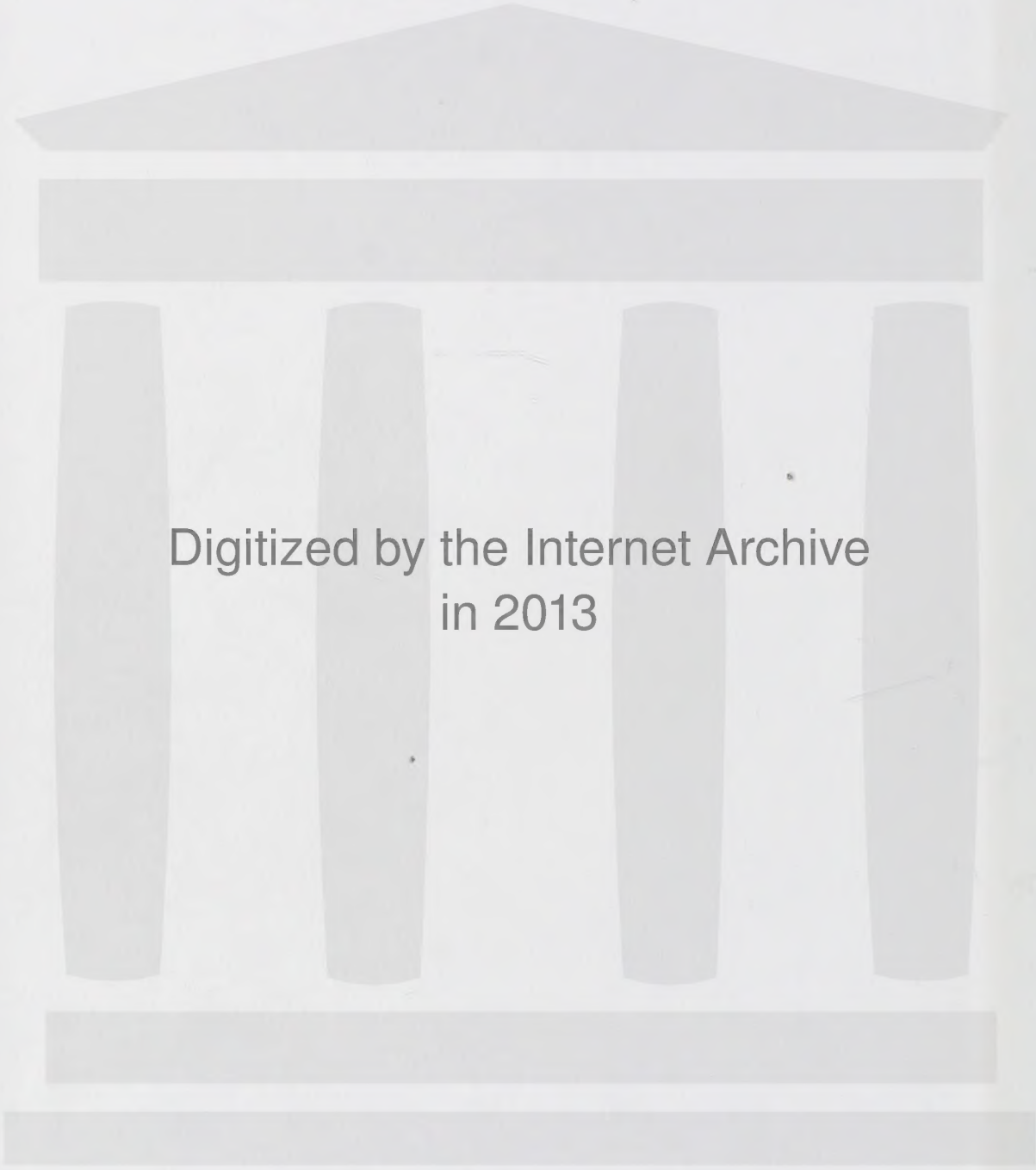

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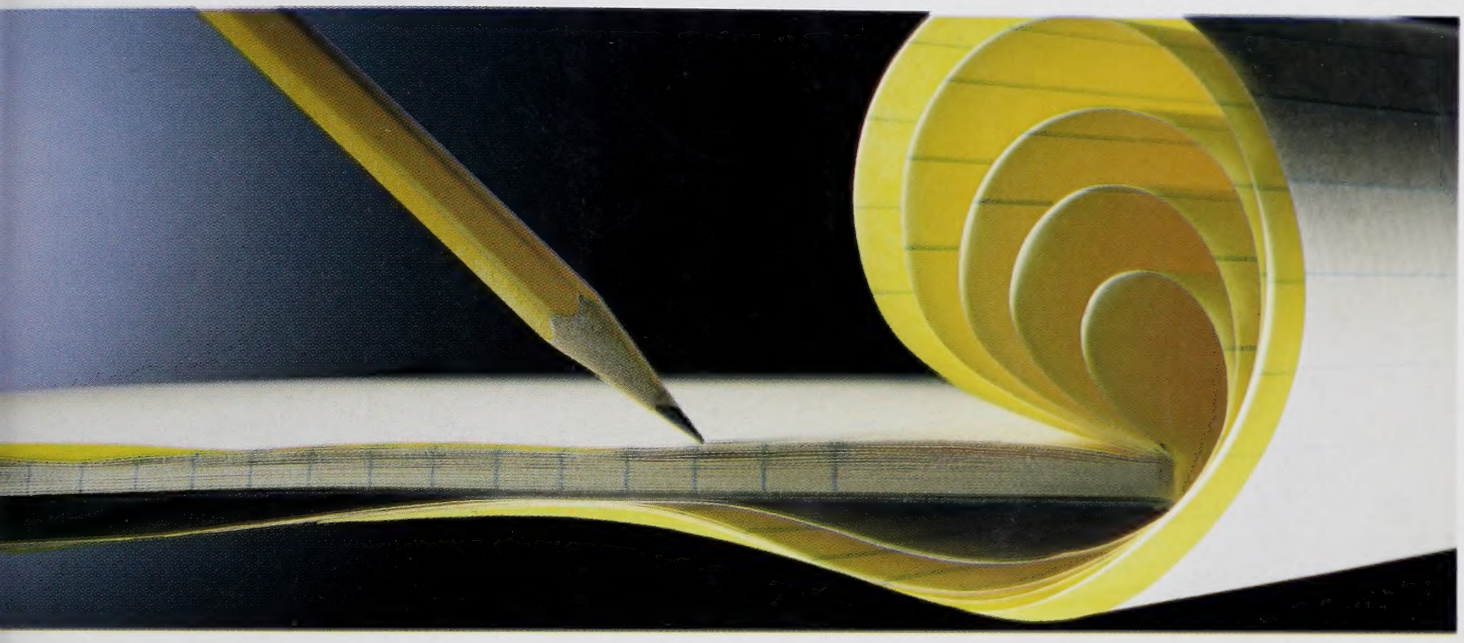
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On (Not) Getting By in America

By Barbara Ehrenreich

BUT IS IT ADVERTISING?

Capitalist Realism at the Clio Awards

By Jonathan Dee

AGAINST THE ODDS

A story by William Trevor

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April 15

I've pretty much lost everything at one time or another. At school it was textbooks and scarves. At college, it was CDs, sneakers and jackets. On a recent trip to San Francisco, it was my wallet.

So there I was, miles from home without a dime, a ticket or a clue. Out of all the credit card companies I called, only American Express had an office where they could help me right then and there. What's more, they all stayed late to do it. Within an hour I walked out with a replacement Card and a new set of Travelers Cheques.

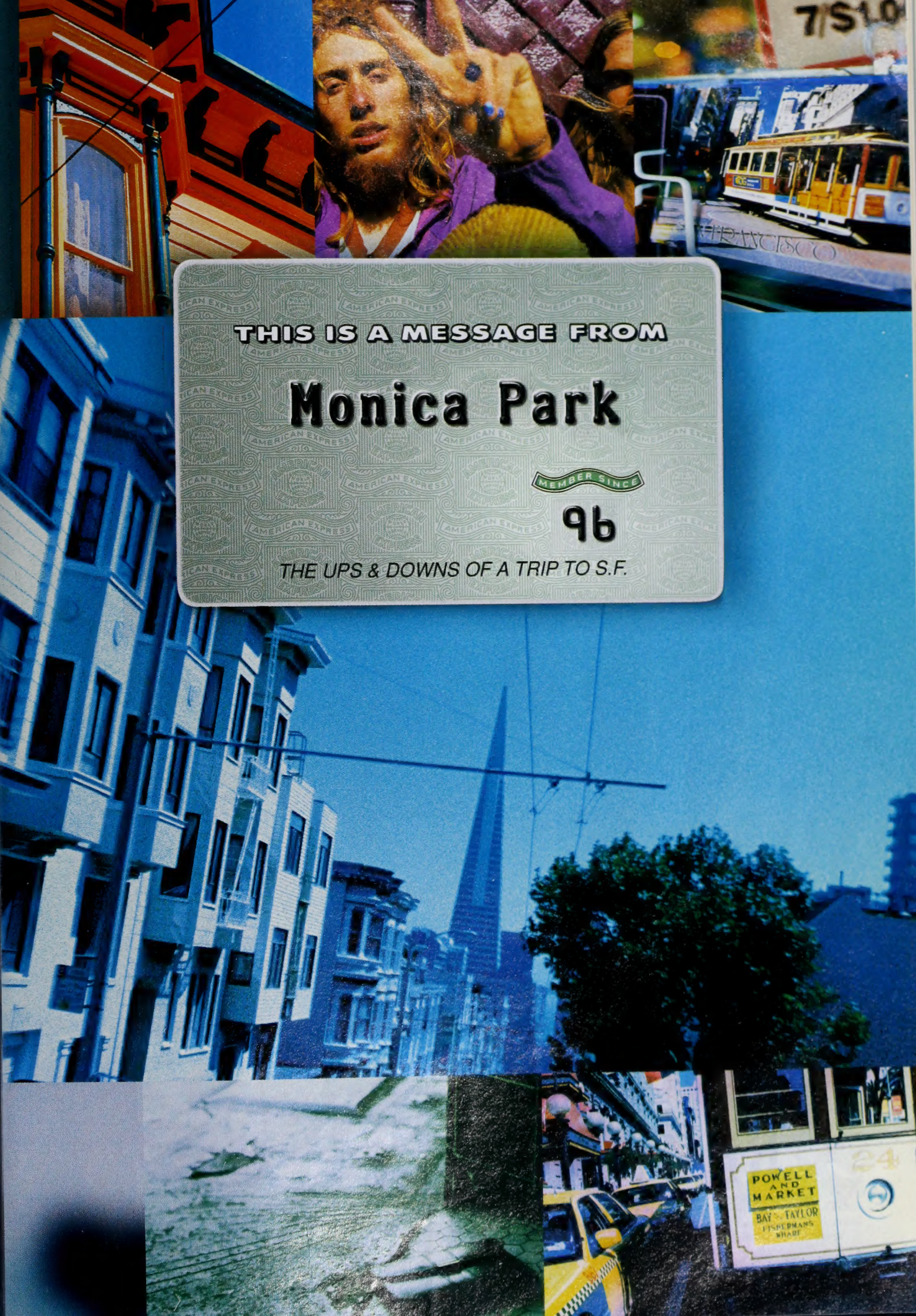
Naturally, I would like to have thanked them all personally when I got back but - you'll never guess what - I'm not quite sure what I did with their number.

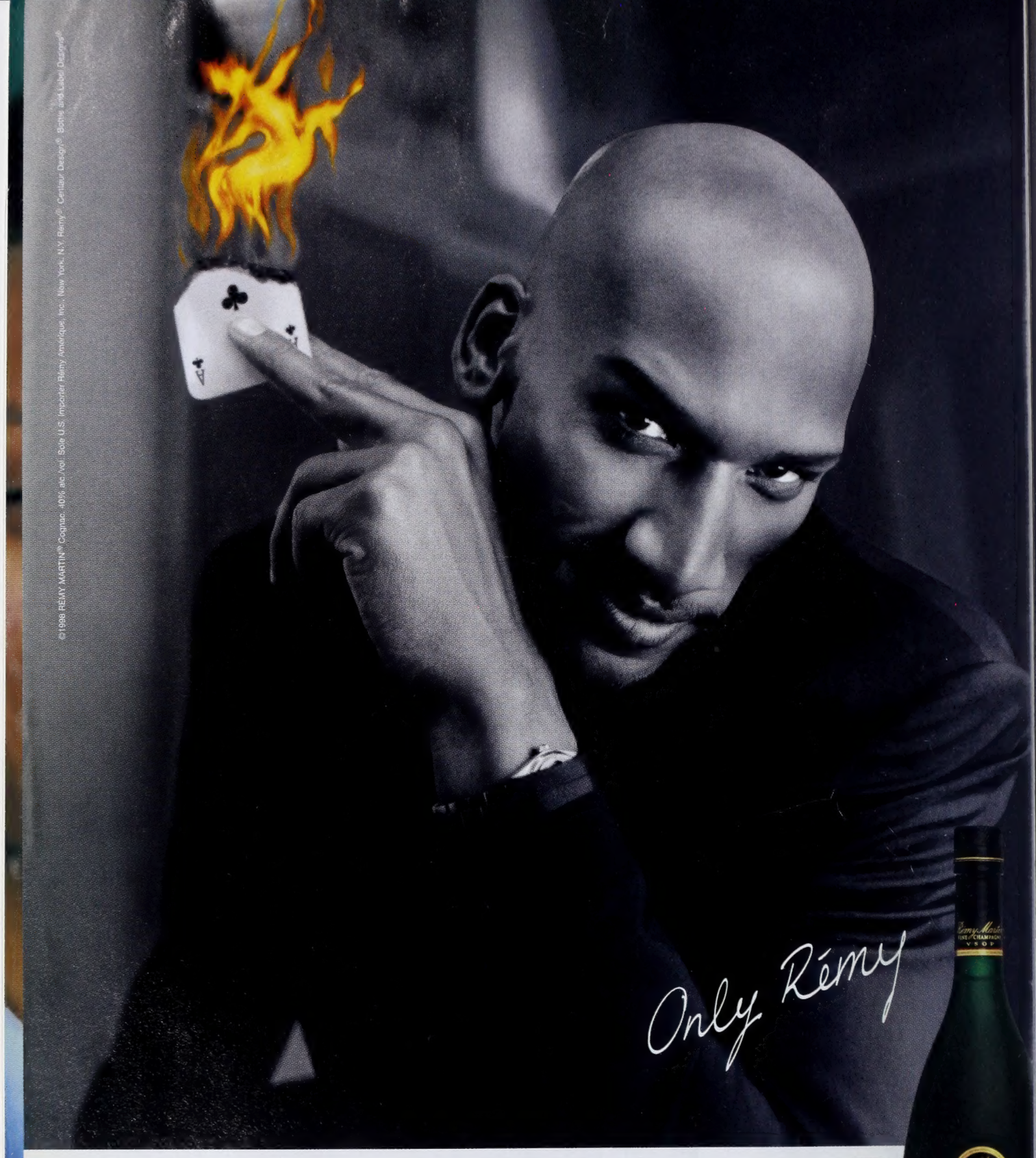


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JANUARY 1999

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the work we have been doing since 1990 to combat the very real problems he identifies.

For instance, it was at our suggestion that he analyzed, and found wanting, drafts of the state-curriculum guidelines for Wisconsin and Illinois. But he mentioned neither the campaigns we coordinated to improve these standards nor the improvements we were able to make. He cites the first draft of the Wisconsin guidelines, but they were radically revised by their final draft as a result of the critiques we organized, both within the state and from such national figures as the historian Stephen Ambrose and the education professor Diane Ravitch. The story is far from complete, in other words, if, like Hitchens, one fails to acknowledge that efforts are also under way to strengthen the teaching of history and that they are often successful.

Elaine Wrisley Reed
Executive Director
National Council for History Education, Inc.
Westlake, Ohio

Christopher Hitchens is right to lament the sad state of history education in the United States. He is way off the mark, however, in his characterization of Joy Hakim's series, *A History of US*, as feel-good history. "[H]ow different," he asks, "is her approach from the standard textbooks of the last generation?" The answer: very different. In fact, the favorable November 1994 review of the series in the *New York Times Book Review* was titled "The New History: Showing Children the Dark Side."

Hitchens singles out a statement from Hakim's opening chapter, that America is "a nation that is trying to be fair to all our citizens," and deems it mere propaganda. But Hakim goes on to tell her young readers that they don't have to agree with her, and she cites past horrors such as slavery and war, as well as contemporary problems of poverty and injustice.

Hakim's books have been criticized by the Christian right for her treatment of Ronald Reagan and by the multicultural left for her admiration of slave-holding founding
thers. The truth is that she is alw
thoughtful and provocative, c
stantly challenging her readers
think critically and reminding th
that for many important questi
there are no easy answers.

Byron Hollinshead
President and CEO
American Historical Publications
New York City

Christopher Hitchens has giv
us a useful wake-up call about t
sad state of history education
America, but he gives little indi
tion that he understands Americ
history of education. As a result,
provides an incomplete response
the essay's subtitle: "Why Ame
cans are not taught history."

That "we dwell in a present-te
culture" is a big part of the answ
but *why* do we dwell in such a c
ture? It could be because we perce
ourselves as a self-invented, pione
ing people. As Tom Paine said up
publication of the Constitution:
is as if we are standing at the beg



r. Tread spaciously, too. Navigator has room for seven in three rows of leather-trimmed seats. To lear

ng of the world." The Enlighten-
ent fostered the notion of a great
ult line through history and en-
ouraged the dismissal of nearly
verything that fell to the nether
de of that line. This thinking en-
oled generations of historians to
spose of a thousand years of history
ith a few quick lines. The notori-
is *Story of Philosophy* by Will Du-
nt, for instance, proceeded directly
om Aristotle to Francis Bacon.

This status quo was worsened, in
y opinion, by the idea of education
a science, a by-product of psychol-
gy and sociology, with two primary
es—democracy and employment.
'e have for too long followed this
iemic line of thought.

en Whelan
an Francisco

Curiosity is a curious phenome-
on. Curiosity awakens on its own
hedule and for its own reasons. It
annot be coaxed en masse from stu-
ents sitting at rows of desks. The
itional squabble over public-school
urricula is essentially about who gets to tell what to a captive audience: children.

Why does Christopher Hitchens assume that history is something that everyone should know? Does Hitchens know how to rebuild the engine of a car? Can he speak Japanese? Can he describe the life cycle of a flea? In what respect is history superior to any of these subjects? And can't our young people be trusted to follow their interests on their own?

John Ramos
Duluth

Israel's Agōnistēs

Edward Said's revisionist essay, now anachronistic in light of last autumn's significant negotiations between Benjamin Netanyahu and Yasir Arafat in Maryland ["Fifty Years of Dispossession," Readings, October], fails to make a convincing argument.

Said betrays an intellectual dishonesty in claiming that Israel's raison d'être "is to provide for Jews and not for non-Jews." In fact, the purpose of the creation of the state of Israel was to return Jews to sovereignty in their historic homeland. This objective should never be equated with exclusion of other communities who chose to make their home in Israel, as evinced by the Druze, Bedouin, and Christian communities, among others, that have lived contentedly as full Israeli citizens throughout the past half-century.

The most disheartening aspect of Said's polemic lies in its distaste for peaceful coexistence—the sure fate of Israel and the Palestinians. If Said cannot accept, as the Palestinian leaders already have, that Israel is a committed partner in a peace process that will not disappear, he will remain an irrelevant anachronism.

Ambassador Shmuel Sisso
Consul General of Israel in New York
New York City

It would be useful to know what Edward Said means by the term "Palestinians" (and his variations, "indigenous Palestinians," "native-born Palestinians," and "Palestinian Israelis"). Are they the descendants



of the Philistines? Are they the descendants of the Old Testament Canaanites? Are they the inhabitants of the League of Nations' "Palestine Mandate" to Great Britain (which includes what is now the kingdom of Jordan, in which case, as some have argued, there already *is* a Palestinian state)?

Is "Palestinian Arab" a redundancy? Is "Palestinian Jew" an oxymoron? That would depend on narrow but clarifying definitions.

In the absence of a common language or culture, if a Palestinian is simply defined as an inhabitant of Palestine (or a native of what Said calls "historical Palestine"), what is the definition of Palestine? What map at what time defines the geographical territory, a region where over millennia people of various ethnic and religious and sociopolitical makeup have settled and made pilgrimages, waged tribal feuds, and engaged in rebellions and jihads and wars of liberation? The definitions and borders shift like the sands of the Sinai (which may or may not be included). Any process that hopes to bring about an evenhanded attainment of civil, human, and legal rights can be based only on the mutual acceptance of a shared vernacular.

Neil D. Isaacs
Colesville, Md.

Edward Said's essay provides us a very infrequently available view of the Israeli–Palestinian saga. He charitably does not mention that U.S. economic and military assistance to Israel has averaged $5.5 billion per year ($10,000 for each inhabitant) for the past twenty years. The U.S. taxpayer deserves to be better informed about what that money is buying and the modus operandi behind this largesse.

John McKigney
Cape Coral, Fla.

I have never understood why our leadership tolerates (and our media ignore) the Israeli government's uncloaked disregard of human rights; the United Nations, too, seems to have forgotten about the existence of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is indeed ironic that the strongest support for Israel comes from countries where violence against Jews was routine before World War II—the United States itself missed a golden opportunity when it refused to accept large numbers of Jewish refugees prior to the war.

Duane Bates
Greenville, S.C.

Although Israel's actions have often flouted democratic notions of freedom and justice, comparisons to the United States (or Canada, Japan, or the Western European democracies) are unreasonable because these countries stand beneath a great security umbrella, have not been recently involved in an active war, and are not surrounded on all sides by enemies. Every country, including the United States, has the right to suppress freedoms during wartime in order to maintain the integrity of the government and allow the state to continue to exist and function. In this light, and when compared with its neighbors, Israel's track record on human rights is exemplary.

Randy Silvers
Tempe, Ariz.

A Glowing Review

Ken Silverstein's story of David Hahn, who, as a teenager, used his mother's potting shed as a nuclear workshop ["The Radioactive Boy Scout," November], put me in mind of my 1960s boyhood. I, too, fell under the spell of *The Golden Book of Chemistry Experiments*. It showed me how to create hydrogen balloons, the better to stage mini-*Hindenburg* reenactments in the basement. I learned how Sani-Flush could serve in a pinch as a stand-in for sulfuric acid. Just a week ago, I told my fiancée how I still hope to create the book's wondrous ammonia fountain with her at my side.

Sadly, such a dangerous book could never be published today. Consider how far the following goes beyond the standard vinegar-and-baking-soda demonstrations:

> Heat mixture for a few moments without boiling. Then sniff carefully. You get the peculiar sweetish odor of chloroform.

Once, I prevailed upon my mother to buy me a glass retort, the vessel used by scientists to distill or heat substances, for my birthday. My plan was to heat Sani-Flush and ammonium nitrate together, dissolving what I hoped would be nitrogen dioxide in water to produce nitric acid. It's true that I managed to stink up the basement, but David Hahn's nitric ambitions—radioisotope purification!—were so much richer than my pedestrian dreams of nitroglycerin and flash paper. Perhaps it's for the best that by the mid-1970s I had refashioned my retort as a bong.

Carry on, Seaman Hahn. I wish you smooth sailing and benign tumors.

Ralph Bonheim
Brooklyn, N.Y.

The Bad, the Ugly, the Good

Where *is* the hideousness in David Foster Wallace's "Brief Interview With Hideous Men" [October]? Is it in the way they express their forbidden cortextual doodles? In the content of these thoughts? In the truth that they have such thoughts at all? I had only one instant response, and it remains: Where are these men? I'd like to meet them.

I don't mind the vulgar language, the degrading intent, the urinary and self-absorbed stream of consciousness as long as they are in service to candor. If only the dialogues manufactured by Wallace's generous imagination reflected the habit of live men to speak with such eloquent sincerity.

The hideous truth includes me and compels me. Please give us more of what the author presumes will be monstrosity and less of the gently lying nods as we sob over our dying delusions. It's refreshing.

K. Garvin
mcgarvin@concentric.net

The Blessings of a Curse

Like Jesse Sheidlower ["Revising the F-Word," Readings, November] I have had occasion to consider the origins of scatalogical terms. When

y oldest was thirteen, we had the
ligatory father-son chat about sex,
a rather long and uninterrupted
ive through northern California. I
ld him he was free to ask me any-
ing, and I remember he hedged for
while, moved about in his seat,
en asked me if I knew the deriva-
on of the word "fuck." (This was
ring the "Dirty Word" period on
e Berkeley campus.)
I was stymied. When we returned
me I began a search through stan-
rd dictionaries (no help), etymo-
gical dictionaries (no help), and fi-
lly a review of British history, in
attempt to answer my son's per-
ctly reasonable question. Eventual-
I arrived at the Norman Conquest.
My conclusion, and I am con-
nced of it, is that the Normans set
t to clean up the vulgar ono-
atopoeia of the Saxons. "Cow
eat" became "boef"; "deer," "veni-
n"; "pig," "pork." In like manner,
iss" became "urinate"; "shit," "defe-
te"; and "fuck," "intercourse."
(Pardon my French.)

ichael Haggerty
ucson, Ariz.

Whereas Jesse Sheidlower's essay
stifies to the creative expansive-
ss of the f-word, I would like to
are an anecdote that testifies to
e word's endless versatility.
My English brother-in-law tells of
Birmingham bloke who was a ma-
ine operator in a factory there.
pon the untimely demise of one of
e machines, he was heard to com-
ent (and this is my best Birming-
m accent—rhymes with "took"),
ookin' fooker's fooked."
What other word does so much
th so little?

ter Cass
urham, N.C.

Bee's-Eye View

Susan Brind Morrow fails to con-
der the ways in which her pursuit
honey ["The Hum of Bees," Sep-
mber] abuses bees. She provides a
ne-sided account of the beauty of
eekeeping from an apiarist's per-
ective and neglects to mention the
evitable harm and death imposed upon bees by humans in the process of extracting honey from the hive.

Morrow writes that the invention of removable frames enabled beekeepers to "remove the excess honey that is produced every year without harming or displacing the bees." Apparently she is unaware of the fact that dozens of bees are killed every time a hive is probed for honey, each one giving its life to protect the queen bee and the hive from human intruders. Furthermore, the reason bees expend so much energy and time making honey is to ensure that they will have enough food to last them throughout the winter. The "heap of white sugar" left behind for bees in place of the stolen honey cannot possibly make up for the energy (and perhaps enjoyment) that bees derive from their own honey.

Morrow's omission of the bee's perspective leads me to believe that her relationship with bees is not sensitive but in fact exploitative.

Ara Barsam
Oxford, England

Press for Success

The "shallowness and ignorance of the news media" that Lewis Lapham laments ["Punch and Judy," Notebook, September], and the civic apathy that it spawns, may find their solution in the vast potential of the so-called public journalism movement. The goal of public journalism is simple: to promote conversation. As it now stands, there are precious few institutions providing non-virtual settings where an intellectually disparate citizenry can gather to discuss issues of the day. Sniping on talk shows can in no way approach the soul-changing potential of talking—and *listening*—to one's supposed foes in a relaxed setting.

The BBC and the *Independent* newspaper have gone the furthest down this path with their practice of "deliberative polling" before all general elections. They randomly choose and gather hundreds of ordinary citizens in a central location for a week or more to discuss a central campaign issue. The alternation of small group discussions with plenary sessions make possible a dialogue that otherwise is inconceivable. Needless to say, this poll differs significantly in outcome from run-of-the-mill opinion polls.

The *Herald-Dispatch* of Huntington, West Virginia, organized a much smaller citizen task force to look at regional economic development. The local Chamber of Commerce was so impressed by the group's output that it promptly disbanded and reformed as a much more representative and larger body, which resulted in so many sound proposals that the area secured a $3 million federal grant along with a grant of $1 million from the state.

This kind of citizen involvement is no simple feel-good exercise; it gives voice to otherwise passive readers and viewers, and it provides politicians something more than meaningless opinion polls to govern by.

So when Mr. Lapham ponders the sorry state of the status quo and wonders "How else except in the blurred and imperfect images of the morning paper and afternoon television summary can the labor leader, the ballerina, or the police detective form even a distorted image of one another?" we can confidently avow that there is another, more productive paradigm available.

Evan Bedford
Calgary, Alberta

The Rules of Fear

As a graduate of one of the country's "well-to-do universities," I share Lewis Lapham's criticism of my peers ["Members Only," Notebook, October]. Far too many of my generation have "misplaced" their idealism, if they had much to begin with. Nevertheless, I find it difficult to view the sorry state of contemporary youth with Lapham's bemused detachment. The "philosophical questions" have not gone "missing in action." Quite the contrary: without the stable economy enjoyed by our predecessors, these questions have acquired a new and panicked immediacy.

For those of us who find social protest neither "superfluous" nor "quaint," the avenues of engaged action are narrow and few. Having

Continued on page 84

NOTEBOOK

Italian opera

By Lewis H. Lapham

Il Grandioso

The Cast

Orlando Grandioso, *slayer of shibboleths* . . . . . Newt Gingrich
Malocchio, *an evil prince* . . . . . Bill Clinton
Gwendolyn the Good . . . . . Peggy Noonan
Beadle, *a sage* . . . . . Alvin Toffler
Der Meisterschelter . . . . . Kenneth Starr
Moth, *a journalist* . . . . . Peter Jennings
Cobweb . . . . . Susan Molinari
Seraphina . . . . . Arianna Huffington
The Duke of Revlon, *a Moor* . . . . . Vernon Jordan
Balthazar . . . . . Robert Bork
Rubato, *a minstrel* . . . . . Rush Limbaugh
Ringwort . . . . . Henry Hyde
Bearpaw . . . . . Dick Armey

SCENE 1

—Stormy night in a forest on Kennesaw Mountain

A band of fierce partisans assembles around a fierce campfire, swearing patriotic oaths, despising platitudes. It is clear they have come in haste. Trouble broods upon the land. An evil prince rules in Washington. The partisans brandish a motley assortment of weapons—shotguns, scythes, Ronald Reagan's magic zither—and they wear a motley assortment of costumes—gypsy shirts, cavalry boots, Viking helmets, a few fishing and duck-shooting hats.

For twenty minutes the partisans sing of their grievances, the bass voices accompanied by a scherzo rhythm in the strings, and through the agitated counterpoint we hear enough of the words (*"cultura brutta," "omosessuale," "madre non sposata"*) to know that the prince is a foul liberal. Rubato emerges from the forest with a dead television anchorperson stretched across his shoulders. He pitches the body into the fire. The excitement in the woodwinds mounts to a triumphant braying of the horns.

The partisans separate, and suddenly in their midst, we see, alone in a magenta spotlight, Il Grandioso, slayer of shibboleths, revealer of wisdom. A surprisingly boyish figure, his head cocked to one side like a remarkably alert parrot, Grandioso wears lederhosen and a military cape inherited from an ancestor who died in the Napoleonic Wars. In his left hand he holds the "Contract with America," and with his right hand he sweeps the ostrich plume off his head and sings, in English and a high tenor voice, the stirring march "I Am the Duke of Wellington." The partisans vow to conquer the wicked cities of death and time. They sing *"Dov'è Andata la Libertà?"* and the scene ends with the ensemble rushing resolutely offstage to the sound of kettle drums.

SCENE 2

—The Rotunda of the Capitol, early afternoon

The partisans have won through to victory, capturing all the radio stations south of Boston, and the best people in Washington nervously await the coming of their new speaker of eternal truth. Noble lords, gra
cious ladies, regal lobbyists, miscell
neous oracles, jesters, professors
economics. The orchestra plays wal
music while perfumed servants pou
glasses of champagne for the pe
fumed guests, who respond wit
hearty gusts of stage laughter. Th
corps de ballet dances *tableaux v
vants* depicting famous scenes i
American history—Washingto
crossing the Delaware, William Jer
nings Bryan crucified on the cross
gold. Rubato and Cobweb sing th
romantic duet "I Never Thought I
See This Day."

Grandioso enters with an escort
his rough-hewn partisans, who gla
suspiciously at the champagne an
Cokie Roberts. Bearpaw stabs a wel
wisher whom he mistakes for Da
Rather. The orchestra expresses th
confusion of sensibilities by giving
the flutes the angry leitmotifs of th
forest horns, and after a sustaine
tremolo in the violins, Gwendoly
the Good restores the sense of gene
al rejoicing with the immortal ar
"Bliss to Be Alive." Children distri
ute flowers. Moth proposes a toa
and bravely smashes his glass again
the bust of Millard Fillmore. A co

nted Grandioso, still in lederhosen
ıt now wearing Teddy Roosevelt's
ımpaign hat instead of the ostrich
ume, strides downstage center to
ad the company in the singing of
La Via Mia," the deathless ode to
ee enterprise.

SCENE 3
—Early morning in an American Opportunities workshop

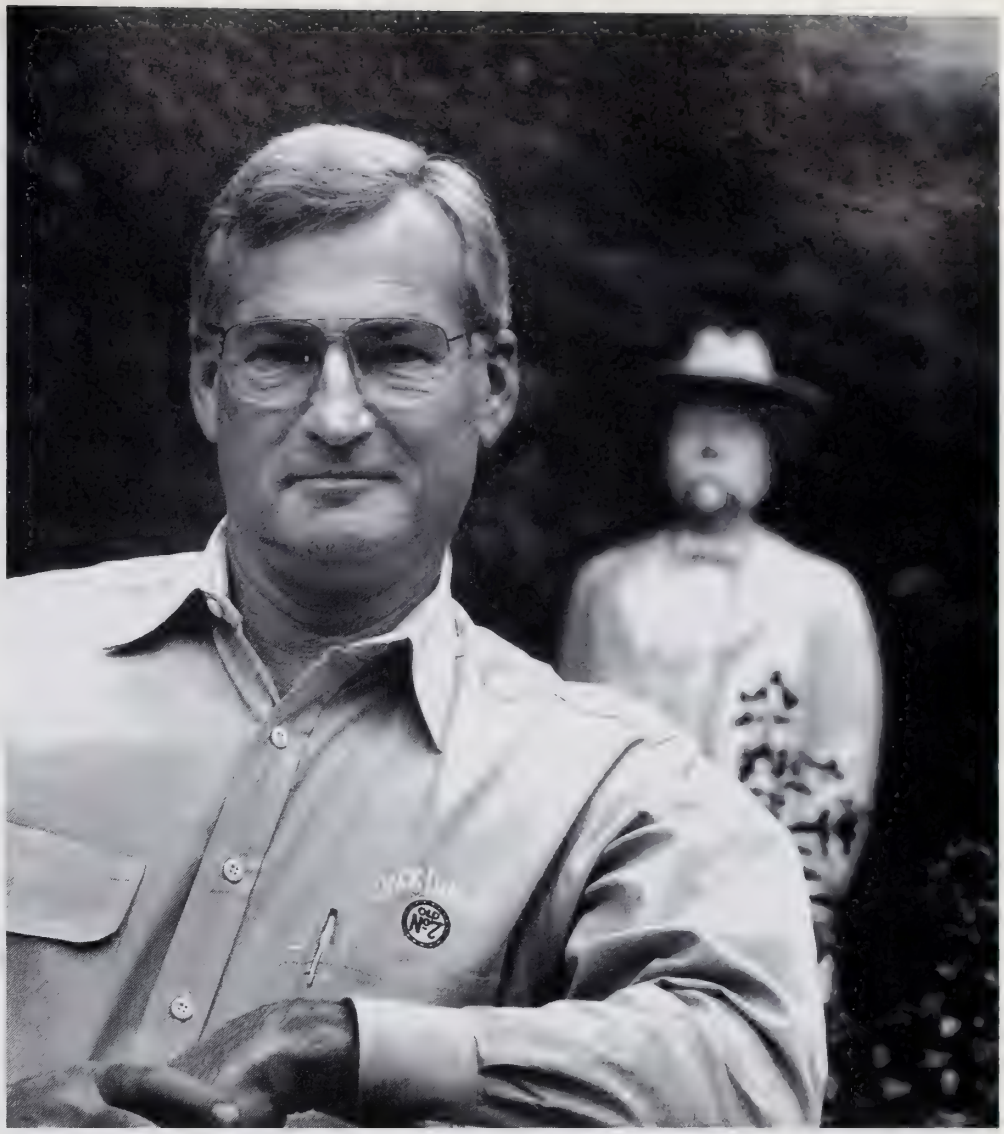
Grandioso sits on a high chair in
ont of a computer monitor, busily
vising the history of Western civi-
zation, adding and deleting para-
aphs, revoking the sexual license
the 1960s, scattering papers on a
age already littered with blueprints,
emoranda, old books. The orches-
a seethes and chatters with furious
ergy. Aides rush in and out with
illetins—from Rupert Murdoch,
no wishes to present a gift of mon-
; from Mongolia, where Grandioso
s been named the last of the Ming
nperors; from Arkansas, where
ingwort and Bearpaw have learned
ıe Spanish word for penis. The
eritage Foundation sends four bird-
ges the size of newspaper kiosks, in
ch one of which a tame policy in-
llectual swings back and forth on
s perch, humming 1950s Broadway
ow tunes. The corps de ballet per-
rms the dance of the Delphic ora-
es ("The Six Major Changes,"
The Five Basic Principles," "The
hree Essential Reasons"), which il-
strates Grandioso's theory of the
niverse.

Beadle enters with his pet owl,
randioso climbs down from his
gh chair, and together they de-
aim the recitativo "The Ideas Are
oo Big, the Issues Too Important."

Interlude for the corps de ballet

The dancers enact Grandioso's
teful struggle for an important seat
oard Air Force One. Grandioso
rives by limousine at Andrews Air
orce Base; Grandioso walks to the
ane; Grandioso starts to ascend
ıe stairs.

But no. It's not to be. Grandioso
oesn't know how to play hearts,
nd so he can't sit up front with
ialocchio and Moth and the
acadamia nuts. An aide-de-camp



If you'd like to learn more about our whiskey, drop Jimmy a note. He'll be glad to answer any questions.

IF YOU SEE THIS MAN at your neighborhood bar, you're bound to learn something you didn't know about Jack Daniel's.

He's Jimmy Bedford, our head distiller, and he loves to travel around telling folks all about our whiskey. (Jimmy can probably talk more about Jack Daniel's than any man alive.) He's always happy to discuss the Grade A grain we use, or our copper stills, or the way we mellow each drop through hard maple charcoal. And from what we've seen, folks who appreciate a smooth sippin' whiskey are always happy to listen.



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points imperiously to the ramp at the rear of the plane.

Shock. Horror. Wild alarm. The percussion erupts into a frenzy of chromatic scales. America is no longer a democracy. All men are not created equal.

Grandioso protests, shakes his fists, draws his dagger, lunges at a flight attendant. The dancers rush frantically around the stage, miming the gestures of truth denied, virtue rebuffed. All to no avail. Men in uniform restrain Grandioso and lead him up the ramp with the lettuce and the towels. The music droops into a sullen muttering of oboes. The dancers crumple and fall like wilting flowers.

SCENE 4

—The Tidal Basin, dawn

Grandioso gazes pensively into the mist. He now knows that Malocchio is more dreadful than he had thought. More dreadful and far more devious. The music recalls the heroic march from Scene 1 ("I Am the Duke of Wellington"), but the melody drifts into the key of D minor, bringing to mind the myth of Troutbeck and the sadness of willow trees.

Grandioso opens Chinese fortune cookies. None of the messages assuage his sorrow, and without giving any thought to his action he throws the crumbs to the ducks. His idle gesture accomplishes a miracle. The crumbs restore one of the ducks to her true form as Seraphina, the tragic Lady of the Tidal Basin, who rises majestically from the water in a gown of white damask, holding the invincible dragon sword believed to have been lost by John Wayne in a stagecoach accident in Benedict Canyon. Seraphina presents the sword to the astonished Grandioso, explaining as she does so (*"Ecco, Farfalla"*) that it cost $32 million and was thrice blessed by Charlton Heston. The emboldened Grandioso seizes the sword and rushes offstage to renew his attack on Malocchio.

Interlude for the corps de ballet

Reunited with Bearpaw and the forest partisans, Grandioso shuts down the operations of the federal government. The dancers mime the functions of the Mint, the Post Office, the Department of Agriculture, and one by one, as Grandioso strikes them with the invincible dragon sword, they stop moving.

SCENE 5

—The office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, a year later

The coup d'état has failed, and once again Grandioso has been disgraced. Malocchio continues to play him for a fool, and Gwendolyn the Good no longer hears in his voice the sound of trumpets. The music wanders around in the registers of German despair as Grandioso sings the haunting aria "Why Won't They Let Me Lead?" He looks for comfort to the dead shibboleths mounted on the walls. He has slain so many of them, tracked them through the wilderness of the *New York Times*, brought them down at conference centers, cut their throats on C-Span. How is it possible that nobody noticed? Why has it not occurred to the friends of Moth (*Gli Illuminati*) to invest him with the powers and divinities of a philosopher king?

A loud knocking on the door interrupts Grandioso's elegiac monologue. Ringwort and Balthazar burst into the room with great news. They have just come from the House of Scolds (*Das Scheltenhaus*), and they know that God is just. Malocchio has ravaged Fidelia, the fair maid of Rodeo Drive, and the citizenry clamors for revenge. Together with Grandioso, Ringwort and Balthazar sing a jubilant reprise of "I Never Thought I'd See This Day."

SCENE 6

—Noon, the Jefferson Memorial

The hour of judgment is at hand, and the scene is large and festive. Acrobats, happy villagers, handsome cavalry officers, buxom peasant girls, children rolling hoops. The best people in Washington stand around at stage left, drinking champagne, exchanging hearty gusts of ribald laughter. Balthazar strums Ronald Reagan's magic zither, Grandioso fires Teddy Roosevelt's target pistol, Moth proposes a toast and brave smashes his glass against a marb column.

Suddenly in the distance we he the high clear note of a single *Wal horn*, announcing the approach doom. As the crowd falls silent th carnival music subsides into a sini ter murmuring of cellos, and th palace castrati drag Malocchio on the stage in a tumbrel. He stan with his hands tied behind his bac but he has lost nothing of his fec less and buoyant spirit. He winl bawdily at Angelina, the unwe gypsy mother, and we know th were it not for the rope on h wrists, he would be off among th peasant women like a beagle chasi squirrels.

The trial takes place at the sto altar in the center of the stage. D Meisterschelter presides. A bass profundo wearing the costume of seventeenth-century Puritan clerg man, he sings, a cappella and for tw hours, the beloved fulmination *"I Sei un Cane Sporco."* The lyrics fa on the head of the evil prince with out visible effect. Given a chance t defend his honor, Malocchio sings nursery rhyme remembered from h childhood in an Arkansas gamblir den, *"La Fortuna è Sempre Con Me* A magistrate asks for a verdict—fir from the high-born lords and gr cious ladies, then from the happ villagers.

The splendid people jeer an mock and point their jeweled finger and among all their glittering con pany only the Duke of Revlon, th noble Moor, comes forward to sing rebuttal to the charge of treaso *"Lascia Che il Cane Mangia."* For long moment it looks as if the ev prince must suffer an evil fat Grandioso smirks. Rubato gloat Bearpaw stabs another well-wish whom he mistakes for Dan Rather.

But when the magistrate puts th question to the common peopl they forgive Malocchio. The con mon people like evil princes; the hope he will bless their crops an look favorably upon their daughter A court jester unbinds Malocchio wrists, Grandioso retires in confu sion, and the corps de ballet danc the rite of eternal spring. The scen

ds as it began—acrobats, carnival usic, children rolling hoops.

SCENE 7
—The lawn behind the Jefferson Memorial, twenty minutes later

The fierce partisans have lost the peal to conscience, and they arch for The Five Basic Principles, ne Three Essential Reasons. Bear- w stabs Grandioso, Grandioso bs Balthazar, Balthazar stabs Ring- rt, Ringwort stabs Cobweb, Cob- b stabs Bearpaw. Moth proposes a ast and bravely smashes his glass Balthazar's Viking helmet.

Beadle returns with his owl, and gether they carry off the wounded randioso, declaiming a reprise of e recitativo "The Ideas Are Too g, the Issues Too Important."

SCENE 8
—Twilight, the forest on Kennesaw Mountain

Grandioso enters alone, leading s horse. Once or twice he looks ck over his shoulder at the burn- g city of Rome, but we know by s imbecile grin that he no longer res for the trifles of Mammon. He s found inner peace and spiritual ntentment, and as he climbs high- up the mountain toward the old rtisan campfire, he begins to sing, ntly at first but then in a stronger ice and with the accumulating pport of more instruments and ghter harmonies, "I Am the Duke Wellington."

He is far from the tumult of poli- s, far from Balthazar's maps and e intrigues of Moth, and there is body to join him on his march. body but the little woodland k—the timid rabbit, the shy chip- unk, the cheerful sparrow—who adually emerge from the forest as randioso mounts ever nearer to e sky. They align themselves in litary formation, intrepid in the ding light. We hear a chorus of so- ano voices, and we know that randioso has recruited another my of the faithful, that his song n never die.

—Full orchestra with brass choir
Curtain ■

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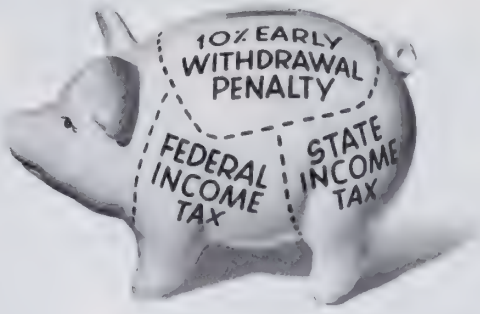
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HARPER'S INDEX

Estimated amount a major-party U.S. presidential candidate must raise per hour this year to become a nominee : $2,466

atio of campaign spending per vote won last year by Newt Gingrich to spending per vote won by Senator Russ Feingold : 9:1

Ratio of the number of House incumbents who ran unopposed last year to the total number of congressmen in 1791 : 1:1

Percentage change since 1994 in the number of votes cast by members of union households : +66

Percentage change since then in the number of Republican candidates endorsed by a union : +125

Hours after ABC's technical union declared a strike last fall that Al Gore canceled an ABC interview : 12

Chances that a Disney World employee is unionized : 2 in 5

Rank of Disney World, among the country's largest single-site employers : 1

Rank of the Budweiser frog TV-ad campaign, among the most popular commercials with children over the age of six : 1

Ratio of the number of political ads aired last year that used the word "good" to those that used the word "evil" : 44:1

Ratio of minutes that the three major networks spent on the Lewinsky story last fall to minutes they spent on Kosovo : 5:1

Hours after Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic agreed to last fall's Kosovo peace plan that he closed two newspapers : 12

Percentage of the fall 1998 issue of Britain's *The Ecologist* magazine devoted to an investigation of Monsanto : 95

Percentage of the issue's entire press run immediately pulped by the printer, for fear of breaking British libel laws : 100

Number of Boston library workers who required counseling last summer after a flood soaked 50,000 cartons of books : 12

Ratio of total U.S. disaster aid to Honduras last year to average annual U.S. military aid to Honduras in the 1980s : 6:7

Percentage of the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency's one-page biography of Chile's Augusto Pinochet that is classified : 90

Number of words devoted to the Depression in Houghton Mifflin's fifth-grade history book, *Build Our Nation* : 332

Number devoted to the baseball career of Cal Ripken Jr. : 339

Chance that an NBA player has a toenail fungus : 1 in 3

Price that Manhattan's new NBA boutique charges for a Waterford crystal vase engraved with an image of Larry Bird : $8,000

Value of each 20,000-yen government-issued "shopping voucher" to be received this year by 35 million Japanese : $165

Estimated number of days that Russia's emergency food reserve could feed the country : 5

Number of dates since 1914 that the Jehovah's Witnesses have predicted as the start of the apocalypse : 7

Change since 1916 in the percentage of U.S. scientists who say they believe in a god : 0

Chance that a Jewish Jerusalemite agrees that sovereignty over the city's holy sites "ultimately belongs to God" : 1 in 3

Chances that a Palestinian Jerusalemite believes this : 2 in 3

Average number of donations that a North Carolina church receives each week through its ATM : 7

Percentage of the funds spent fighting Alaska's gay-marriage initiative last year that came from the Mormon Church : 79

Ratio of the number of state ballot initiatives to limit abortion voted on last year to those advocating animal rights : 1:3

Extra days of legal duck hunting this month in three Southern states as a result of Senator Trent Lott's lobbying : 14

Chance that an American believes Bill Clinton is "a bigger threat to the American way of life" than Saddam Hussein : 1 in 5

Estimated amount the Pentagon will spend this year on Viagra : $50,000,000

Number of the three action figures inspired by John Glenn that are dressed in a suit and tie : 1

Estimated number of colleges that Newt Gingrich's high-school football coach queried in vain for a big enough helmet : 5

Estimated number of people who watched a live Webcast of a hair transplant last fall : 8,000

Months after boxing promoter Don King was acquitted of fraud last year that he took his jurors to the Bahamas : 2

Price of a day's excursion at Obertraun Schilcherhaus, an Austrian resort offering nude cross-country skiing : $30

Number of emergency-room visits in 1997 by elderly Americans injured while snowboarding : 75

Figures cited have been adjusted for inflation and are the latest available as of November 1998. Sources are listed on page 85.
"Harper's Index" is a registered trademark.

Mom would've loved this award. Even if she didn't know what it meant.



You may have heard how my father started from scratch in the '50s to create his distinctively mellow bourbon whisky, recognized by connoisseurs around the world. My mother's contributions are a little less known.

Aside from relinquishing her kitchen for use as my Dad's test lab, she was the one who came up with the distinctive design of the Maker's Mark package. And now, nearly 40 years later, she seems to be getting some well-deserved credit.

In a recent competition, a panel of world-renowned graphic designers judged her liquor package design as one of the "Best 5" in the entire world.

Among other comments, a New York judge noted that "Every bottle is manually inverted in wax, which acts as a seal and becomes a clever design feature as the wax drips down the upright bottle. This tendril effect means each bottle is genuinely unique." Hmmm.

Of course, Mom would've never used words like that to describe her idea.

But at least she's getting some recognition, however long overdue.

I just couldn't be prouder. Because, as you now know, it's quite an accomplishment to be world renowned for your tendril effect.

Bill Samuels, Jr.

Bill Samuels, Jr.
President
Maker's Mark Distillery

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READINGS

[Open Letter]

A DESPOT'S LAST SHOT AT REDEMPTION

From "Repent Now, General, While You Still Can," by Ariel Dorfman, in the November 1, 1998, issue of the London Observer. *General Augusto Pinochet was arrested in London on October 16 on a warrant from Spain accusing him of involvement in the deaths of more than 3,000 people, including Spanish nationals, between 1973 and 1990. Dorfman teaches literature and Latin American studies at Duke University and is the author, most recently, of* Heading South, Looking North: A Bilingual Journey, *a memoir about surviving Pinochet.*

Believe me, General: your detention in London is the best thing that could have happened to you.

I understand that it can't be pleasant to be arrested without warning, not to be able to amble along the streets of Chelsea whenever you feel like it, not to know what future awaits you. Just ask the many Chileans who, when your men came for them in the middle of the night, were not exactly lodged in five-star London clinics.

But if you're scared, and you feel alone, and you think you've been stabbed in the back, perhaps you should consider that destiny may have offered you at the very end of your life a providential chance to save your soul. You have, for the last twenty-five years, been living an illusion, constructing a sham version of yourself, obsessively justifying it, faking innocence since the 1973 coup, in fact since the death of Salvador Allende, the constitutional president of the republic who named you commander in chief and whom you betrayed. That first act of treachery was followed by others, an inevitable avalanche of betrayals, because the first great crime always needs to be covered up with more crimes. Dictators aspire to total power in order to seek refuge from the demons they have unchained. As a way of silencing their ghosts, they demand to be surrounded by a rampart of flattering mirrors and genuflecting counselors that assure the tyrant that yes, you are the most beautiful of them all, the best, the one who knows more.

And you ended up believing them, General.

You defended yourself from what you had done, what you were doing, with the isolating walls of your supposed invulnerability, the conviction that nobody would ever hold you accountable, that there was one law for you and a different law for the rest of your compatriots, and when the people of Chile rejected you in a plebiscite in 1988 and forced you to leave the presidency in 1990, you were able, with an uncanny instinct, to trap the whole country in a transition to democracy in which you would never have to answer for even one of your deeds or your words, a transition in which you were the only one who was really free to say and do what you wanted whenever you wanted to, while your fellow countrymen always had to be careful of our mouths, careful even of our thoughts. We couldn't, given the

terms of the transaction we agreed to under the shadow of your gun, express our true emotions, fearful that if you didn't like our latest move you would just up and kick the table on which the game was being played, threaten the player who had dared to trump your card. We got our democracy back, General, but you set the limits of how far and deep that democracy could go.

And then you confused your country with the world. You thought you could travel to England, a nation that symbolized civility and civilization to you. You thought you could walk along the Thames as if it were the Mapocho. You thought that the English would respect the rules and compacts of Chile, would be as subservient as Chile.

It is doubly sweet to think that you ensnared yourself, General, that it was the same arrogance with which you governed that ended up blinding you, befuddling your sense of reality, lulling you into the fantasy that you could always impose your will upon everybody else, insulating yourself as a guarantee that you would never have to look at the nearby pain you had caused other human beings.

That's why this detention, no matter how temporary, is so healthy for you. Also for our country, of course, because it forces all Chileans to look at each other face-to-face, it tests our democracy, its real strength, its possible precariousness. Finally, it compels us to confront the need to resolve this complex, ambiguous, and eternal transition that you have restricted and cramped with your overwhelming, omnipresent shadow.

I want you to know, General, that I don't believe in the death penalty. What I do believe in is human redemption—even yours, General Augusto Pinochet. That's why, for the last twenty-five years, I've wanted so much for this to come to pass: that at least once before your death your blue eyes would have to look at the black and clear eyes of the women whose sons and husbands and fathers and brothers you kidnapped and disappeared, one woman and then another woman and then one more. I wanted them to have the opportunity to tell you how their lives were fractured and ravaged by an order you gave or an order you never blocked. I have asked myself what would happen if you were required to listen day after day to the numberless stories of your victims, if you had to recognize their existence.

You believe in God, General, and therefore might be able to decipher what your wise and compassionate and severe Lord has sent you as your life draws to a close: the chance to repent. To penetrate the fierce circle of your crimes and ask forgiveness and tell us where our dead lie buried. Do you know something, don Augusto? Personally, as far as I'm concerned, that would be enough. It would be punishment enough. And think of what a great contribution to the country you say you love: you could help our shared motherland take one more step in the arduous, tentative task of reconciliation, which is only possible if the terrible truth of what has been done to us is revealed and acknowledged, if you participate in this bruising search for that truth without lying to us or to yourself.

Remember what history and religion and also literature teach us: the best thing that can happen to a criminal is to be captured, because in his solitary cell, without the habitual defenses with which he has hidden his past from himself, at times the miracle of a minute window opens inside the prisoner's heart, a window that might lead to self-awareness and redemption.

I do not believe that you will read these words or that you would attend to them if you did happen to read them. I don't think you would relinquish of your own accord an immunity that the English High Court has conferred upon you, and as for impunity, you certainly have not shown signs of wanting to cast that aside. No, I really don't believe that now that your body has been captured for a brief span you will use the occasion to find the spiritual path to acting like a genuinely free man, someone who can forswear his fear and comprehend the enigma of his life, can suddenly see himself as the immense majority of humanity sees him, can understand why we want to exorcise him—exorcise you and so many other despots in this century of mass genocide.

It's never too late, General.

[Critique]

THE PROBLEM WITH BEING A DOVE IN HAWK'S CLOTHING

From "Military Force in an Age of National Cowardice," by John A. Gentry, in the Autumn 1998 issue of The Washington Quarterly. *Gentry is a retired U.S. Army Reserve officer who previously worked at the NATO implementation force headquarters in Sarajevo.*

In recent years the United States has extensively deployed military forces abroad, but America's leaders are increasingly reluctant to



"To Add One Meter to an Unknown Mountain," a performance piece by Chinese artist Zhang Huan. It is included in In-ide Out: New Chinese Art, *on display until January 3 at the Asia Society and P.S. 1 in New York City.*

use them in roles that could lead to casualties in combat. Since Operation Desert Storm in 1991, we have generally been tentative about our commitment to using force. In fact, concerned with an ever-growing list of "threats," President Bill Clinton and his Defense Department have elevated force protection from a task that commanders perform as part of their troop responsibilities to a paramount, stand-alone mission. Thus the U.S. Army told its soldiers in Bosnia beginning in 1996 that force protection is the primary mission there; the peace operation is secondary. In 1997 Brigadier General Richard Coleman, director of the U.S. Air Force security forces, said, "Force protection has become the Air Force's highest priority . . . conducting that mission is now as important as projecting our combat power." These statements are tantamount to a directive stating that cowardice under fire, or even the threat of fire, is acceptable.

Thus the United States presents a schizophrenic posture to the world: we crow about being the world's only superpower and claim the perquisites of that status, including the world's obeisance under the threat of sanctions, but we radiate fear about using power if any people are likely to be hurt. We appear, at least in the military-diplomatic arena, like international bullies who throw our technological weight around while lacking the moral courage of our purported convictions. This inconsistency, even hypocrisy, is not sustainable without considerable diplomatic and human cost.

The trend toward greater sensitivity to casualties is clear. An estimated 58,148 Americans died in Vietnam War–related causes (47,364 in combat) before we declared victory and left. It took a truck bomb and 243 deaths in late 1983 in Beirut to induce us to abandon our overt military support for the Lebanese Christians and to withdraw from the country in early 1984. Only twenty-nine American military deaths in total, but eighteen on one day in October 1993, led us to abandon our "nation building" mission in Somalia in 1994. All of these episodes constituted clear American political-military defeats.

The nineteen deaths from a truck bomb at Khobar Towers in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, in June 1996 drove us promptly to commit $353 million to retreat to Prince Sultan Air Base deep in the Saudi desert and to look for scapegoats. During the crisis over Saddam Hussein's restrictions on U.N. inspectors' searches for biological weapons in early 1998, Clinton ruled out the only option that could possibly lead to finding the weapons or removing Saddam from

power—an invasion. Key among the reasons: U.S. troops would get hurt.

Air strikes against Bosnian Serbs in 1995 came after repeated American refusals to commit troops to the U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and chronic carping about what the Europeans should and should not do in Bosnia. While NATO member nations lost several hundred troops during UNPROFOR operations, the United States lost one F-16—whose pilot incongruously returned a hero, quit the U.S. Air Force, and wrote a book. The United States refused to deploy ground troops to Bosnia until the warring factions had concluded a cease-fire and it was safe. Only after the fighting stopped did we send an armored division to a locale where small numbers of unarmed U.N. and private humanitarian relief workers had toiled for years. And the trend continues. American leaders, while orchestrating NATO's recent threats to bomb Yugoslav forces in Kosovo, refuse to commit to a possible military presence there.

Our adversaries abroad have not failed to notice our national aversion to danger. The commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps told an interviewer in 1995 that he expected to be able to take 20,000 American prisoners if the United States invaded Iran, but that he thought that Washington would be at the negotiating table after only 1,000. Only one week after the debacle in Mogadishu in October 1993, a small mob on the docks of Port-au-Prince held at bay the USS *Harlan County*, a Navy assault ship carrying U.S. and Canadian troops as part of a U.N. force designed to train Haitian soldiers and police officers. The United States, unwilling to risk its personnel, withdrew the ship and scuttled the U.N. mission. In January 1996, Assistant Secretary of Defense Charles W. Freeman Jr. warned senior Chinese officials that the United States would respond militarily to a Chinese attack on Taiwan. According to Freeman, the Chinese responded, "No you won't. We've watched you in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia, and you don't have the will."

It seems unlikely that we will alter our basic course during the Clinton Administration—or before a major military defeat. In the short term, we will pay a number of moderately sized prices for this national policy of cowardice, setbacks that, if taken individually, are likely to be politically affordable to politicians who can count on [illegible] voters to have short memories [illegible] pockets are full.

The long-term costs, however, seem certain to be much greater. The transparent tendency of the United States to buckle in the face of attacks on our people, along with our still growing preoccupation with protecting them, is likely to increase rather than diminish the danger to U.S. personnel. For example, if a Bosnian faction or even an individual wishes to scuttle the NATO mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the preferred target is likely to be the American military contingent, because European NATO members have made it publicly clear that they will not stay without an American ground presence. If the Americans can be compelled to withdraw, NATO will follow. Thus Americans are targets, because attacks on our people yield tangible geopolitical results.

Having communicated to potential adversaries our nation's moral flaccidity, it makes sense that North Korea, Saddam, or others will believe that we are unwilling to defend traditional vital interests. And our current preoccupation with chemical and biological weapons, coupled with our reluctance to commit any forces other than air troops, may have already signaled that gains can be had through such attacks on American citizens.

Our aversion to the physical dangers of small-unit tactics is symptomatic of a basic flaw in our collective strategic vision. We have trouble defining vital interests worth defending, which could eventually lead to an overall unwillingness to maintain a responsible foreign policy. It could also encourage us to become yet more isolationist: with bruised feelings and a sense of paranoia about attacks, we might retrench even more deeply—intellectually and physically. Perhaps we will eventually find security for our troops, if not our national interests, in the American heartland. They would be home and safe, but there might not be much reason any longer to have them in uniform.

[Interview]

PEACEKEEPING SPICE

From an interview with former Spice Girl Geri Halliwell ("Ginger Spice") on the October 22, 1998, broadcast of Larry King Live. *Halliwell is currently serving as goodwill ambassador to the United Nations.*

LARRY KING: Joining us now from New York is former Spice Girl Geri Halliwell. They're still the Spice Girls, but she isn't one of them. She is now on her first day as U.N.

goodwill ambassador. She plans to use her fame and fortune to promote safe sex in the Third World. Hello, Ger.

GERI HALLIWELL: Hello.

KING: Why did you take this position?

HALLIWELL: I just felt very privileged and proud. I was offered it about a month ago, and I gave it lots of thought. And, you know, I think in life, I think we can make a difference. And, obviously, this is going to give me a louder voice to do that.

KING: And were you surprised—you're what, twenty-five years old, right?

HALLIWELL: I'm twenty-six.

KING: Were you surprised that you were offered this post so young?

HALLIWELL: I was very, very surprised. I am very, very flattered.

KING: Geri, a lot of bases to cover. Why did you quit?

HALLIWELL: Why did I quit what, Larry?

KING: The Foundation for the Arcane—no, why did you quit the Spice Girls?

HALLIWELL: I understand the question. As I said in my press statement, there were differences between us—personal differences. And you're going to have to have respect for me now. I think we should leave the memory of the Spice Girls alone.

KING: Were the Spice Girls talents? Were you all good singers or not? People made fun of their lack of talent.

HALLIWELL: I mean, what is a good singer anyway? My personal belief is that singing is about expression and heart. I think I have that and the Spice Girls had that, and that's good enough. We're not claiming to be Barbra Streisand. I'm just, you know, being a creative expressionist.

KING: Your involvement with Prince Charles—you're going to sing "Happy Birthday" at his fiftieth birthday. Here we see you and the Spice Girls pictured with him. As he approaches you, Geri, you suddenly pinch him in an unusual place. What prompted that?

HALLIWELL: Do you know what? I was actually—last week I was sitting on my couch. I was sitting talking to my sister, and I said, I really can't believe I did that. I don't know what possessed me.

KING: I mean, he's the next king of England.

HALLIWELL: I know. It was just one of those spontaneous moments, and I forgot who he was and who I was.

KING: Let's take some phone calls for Geri Halliwell. A lot has happened in her life. The former Spice Girl is now goodwill ambassador for the United Nations. Winnipeg, Manitoba—hello.

[Criticism]

BEFORE THE AGE OF FALSE PRAISE

The following letters were exchanged by Joseph P. Kennedy and Harold Laski in August 1940. At the time, Kennedy was the U.S. ambassador to Great Britain; Laski was a professor at the London School of Economics. Earlier that summer, John F. Kennedy had graduated from Harvard and had his senior thesis published as Why England Slept.

Dear Harold,

I have just received two copies of Jack's book by air mail from the States. I thought you would be interested in reading it. I gave one to the Prime Minister, and as this is the only one I have, I should appreciate your sending it back to me as soon as you have finished it. When a further supply arrives, I shall see that you have one. The reviews have been swell. I am tickled to death for Jack. If you feel like writing him a line, I know he would be delighted to hear from you.

Sincerely,
Joe Kennedy

Dear Joe:

The easy thing for me to do would be to repeat the eulogies that Krock and Harry Luce have showered on your boy's work.

In fact, I choose the more difficult way of regretting deeply that you let him publish it. For while it is the book of a lad with brains, it is very immature, it has no real structure, and it dwells almost wholly on the surface of things. In a good university, half a hundred seniors do books like this as part of their normal work in their final year. But they don't publish them for the good reason that their importance lies solely in what they get out of doing them and not in what they have to say. I don't honestly think any publisher would have looked at that book of Jack's if he had not been your son, and if you had not been ambassador. And those are not the right grounds for publication.

I care a lot about your boys. I don't want them to be spoilt as rich men's sons are so easily spoilt. Thinking is a hard business, and you have to pay the price for admission to it. Do believe that these hard sayings from me represent much more real friendship than the easy praise of "yes men" like Arthur Krock.

Yours very sincerely,
Harold J. Laski

[Attractions]

ICONS OF THE SILVER SCREEN

From "Movie Induced Tourism," a study by Roger Riley, Dwayne Baker, and Carlton S. Van Doren, in the October 1998 issue of Annals of Tourism Research. *The authors examined the reasons people visit film locations and determined that "if part of a movie is extraordinary or captivating, it serves as an icon which viewers attach to a location shown in the movie. . . . Icons, abstract or tangible, become the focal point for visitation." They found that, on average, visits to movie locations increased 40–50 percent after a film's release, and that movie-induced effects on tourism lasted for approximately four years. In the chart below, the authors identify the iconic attraction of various blockbusters; they warn that "while the sight of the site may be sufficient for some visitors, a re-creation of the action . . . may be necessary for others to relive their favorite scene. . . . Suicide attempts were made in the style of* Thelma and Louise *even though they got their location wrong and used the Grand Canyon instead."*

MOVIE	LOCATION	ICONIC ATTRACTION
Bridges of Madison County	Covered bridges, Winterset, IA	Love Theme
Close Encounters	Devils Tower Nat'l Monument, WY	Alien Encounters
Crocodile Dundee	Kakadu Nat'l Park, Australia	Australian Bush Culture
Deliverance	Georgia rivers	Canoeing
Forrest Gump	Park bench, Savannah, GA	Underdog-Makes-Good Theme
Fried Green Tomatoes	Juliette, GA	Self-Liberation Theme
The Fugitive	Great Smoky Mt. Railroad, NC	Train Crash
Home Alone	Winnetka, IL	Suburban Home of Kevin
Somewhere in Time	Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island, MI	Colonial-Love-Story Theme
Steel Magnolias	Natchitoches, LA	Women's Relationships
Thelma and Louise	Arches Nat'l Park, UT	Self-Empowerment Theme
Weekend at Bernie's II	U.S. Virgin Islands	Tropical Paradise

CALLER: Hi, Larry.

KING: Hi.

CALLER: I'd like to ask Geri, with her new position as the United Nations ambassador, will she be traveling to different countries to speak on her personal beliefs and everything?

HALLIWELL: First and foremost, I'll be trying to make awareness in the U.K. about Third World countries—how they're denied basic rights, you know, education and, you know, health and reproductive care. But I will—I have just been in Uganda, actually, and it was really a fantastic learning experience. I went to a camp where they teach women to read and write, and it was just fantastic, because—just things we take for granted, you know, getting on the bus, you know, knowing where to go, or reading a pharmaceutical bottle, you know, taking the right amount of tablets, just things like that, it was just so fantastic and enlightening.

KING: And obviously since they asked you to do this, Geri, they must be—the U.N. is pretty progressive, pretty aware that people hold you in high regard. Do you think that when you were a Spice Girl, and now, that you were a symbol?

HALLIWELL: I'm just very honest about who I am and what I feel, and I think I reflect, you know, how a lot of women feel today. Maybe they just identify with me. That's all.

KING: New York City, hello.

CALLER: Hi. I was just wondering, Geri, if your U.N. thing doesn't work out, or your new record deal, would you ever consider going back to the Spice Girls?

KING: How old are you caller? Caller?

CALLER: I'm fifteen.

Speak French at 3!
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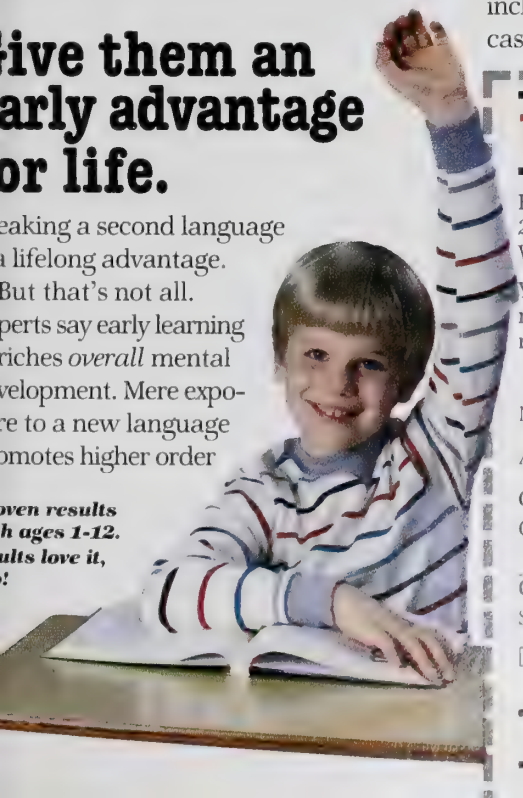
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"Gay Pride," a long-term-exposure photograph of last summer's Gay Pride Parade in New York City, by Michael Wesely, whose series New York Short Stories *was on display last fall at the Stefan Stux Gallery in Manhattan. Wesely lives in Munich, Germany.*

KING: Fifteen.

HALLIWELL: You're fifteen. Hello. That's a very interesting question, you know, and I'm very optimistic, and I'm going to do my best with this U.N. job, and try and really make it work. You know, sometimes you have to move and go forward. I don't really think that I'd go back to the Spice Girls, but you can never say never, but—

KING: Why do you think—and this is just a microcosm tonight—why do you think younger girls like you so well?

HALLIWELL: I think the Spice Girls are very animated, very digestible. And I remember when I was young, I had Madonna. I think everybody likes somebody to look up to and copy.

KING: Yes, Orlando, hello.

CALLER: Even though you've left the Spice Girls, are you still going to carry their message to the U.N.?

HALLIWELL: Absolutely. I think I am taking it one step further. You know, I was said to be the "evangelist of girl power." This is just empowerment of women, really. We're talking about reproductive health care. That's about contraception, and so it's just a more grown-up version of that.

[Exhortation]

NECESSARY INCIVILITIES

From "Matthew's Passion," by Tony Kushner, in the November 9, 1998, issue of The Nation. *Kushner is the author of the play* Angels in America.

When Trent Lott heard the news about the murder of Matthew Shepard, the first thoughts that flashed through his mind were all about spin. Trent Lott worried about how to keep his promise to the religious right, to speak out against the homosexual agenda, without seeming to endorse murder. Trent Lott endorses murder, of course; his party endorses murder, his party endorses discrimination against homosexuals, and in doing so it endorses the ritual slaughter of homosexuals.

Democracy is a bloody business, demanding blood sacrifice. Every advance American democracy has made toward fulfilling the social contract, toward justice and equality and true liberty, every step forward has required offer-

ings of pain and death. The American people demand this; we need to see the burnt bodies of the four little black girls or their sad small coffins; we need to see the battered, disfigured face of the beaten housewife; we need to see the gay man literally crucified on a fence. We see the carnage and think, Oh, I guess things are still tough out there for those people. We daydream a little: What does that feel like, to burn? To have your face smashed by your husband's fist? To be raped? To be dragged behind a truck till your body falls to pieces? To freeze, tied to a fence on the Wyoming prairie, for eighteen hours, with the back of your head staved in?

And then, after we've drawn a few skin-prickling breaths of the aromas of torture and agony and madness, we shift a little in our comfortable chairs, a little worried that God has seen us also, a little worried that we have lazily misplaced our humanity, a little sad for the victims: Oh, gee, I guess I think that sort of thing shouldn't happen out there to those people and something should be done. As long as I don't have to do it.

And having thought as much, having, in fact, been edified, changed a very little bit by the suffering we have seen, our humanity as well as our skin having been pricked, we turn our back on Matthew Shepard's crucifixion and return to our legitimate entertainments. When next the enfranchisement of homosexuals is discussed, Matthew Shepard's name will probably be invoked, and the murder of gay people will be deplored by decent people, straight and gay; and when the religious right shrills viciously about how the murder doesn't matter, as it has been doing since his death, decent people everywhere will find the religious right lacking human kindness, will find these Gary Bauers and Paul Weyrichs and Pat Robertsons un-Christian, repulsive in fact. And a very minute increment toward decency will have been secured. But poor Matthew Shepard. Jesus, what a price!

Pope John Paul II endorses murder. He, too, knows the price of discrimination, having declared anti-Semitism a sin, having just canonized a Jewish-born nun who died at Auschwitz. He knows that discrimination kills. But when the Pope heard the news about Matthew Shepard, he, too, worried about spin. And so, on the subject of gay-bashing, the Pope and his cardinals and bishops and priests maintain their cynical, political silence. Rigorously denouncing the abuse and murder of homosexuals would be a big sin against spin, denouncing the murder of homosexuals in such a way that it received even one one-thousandth of the coverage his and his Church's attacks on homosexuals routinely receive would be an act of decency the Pope can't afford, for the Pope knows: behind this one murdered kid stand legions of kids whose lives are scarred by the bigotry this Pope defends as Sanctioned by God. None of these kids will ever be allowed to marry the person she or he loves, not while the Pope and his Church can prevent it; all of these kids are told, by the Holy Catholic Church, and by the Episcopalians, and Lutherans, and Baptists, and orthodox Jews: your love is cursed by God. To speak out against murdering those who are discriminated against is to speak out against discrimination. To remain silent is to endorse murder.

The Pope, in his new encyclical, *"Fides et Ratio"* ("Faith and Reason"), laments the death of civil discourse and cites "ancient philosophers who propose friendship as one of the most appropriate contexts for sound philo-

[Alumni Relations]

REJECTING A HOMECOMING QUEEN

From a letter sent to Wayne Mouritzen on October 6, 1998, by James A. Berg, the dean of students at Bob Jones University, a fundamentalist Christian school in Greenville, South Carolina. Mouritzen graduated from BJU in 1966.

Dear Wayne:

Recently we learned that you left your wife in order to pursue a homosexual lifestyle. You reportedly even said that your secret homosexual lover is, or was, a person related in some way to BJU. I cannot tell you how our hearts sank at this news, but we understand the report came from your very own lips. If this report is not true, we would certainly rejoice to have it corrected. If it is true, we beg you to desist.

With grief we must tell you that as long as you are living as a homosexual, you, of course, would not be welcome on the campus and would be arrested for trespassing if you did visit. We take no delight in that action. Our greatest delight would be in your return to the Lord.

Please consider these things.

Sincerely yours,
James A. Berg

[Suicide Note]

MANAGED DESPAIR

The following suicide note was left by J. Timothy Hogan for his sister, Althea Davis, on May 10, 1998. Davis read the note last September on The Infinite Mind, *a Public Radio International program hosted by Dr. Fred Goodwin.*

No one who has not experienced a severe episode of depression can really understand what it is. It's like a woman trying to explain childbirth to a man. Or a black man trying to explain to a white man what it is like to live with racism. Or the blind, the deaf, or crippled trying to explain to a healthy person what it is like to live with a disability. You can explain, but the other person can't truly understand.

So it is with depression. It is real and totally disabling. It is not merely feeling low or alone. It is overwhelming. It doesn't happen only to those with a screwed-up life. I have a loving family and close friends. I am well educated, successful in business, and financially comfortable. Yet I have this tremendous depression. So why not get help? I tried and tried and tried. The health-care system completely failed me.

When I moved here, I contacted my mental-health doctor in Pennsylvania for a referral to someone to see in Massachusetts. He was not able to provide one. I tried to find a doctor on my own but didn't want to pick one out of the phone book (not that it would do any good, I later discovered). I called the Massachusetts psychiatric referral line. It was not in service due to "staff turnover." With no other number to call, I called the local hospital referral line. I got voice mail. I made an appointment with a general physician. I tried to get a referral from him. His office tried to set me up with an affiliated doctor, but their mental-health-care doctors didn't take my insurance. I said I would pay CASH! They said they didn't take cash, because it is too expensive. I called the HMO. They had four doctors. I called each one. The earliest appointment I could get was a month away. I called my GP back to see if he knew any of these doctors. He said, No, sorry, I can't help you.

So that is my story. I know I am sick. I tried to get help. No one wanted to help me. It is no wonder that there are so many suicides in this country. My only hope is that my death will awaken the health-care community and that lives will be saved in the future.

sophical inquiry." Tell you what, Your Holiness, take the gun away from my head, and we can discuss the merits of homosexual sex, homosexual marriage, abortion, anything you like.

A lot of people worry these days about the death of civil discourse and would say that I ought not call the Pope a homicidal liar nor (to be ecumenical about this) the orthodox rabbinate homicidal liars nor Trent Lott a disgusting, opportunistic hate-monger. But I worry a lot less about the death of civil discourse than I worry about being killed if, visiting the wrong town with my boyfriend, we forget ourselves so much as to betray, at the wrong moment in front of the wrong people, that we love each other. I worry much more about the recent death of anti-discrimination initiatives in Arkansas, Colorado, Maine, Hawaii, and Alaska. I worry more about the death of civil rights than the death of civil discourse. I worry much more about the irreversible soul-deaths of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered children growing up deliberately, malevolently isolated by the likes of Trent Lott. I mourn Matthew Shepard's actual death, caused by the unimpeachably civil "we hate the sin, not the sinner" hypocrisy of the religious right, endorsed by the political right, much more than I mourn the lost chance to be civil with someone who does not consider me fully a citizen, nor fully human. I mourn that cruel death more than the chance to be civil with those who sit idly by while theocrats, bullies, panderers, and hate-mongers, and their crazed murderous children, destroy democracy and our civic life. Civic, not civil, discourse is what matters, and civic discourse mandates the assigning of blame.

If you are lesbian, gay, transgendered, bisexual, reading this, here's one good place to assign blame: the Human Rights Campaign's recent appalling, post–Matthew Shepard decision to dedicate our resources to the perpetuation of a Republican majority in Congress. And save some blame, and nausea, for the astounding one third of openly homosexual voters who actually voted Republican in November, people prepared to crawl into bed with anyone just to keep their taxes low. If you are a heterosexual person, and you are reading this: yeah yeah yeah you've heard it all before, but if you have not called your congressperson to demand passage of a Federal Hate Crimes Bill that includes sexual orientation, and e-mailed every congressperson, if you have not gotten up out of your comfortable chair to campaign for homosexual and all civil rights—campaign, not just passively support—may you think about this crucified man, and may you mourn, and may you burn with a moral citi-



Calcutta, 1998," by New York City artist Philip-Lorca diCorcia. The photograph is included in diCorcia's exhibition Street *York, currently on display at the PaceWildenstein gallery in New York City.*

zen's shame. As one civilized person to another: Matthew Shepard shouldn't have died. We should all burn with shame.

[Observations]

EPICS OF EVERYDAYNESS

From Once Again for Thucydides, *a collection of "micro-epics" by Peter Handke, written during his travels around the world and published by New Directions. Handke's most recent novel is* My Year in the No-Man's-Bay. *Translated from the German by Tess Lewis.*

On March 23, 1987, a leaf in the evergreen ivy climbing the side of a house on the Felsenberg seemed wilted. When a man's shadow fell on the leaf, it rose up, spreading wings infinitely yellower underneath—the strongest color seen in a long time. Then, a second brimstone butterfly flew around the corner of the house, a twitching shadow on the wall. The butterflies alit, revealing a pair of dark spots on their veined, lemon-yellow wings, one dot above the other; their heads retained something of their former caterpillar states. Throughout the winter they had hung unnoticed in the bushes, rolled up like cigarettes. Next to one of the butterflies, a first bee landed suddenly. Again, as the butterfly flew off, its underwings emitted their deep shine into the world, forcing one's glance back into a look around. This was after the ten o'clock news on the radio. The sun grew warmer, and both butterflies disappeared. By midday, deep in the front garden, the granular snow of the firn began to stir. The grains of snow began to topple as if of their own will. They fell away, rolling to the side, and grew more diaphanous and transparent with each glance. Across the entire blanket of snow and throughout the garden there was a constant, endless jolting, lurching, beginning-to-flow, trickling, and—if one brought one's ear close—a rustling. It was the snow melting. Some of the grains settled on the incline, gleaming under the warm sun like the concave mirrors of tiny cosmic telescopes. At the same time, the blanket of snow sagged visibly between the several blades of new grass piercing it. The rocket of a first crocus flashed up, still half shrouded in leaves, the deep blue tip aimed toward the equally blue outer space. Seen through a magnifying glass, the crystallized firn was full of soot.

These were the events of the morning of March 23, 1987.

•

On November 24, 1987, flares of sheet lightning in the sky ("the stars' eyes," as the ancient Greeks called it) wandered over the Yugoslavian island Krk, across the entire horizon, blaze after blaze, as if each flare were answering the previous one. These flares were of very different sizes and kinds: first, light would cover the entire firmament with its silent flash, raise from the darkness cloud formations that were otherwise sunk in the night, and serrate the tip of the island out of its invisibility on the ground below; then, a tiny flicker would bring out only the contour of a cloud fragment; then, nothing more than a weak sputter of light from behind shapeless clouds; and once again, a silent, all-encompassing flash, a soundless whirring from the zenith down to the last few men out on the village streets, where the electric wires had hummed in the calm before the storm and the last small, red and yellow autumn leaves—acacia fans, parched, crumbling in mid-flight—now flew through the flash. Finally a tremendous noise, the rolling of thunder, sounded behind the crests of mountains and waves, for a time followed only by wan, silent, but extensive flashes. At last, unexpectedly, in the midst of a flash scattered across the sky, the first tree of lightning appeared, its branches shining with the sheet lightning. Abruptly, and from all directions, both lightning bolts and sheet lightning blazed. In the next moment, a storm tide rushed into the port. Towering waves crashed against the doors of the pier houses. Although the observer fled all the way back to the farthest part of the harbor, the spray surged up over his hips as he took the last steps to his lodgings. Deeply moved, the wet man entered the hotel, whose plinth was already covered by the surf. He awoke late that night to the richest of star-filled skies, under which, however, sheet lightning had again begun to flash, rising up to the seven stars of the Pleiades and the quietly glowing twins, Castor and Pollux. The tips of the flashes now reached down below the low-lying fringes of the clouds over the sea, once again calm, and up to the very edges of the constellations. And yet, they did not extinguish the stars, but instead exposed them even more clearly as pictures. This was the sheet lightning over the Yugoslavian island Krk on the night from the twenty-fourth to the twenty-fifth of November 1987.

•

One epopee is still missing: that of the glowworms. How, for example, they were "suddenly there," not glowing but blinking, on the path through the fields between Cormons and the village of Brazzano in Friuli, last night, from the twenty-ninth to the thirtieth of May 1988—the way they sat on the path, illuminating the ground with their glowing bodies, or blinked like airplanes among the tall grasses. On the palm of the night stroller's hand, one lit up the

[Opinions]

THE IN-SINK-ERATOR COMES TO GOTHAM

From evaluations submitted by New York City residents who installed in-sink garbage disposals in their homes as part of a twenty-one-month study completed in the summer of 1997 by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection. The study evaluated the feasibility of legalizing the use of the disposals in New York City, where the devices, which gained widespread popularity in the 1950s elsewhere in the country, had long been banned.

Pros

I am very happy with my garbage disposal.
The machine is fabulous.
I love it.
It is good and no foul garbage odors.
It is wonderful.
It is a pleasure to have and to use.
Excellent product; very convenient.
Enjoy using it; more sanitary.
The food disposal is a great device.
Love the disposal. (Have very bad feelings about compost heaps.)
Use should be mandatory in every home.
I don't know how I ever lived without it.

Cons

Don't like the smell.
My main concern when using the disposal unit is how I might throw in items that should not be shredded.
The machine stops frequently. Presently, it's not working.
Disposals prevent the use of LiquidPlumr.
It has not worked properly since it was installed. The superintendent says it is not his responsibility. Removal of unit would be appreciated.
Works well but too noisy!
Food-waste disposals are pointless. They merely divert food scraps into the sewer system. They prevent free flow of sink wastewater. They are inadequate for sizable bones. They are noisy and occasionally vibrate threateningly.
I'm leery of the switch positioned under the sink.

Snack]

MEET AND EAT



rom Food Chain, *a series of photographs by New York City artist Catherine Chalmers. Chalmers raises a variety of vegetables, animals, and sects in her studio, and photographs them to illustrate the stages of the food chain. For this project, Chalmers first photographed caterpillars eat g a tomato, then praying mantises eating the caterpillars, and finally frogs eating the praying mantises. Some of the photos above appeared in the pring/Summer 1998 issue of* Blind Spot; *Chalmers's work will be on display this spring at the Center for Contemporary Art in Seattle.*

lines, a long glow just next to his life line. From up close it appeared as if light, luminous tractors were strapped onto the small, dark creatures. Then, when he looked up, the bugs' flashes across the entire Friulian plain glowed brighter than the stars above, as if it were the first hour of the glowworms' appearance this year, the celebration of their reappearance in the world. Ah, this epopee should be so much more compelling and should tell more exactly how a group of these creatures sat in the crannies of the path's surface and, with their constant flashing, illuminated a runway upon which their fellows could silently land; how, when taken in the palm of my hand, they did not stop glowing, but glowed even brighter; how there, in my hand, the flashing became a constant, peaceful glow; and how I just now opened my other hand in an attempt to reenact the events of that night as I wrote them down; it should tell how I spoke with them, how I blew on them, as though trying to get them to glow more, and—as I imagined—they did. I also imagined that the glowing section was warm and even gradually became red hot, burning my hand (however, now in daylight, there is unfortunately no scar). This epopee should tell how I started at the thought that a glowing thing was sitting right on my life line and could burn it up. But no, it was sitting on the line next to it, the one I believed was my "luck line." It should tell how, when I held the creature lightly between my thumb and forefinger in an invitation to fly off into the darkness, it lit up my fingerprints as labyrinthine shapes in the night; how these glowing creatures, rising higher and higher, flew through the branches of the apple and cherry trees, giving these nocturnal trees and the developing, ripening fruit their particular and unexpectedly soft night shapes; how—as the lit train to Trieste passed by in the distance and the worms seemed to glitter all the more forcefully—I naturally imagined, after a laborious, barren day, a god had given me back a design, this small, blessed, glittering design, branching out deep into the night, of the vacillating, tiny newborn glowworms that are often found floating over the Friulian plain, a plain that gradually grows to enormous dimensions around them. This mobile design that restored my soul after the laborious, barren day. And that, finally, would be the little epic of the glowworms on the night from the twenty-ninth to the thirtieth of May 1988, between the town of Cormons and the village of Brazzano in Friuli.

[Crime Alert]

DICK MORRIS U.

From the Fall 1998 issue of "Campuswatch," the newsletter of the Meramec Campus Police Department at St. Louis Community College in Kirkwood, Missouri.

Although we are located in a quiet area, we are not immune to the criminal element that often preys upon the somewhat naive student.

One type of sexual perversion you should be aware of is indecent exposure. Someone may seem properly dressed while standing but when seated may expose more body parts than is acceptable. Others may seem properly dressed, yet when they stop to ask for directions their genitals are exposed.

There are of course more blatant, evident signs of perversion. These people may be easily recognized by their bizarre apparel and out-of-place accessories, such as wearing a diaper and carrying a baby bottle or rattle. Initially, however, you may not even be aware of the perversion. Someone could easily approach you under the guise of taking a survey for an anatomy class. There have been documented cases of unwanted "toe sucking" that began as an innocent survey for an anatomy class.

All inappropriate behavior should be reported to the college police. Remember: You do not have to feel threatened to be a victim.

[Curriculum]

LET US NOW PRAISE INFAMOUS MEN

From the "Curriculum for the Study of the Legacy of Mayor Marion Barry Jr.," distributed to all 146 Washington, D.C., public schools last October. The curriculum, written by Barry's staff, includes a summary of Barry's accomplishments and a lesson plan for grades 1–12. The curriculum omits the fact that Barry was convicted for possession of crack in 1990 but does mention briefly that he "fell prey to the demons of alcohol and illegal substances" yet rose "like a phoenix" and was reelected mayor in 1994.

GOALS

• To acquire knowledge about the role and contributions of Marion Barry Jr. during the Civil Rights Movement.

• To examine and develop an understanding of the political movement for Home Rule in the District of Columbia and the role of Marion Barry Jr. in this event.
• To acquire knowledge about the significant contributions of Marion Barry Jr. to the District of Columbia during his tenure as school-board member, city-council member, and mayor.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

• Develop a time line chronicling important dates in the life of Mayor Marion Barry Jr.
• Develop original posters on the life of Marion Barry Jr.
• Organize a door-decorating project in honor of Mayor Marion Barry Jr.
• Organize a bulletin-board contest highlighting the life of Mayor Marion Barry Jr.
• Design banners to display in your school honoring the legacy of Mayor Marion Barry Jr.
• Form research groups to obtain information on the contributions of Mayor Marion Barry Jr. as a school-board member.
• Write letters to Mayor Barry expressing your thoughts about his tenure as mayor.
• Research and write essays on the contributions of Mayor Marion Barry Jr.
• Write short stories on the contributions of Mayor Marion Barry Jr. to the youth of the District of Columbia.
• Write poems on the contributions of Mayor Marion Barry Jr.

[Study]

BASKETBALL FANS: A RULY MOB

From "Air Ball: Spontaneous Large-Group Precision Chanting," by Cherrill P. Heaton, in Lowest Common Denominator, *the program guide of WFMU, a radio station in East Orange, New Jersey. Heaton teaches English at the University of North Florida, in Jacksonville. The article originally appeared in the journal* Popular Music and Society.

From time to time during a basketball game, a player will toss up a shot that misses the rim, net, and backboard. The ball hits nothing but air. Partisans of the opposing team may then cruelly and derisively chant, "Air ball, air ball." If the air-ball shooter plays for the visiting team, the chant by the home crowd can be quite loud.

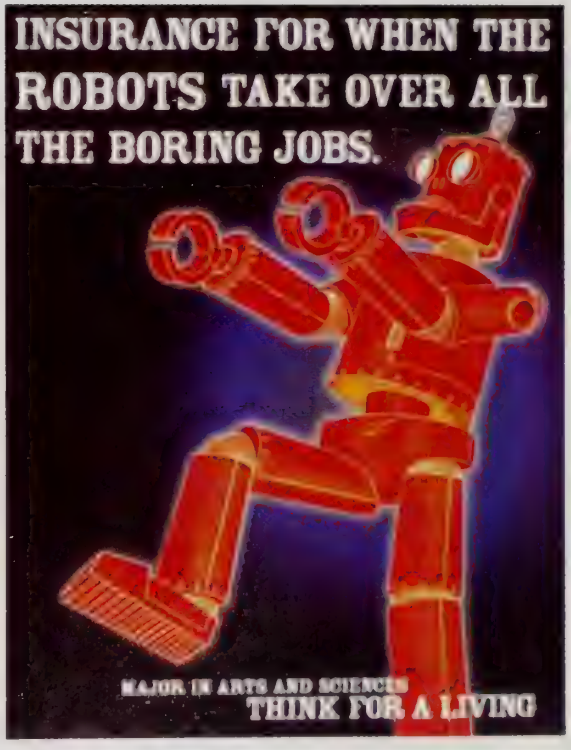
As any director of a church choir or secular chorus knows, getting a mere twenty or thirty trained singers to sing together and in tune is not always easy. Yet without direction or instruction, without a conductor or a pitch pipe, thousands of strangers massed in indoor stadiums are able—if stimulated by an air ball—to chant, "Air ball, air ball," in complete tonal and rhythmic unison.

Although I have long marveled at this phenomenon, only recently did I study it in a systematic way. In the early months of a recent season, I gathered data on air-ball chanting from televised games I happened to watch, primarily college games.

I did not check the rhythm of the air-ball chants with a metronome, but my own rhyth-

[Campaign]

SELLING THE SOUL OF LIBERAL ARTS



This poster is part of an advertising campaign designed by the Indianapolis firm Young & Laramore to attract students to Indiana University's College of Arts and Sciences, which had seen a 20 percent decrease in enrollment since 1990. The campaign, which was launched last June, has caused tension between the College of Arts and Sciences and the university. Other posters declare DO WHAT YOU WANT WHEN YOU GRADUATE OR WAIT 20 YEARS FOR YOUR MID-LIFE CRISIS, OKAY THEN. FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS IN YOUR NEXT LIFE; *and* YEAH, LIKE YOUR PARENTS ARE SO HAPPY.

mic sense suggested that collegiate fans chant "air ball" at about the same speed all over the nation. The chanters at all surveyed stadiums spent about a second chanting "air" and about a second chanting "ball." They never chanted as fast as a word per half-second, nor as slowly as a word per two seconds.

Remarkable as this is, it pales in the face of this study's most significant finding: college air-ball chants nationwide *all start on the musical note F above middle* C, plus or minus one piano key. The two notes of "air ball" are almost always F–D, or extremely close to it.

Below are the sampled games and starting notes of air-ball chants. Starting notes were checked with a Wm. Kraft Co. E-A-D-G-B-E Super Pitch-Pipe. A plus (+) sign following the starting note indicates that the note was a hair higher than the closest tone on the pitch pipe. For example, F+ is higher than F but lower than F#.

N.C. State vs. Virginia—F
Florida vs. Kentucky—F
Kansas vs. Missouri—F#+
Duke vs. Clemson—F#
Florida vs. Vanderbilt—G
Georgia Tech vs. N.C. State—F+
UNLV vs. Long Beach State—F#+
UNLV vs. Loyola Marymount—F
Duke vs. UNLV—variously, E, E+, F, and F#
Detroit Pistons vs. L.A. Clippers—F
New York Knicks vs. Detroit Pistons—Chant started on F as expected, but the second note sounded to me not like D but C, an anomaly I cannot explain.

[Consideration]

THE GRAY MATRON OF OUR DAYS

From "Of Monotony," by Louis Couperus, in the Fall 1998 issue of Conjunctions, *a special issue devoted to previously unpublished and untranslated works. Couperus, who died in 1923, was a Dutch novelist and essayist; his best-known works are* The Books of Small Souls *and* Old People and the Things That Pass. *Translated from the Dutch by Duncan Dobbelmann.*

This is about the monotony of hours and days, of people and things, of souls and their emotions. This is about gruesome monotony, which the gods, just as people after them, have invented and arranged, in order to make our lives unbearable with regularity and natural laws and such.

This is about the monotony of the seasons, which alternate with the most unrelenting monotony. Never does spring suddenly blossom, like a wonder, in the month of December. Never does the beauty of a landscape of ice surprise us just after we have eaten a peach. The seasons follow on the heels of one another as they have done throughout the ages since the earth has orbited the sun. Never has the sun orbited the earth, for instance, or so it is alleged.

The seasons bring neither wonder nor surprise. They bring the monotonous days that pile up on us. Every day begins with morning, and each morning I am compelled to take my shower and put on my clothes.

Monotony paralyzes every spontaneous flight of my soul in the morning. How then to give her flight during the remainder of the day? Like a slave, my corporality, already often stronger than my soul, has bathed and clothed itself. A breakfast awaits me every morning, at the same hour—just about. If only, for once, a supper awaited me, with oysters, game, and champagne! Oh well, it probably wouldn't appeal to me anyway.

I am monotony's slave. Monotony is the gray, shrouded matron who regulates my entire life with boredom. She allows me, once I have dressed myself—and not before—to go out into the street. The street rises around me like yesterday. Never once has the street become an enchanted wood, and why, after all, doesn't the street turn into an enchanted wood? Hoogstraat always remains Hoogstraat, and Scheveningsche Weg never leads to any other surprise than the sea. The sea is never monotonic—she is always different—but how monotonous she is in her changeability! Her changeability is monotony: she never does anything but change in tint and tone. I can't stand her these days because of this repetitious whimsicality.

My hours revolve with monotonous occupations, activities, and recreations. If my lunch isn't ready at one o'clock, I'm unsatisfied with that breach of monotony in my life, and if it is ready, the undisturbed regularity of monotony irritates me. We have divided the day into columns of mornings, afternoons, evenings, nights. The nights are always dark. At twelve o'clock it is always twelve o'clock.

I am always myself. It's hopelessly monotonous always to be myself. Why don't I live a hundred existences? If only I were someone else every day! If only tomorrow morning were presently to become a party, a night of orgy, and if, for once, as soon as I opened my eyes in the morning, I were to find myself a Roman emperor being worshiped, with incense burn-






Lago Trasimento, Perugina, Italy," "Brooklyn Bridge," "Supermarket, Paris, France," and "Les Arenes, Paris," from The World Upside Down, *an ongoing series by London artist Sabina Spaldi. In order to photograph herself perpendicular to the ground, Spaldi, an ex-gymnast and circus clown, uses an auto-timer and does a series of tumbles in the air until all thirty-six frames are used up.*

ing, or a young goatherd who lets his goats graze along the ancient coasts of Laconia. Or a bird in flight, a flower blooming, a water drop. Good heavens, I would even like to be a cricket, a normal cricket chirping in the garden, or, if necessary, Lucrezia Borgia in an imaginary Renaissance. But I am always myself. The same chains bind me: every day, every hour. I have sometimes taken on another name in my travels, in order to put up some resistance to the unrelenting monotony of my name; but then I couldn't pick up my letters at the post office. That was very annoying, and I cursed my infringement upon monotony.

I have always inhabited the same body. It has grown somewhat since childhood and changed slightly over the years, but, closely inspected, it has remained the same. In this body I have always dragged along the same soul.

I am, monotonously and unchangeably, always a man, a Dutchman, a writer, someone from a good family, and I always have the same vices and virtues. Sometimes they bore me very much with their monotony. They sound in me again and again with the same tone; they never change in tint. Now, today, for once I would like not to be a man, a Dutchman, a writer, or from a good family.

I think I would most like to be a magician. If I only knew where magic is studied! I would sell my soul to devil or demon to get magical powers. To become invisible now and then by a flick of the wrist. To conjure up a sudden Moorish palace in the clouds in which only myself and my love of the moment would be allowed to live. To disallow the pillars to stand immovable in monotonous rows but, with a gesture of my staff, to make them dance a cracking tango around us. To have stiff pillars bend and turn with agile voluptuousness. To transform the rational monotony of life and world, with a magic word, into the glorious madness of ruthless metamorphosis. To make waves out of clouds, and to make a crystal palace float out of the unbearable sea, over which the ever-varying choruses of multiplicity and [illegible] monotonality would float. To bathe [illegible] filled with spleen—a spleen re-

sulting from monotony—in the prismatic-colored bath of endless change.

The tiresomeness, the boredom of being what one is on the day after yesterday, to go down the unrelenting road and have to be thankful, one's whole life, for monotony, for it usually demands thankfulness. It rings the monotonous bell of our small prosperity, our minimal luck; it doesn't want the wonder and the various ecstasies, and if we dare not be thankful, it breaks its baker's melody, its nursery rhyme—which is supposed to make us drowsy in our shrill longings—off, with a false tone, and leaves us standing in desperation and cowardly nostalgia for it and its oppressive gifts and goodnesses. Oh, to break with monotony forever!

Come with me; I am the magician! Come with me, you tired and bored! I have now sold my soul: I know the magic that will conjure up eternal change for you, the change of tint, the change of tone, the luxury of eternal surprise. Together we will be who we want to be, we will have what we will have, repeatedly; our loves and our desires will change, repeatedly; our magic castles will flow in and through one another, repeatedly; we will pick grapes among the Northern Lights on icebergs that float in the Mediterranean Sea; we will be mad with changing moods; the stars will rain through one another, and the sea will celebrate her ascension and drift among the clouds. The moon will lie down at our feet like a pale mirror and reflect every metamorphosis of ourselves and our being. We will have reached what we longed for and will be various and powerful through my magic: mornings will shine fantastically with thick masses of clouds, and nights will be luxurious with the darkness of thousands of shining suns. I will make the universe, the world, life, change, alter, swarm, and transform for you until Monotony itself shall resound with millions of tones and glitter with billions of tints.

However, I will not be able to make this variation in your soul, which will, after all, still remain your own:

I will not be able to give you Satisfaction and Luck. And you will still continue, as will I, who was your magician, to long for the one inaccessible change—in air, in light, in yourself, or in whom- or whatever—that would give you not the magic dazzle but true happiness and contentment.

You tired and bored, I have deceived you: I was a powerless magician. Tomorrow, along with me, you will get out of your bed a little earlier or later than today, you will have breakfast as always, and clothe yourself as always and your occupations and recreations will await you as always, and it will be summer if it is summer, and it will become evening when evening must come, and the air and the sea and the clouds and the waves will surely change, but your soul will feel the same as it always has, and it will, [illegible] the dazzlement with which I deceived you, [illegible]ously, cowardly thankful to Monotony, [illegible]atron in her makeshift cloak who cannot [illegible]elled, for returning and taking you by the h[illegible] the gray path of days and hours that un[illegible] before you—to the pale, vague Unkn[illegible]hich you cannot know or see through, to th[illegible], to the mysterious End. ■

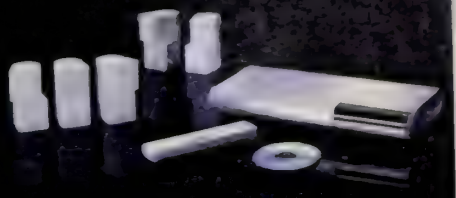
[Musing]

ARCTIC DREAMS

From "My Olivetti Speaks," by Kenneth Koch, in his book of poetry Straits, *published by Knopf. Koch teaches English at Columbia University; his most recent book of nonfiction is* Making Your Own Days: The Pleasures of Reading and Writing Poetry.

Once I taught polar bears to write poetry. After class each week (it was once a week) I came home to bed. The work was extremely tiring. The bears tried to maul me and for months refused to write a single word. If "refuse" is the right term to use for creatures who had no idea what I was doing and what I wanted them to do. One day, however, it was in early April, when the snow had begun to melt and the cities were full of bright visions on window glass, the bears grew quieter and I believed that I had begun to get through to them. One female bear came up to me and placed her left paw on top of my head. Her mouth was open and her very red tongue was hanging out. I realized that she, and the other bears, must be thirsty, so I procured for them several barrels of water. They drank it thirstily and looked up at me from time to time gratefully, but even then they wrote no poems. They never did write a word. Still I don't think this teaching was a waste of time, and I'm planning on continuing it in the future if I find I have the necessary strength. For hard and exhausting it is to attempt something one knows it is impossible to do—but what if one day these bears actually started to write? I think we would all put down our Stefan George and our Yeats and pay attention! What wonders might be disclosed! What dreams of bears!

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Nickel-and-Dimed

On (not) getting by in America

BY BARBARA EHRENREICH



At the beginning of June 1998 I leave behind everything that normally soothes the ego and sustains the body—home, career, companion, reputation, ATM card—for a plunge into the low-wage workforce. There, I become another, occupationally much diminished "Barbara Ehrenreich"—depicted on job-application forms as a divorced homemaker whose sole work experience consists of housekeeping in a few private homes. I am terrified, at the beginning, of being unmasked for what I am: a middle-class journalist setting out to explore the world that welfare mothers are entering, at the rate of approximately 50,000 a month, as welfare reform kicks in. Happily, though, my fears turn out to be entirely unwarranted: during a month of poverty and toil, my name goes unnoticed and for the most part unuttered. In this parallel universe where my father never got out of the mines and I never got through college, I am "baby," "honey," "blondie," and, most commonly, "girl."

My first task is to find a place to live. I figure that if I can earn $7 an hour—which, from the want ads, seems doable—I can afford to spend $500 on rent, or maybe, with severe economies, $600. In the Key West area, where I live, this pretty much confines me to flophouses and trailer homes—like the one, a pleasing fifteen-minute drive from town, that has no air-conditioning, no screens, no fans, no television, and, by way of diversion, only the challenge of evading the landlord's Doberman pinscher. The big problem with this place, though, is the rent, which at $675 a month is well beyond my reach. All right, Key West is expensive. But so is New York City, or the Bay Area, or Jackson Hole, or Telluride, or Boston, or any other place where tourists and the wealthy compete for living space with the people who clean their toilets and fry their hash browns.[1] Still, it is a shock to realize that "trailer trash" has become, for me, a demographic category to aspire to.

So I decide to make the common trade-off between affordability and convenience, and go for a $500-a-month efficiency thirty miles up a two-lane highway from the employment opportunities of Key West, meaning forty-five minutes if there's no road construction and I don't get caught behind

[1] *According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the "fair-market rent" for an efficiency is $551 here in Monroe County, Florida. A comparable rent in the five boroughs of New York City is $704; in San Francisco, $713; and in the heart of Silicon Valley, $808. The fair-market rent for an area is defined as the amount that would be needed to pay rent plus utilities for "privately owned, decent, safe, and sanitary rental housing of a modest (non-luxury) nature with suitable amenities."*

Barbara Ehrenreich is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine *and the author of twelve books, including* Fear of Falling *and* Blood Rites. *Her last article for the magazine, "Spinning the Poor into Gold," appeared in the August 1997 issue.*

Photographs by Jason Fulford

some sun-dazed Canadian tourists. I hate the drive, along a roadside studded with white crosses commemorating the more effective head-on collisions, but it's a sweet little place—a cabin, more or less, set in the swampy back yard of the converted mobile home where my landlord, an affable TV repairman, lives with his bartender girlfriend. Anthropologically speaking, a bustling trailer park would be preferable, but here I have a gleaming white floor and a firm mattress, and the few resident bugs are easily vanquished.

Besides, I am not doing this for the anthropology. My aim is nothing so mistily subjective as to "experience poverty" or find out how it "really feels" to be a long-term low-wage worker. I've had enough unchosen encounters with poverty and the world of low-wage work to know it's not a place you want to visit for touristic purposes; it just smells too much like fear. And with all my real-life assets—bank account, IRA, health insurance, multiroom home—waiting indulgently in the background, I am, of course, thoroughly insulated from the terrors that afflict the genuinely poor.

No, this is a purely objective, scientific sort of mission. The humanitarian rationale for welfare reform—as opposed to the more punitive and stingy impulses that may actually have motivated it—is that work will lift poor women out of poverty while simultaneously inflating their self-esteem and hence their future value in the labor market. Thus, whatever the hassles involved in finding child care, transportation, etc., the transition from welfare to work will end happily, in greater prosperity for all. Now there are many problems with this comforting prediction, such as the fact that the economy will inevitably undergo a downturn, eliminating many jobs. Even without a downturn, the influx of a million former welfare recipients into the low-wage labor market could depress wages by as much as 11.9 percent, according to the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) in Washington, D.C.

But is it really possible to make a living on the kinds of jobs currently available to unskilled people? Mathematically, the answer is no, as can be shown by taking $6 to $7 an hour, perhaps subtracting a dollar or two an hour for child care, multiplying by 160 hours a month, and comparing the result to the prevailing rents. According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, for example, in 1998 it took, on average nationwide, an hourly wage of $8.89 to afford a one-bedroom apartment, and the Preamble Center for Publi Policy estimates that the odds against a typica welfare recipient's landing a job at such a "livin wage" are about 97 to 1. If these numbers ar right, low-wage work is not a solution to pove ty and possibly not even to homelessness.

It may seem excessive to put this proposition t an experimental test. As certain family membe keep unhelpfully reminding me, the viability low-wage work could be tested, after a fashio

To stack Cheerio boxes in chemically fascist America, you have to be willing to pee in front of a health-care worker

without ever leaving my study. I could just pay my self $7 an hour for eight hours a day, charge my self for room and board, and total up the numbe after a month. Why leave the people and wor that I love? But I am an experimental scientist b training. In that business, you don't just sit at a des and theorize; you plunge into the everyday chao of nature, where surprises lurk in the most mun dane measurements. Maybe, when I got into it, would discover some hidden economies in th world of the low-wage worker. After all, if 30 pe cent of the workforce toils for less than $8 a hour, according to the EPI, they may have foun some tricks as yet unknown to me. Maybe—wh knows?—I would even be able to detect in myse the bracing psychological effects of getting ou of the house, as promised by the welfare wonks a places like the Heritage Foundation. Or, on th other hand, maybe there would be unexpecte costs—physical, mental, or financial—to throw o all my calculations. Ideally, I should do this wit two small children in tow, that being the welfa average, but mine are grown and no one is wil ing to lend me theirs for a month-long vacatio in penury. So this is not the perfect experimen just a test of the best possible case: an unencum bered woman, smart and even strong, attemptir to live more or less off the land.

On the morning of my first full day of jo searching, I take a red pen to the want ad which are auspiciously numerous. Everyon in Key West's booming "hospitality industry seems to be looking for someone like me—trai able, flexible, and with suitably humble expe tations as to pay. I know I possess certain traits th might be advantageous—I'm white and, I like t think, well-spoken and poised—but I decide o two rules: One, I cannot use any skills derive from my education or usual work—not that the are a lot of want ads for satirical essayists anywa Two, I have to take the best-paid job that is o

red me and of course do my best to hold it; no larxist rants or sneaking off to read novels in the dies' room. In addition, I rule out various oc-upations for one reason or another: Hotel front-esk clerk, for example, which to my surprise is garded as unskilled and pays around $7 an hour, ts eliminated because it involves standing in one ot for eight hours a day. Waitressing is similar- something I'd like to avoid, because I remem-er it leaving me bone tired when I was eigh-en, and I'm decades of varicosities and back ain beyond that now. Telemarketing, one the first refuges of the suddenly indigent, n be dismissed on grounds of personality. his leaves certain supermarket jobs, such as li clerk, or housekeeping in Key West's ousands of hotel and guest rooms. House-eeping is especially appealing, for reasons th atavistic and practical: it's what my other did before I came along, and it can't e too different from what I've been doing rt-time, in my own home, all my life.

So I put on what I take to be a respectful-oking outfit of ironed Bermuda shorts and ooped-neck T-shirt and set out for a tour of e local hotels and supermarkets. Best West-n, Econo Lodge, and HoJo's all let me fill out plication forms, and these are, to my relief, terested in little more than whether I am a gal resident of the United States and have mmitted any felonies. My next stop is Winn-ixie, the supermarket, which turns out to ve a particularly onerous application process, aturing a fifteen-minute "interview" by com-ter since, apparently, no human on the emises is deemed capable of representing e corporate point of view. I am conducted a large room decorated with posters illus-ating how to look "professional" (it helps be white and, if female, permed) and warning the slick promises that union organizers might to tempt me with. The interview is multiple oice: Do I have anything, such as child-care oblems, that might make it hard for me to get work on time? Do I think safety on the job is e responsibility of management? Then, pop-ng up cunningly out of the blue: How many llars' worth of stolen goods have I purchased in e last year? Would I turn in a fellow employee I caught him stealing? Finally, "Are you an hon-t person?"

Apparently, I ace the interview, because I n told that all I have to do is show up in some ctor's office tomorrow for a urine test. This ems to be a fairly general rule: if you want to ack Cheerio boxes or vacuum hotel rooms in emically fascist America, you have to be will-g to squat down and pee in front of some alth worker (who has no doubt had to do the me thing herself). The wages Winn-Dixie is offering—$6 and a couple of dimes to start with—are not enough, I decide, to compensate for this indignity.[2]

I lunch at Wendy's, where $4.99 gets you unlimited refills at the Mexican part of the Superbar, a comforting surfeit of refried beans and "cheese sauce." A teenage employee, seeing me studying the want ads, kindly offers me an application form, which I fill out, though here, too, the pay is just $6 and change an hour. Then it's off for

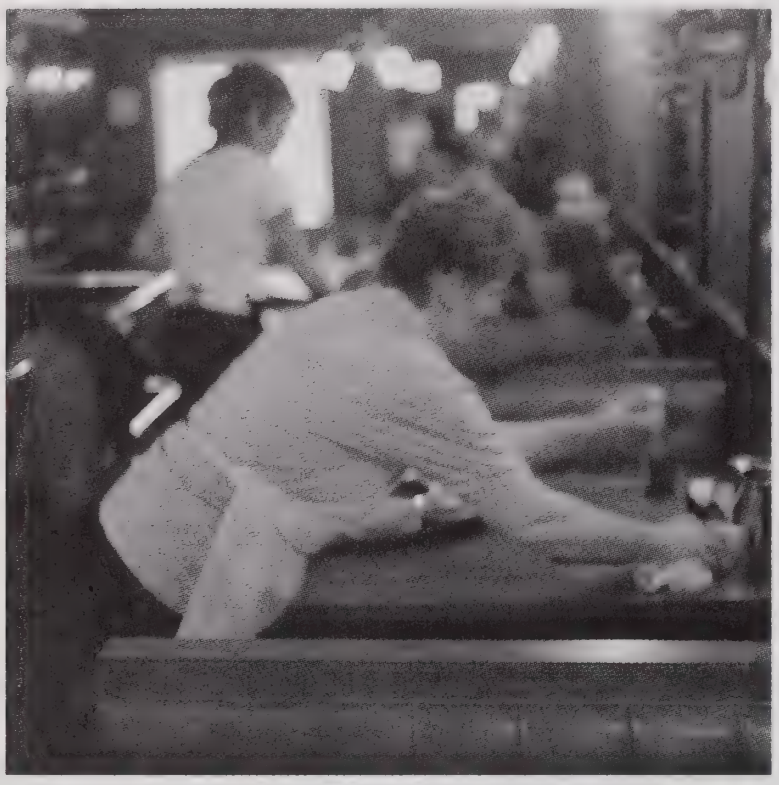


a round of the locally owned inns and guesthouses. At "The Palms," let's call it, a bouncy manager actually takes me around to see the rooms and meet the existing housekeepers, who, I note with satisfaction, look pretty much like me—faded ex-hippie types in shorts with long hair pulled back in braids. Mostly, though, no one speaks to me or even looks at me except to proffer an application form. At my last stop, a pala-

[2] *According to the* Monthly Labor Review *(November 1996), 28 percent of work sites surveyed in the service industry conduct drug tests (corporate workplaces have much higher rates), and the incidence of testing has risen markedly since the Eighties. The rate of testing is highest in the South (56 percent of work sites polled), with the Midwest in second place (50 percent). The drug most likely to be detected—marijuana, which can be detected in urine for weeks—is also the most innocuous, while heroin and cocaine are generally undetectable three days after use. Prospective employees sometimes try to cheat the tests by consuming excessive amounts of liquids and taking diuretics and even masking substances available through the Internet.*

tial B&B, I wait twenty minutes to meet "Max," only to be told that there are no jobs now but there should be one soon, since "nobody lasts more than a couple weeks." (Because none of the people I talked to knew I was a reporter, I have changed their names to protect their privacy and, in some cases perhaps, their jobs.)

Three days go by like this, and, to my chagrin, no one out of the approximately twenty places I've applied calls me for an interview. I had been



vain enough to worry about coming across as too educated for the jobs I sought, but no one even seems interested in finding out how overqualified I am. Only later will I realize that the want ads are not a reliable measure of the actual jobs available at any particular time. They are, as I should have guessed from Max's comment, the employers' insurance policy against the relentless turnover of the low-wage workforce. Most of the big hotels run ads almost continually, just to build a supply of applicants to replace the current workers as they drift away or are fired, so finding a job is just a matter of being at the right place at the right time and flexible enough to take whatever is being offered that day. This finally happens to me at a one of the big discount hotel chains, where I go, as usual, for housekeeping and am sent, instead, to try out as a waitress at the attached "family restaurant," a dismal spot with a counter and about thirty tables that looks out on a parking garage and features such tempting fare as "Pollish [sic] sausage and BBQ sauce" on 95-degree days. Phillip, the dapper young West Indian who introduces himself as the manager, interviews me with about as much enthusiasm as if he were a clerk processing me for Medicare, the principal questions being what shifts can I work and when can I start. I mutter something about being woefully out of practice as a waitress, but he's already on to the uniform: I'm to show up tomorrow wearing black slacks and black shoes; he'll provide the rust-colored polo shirt with HEARTHSIDE embroidered on it, though I might want to wear my own shirt to get to work, ha ha. At the word "tomorrow," something between fear and indignation rises in my chest. I want to say, "Thank you for your time, sir, but this is just an experiment, you know, not my actual life."

So begins my career at the Hearthside, I shall call it, one small profit center within a global discount hotel chain, where for two weeks I work from 2:00 till 10:00 P.M. for $2.43 an hour plus tips.[3] In some futile bid for gentility, the management has barred employees from using the front door, so my first day I enter through the kitchen, where a red-faced man with shoulder-length blond hair is throwing frozen steaks against the wall and yelling, "Fuck this shit!" "That's just Jack," explains Gail, the wiry middle-aged waitress who is assigned to train me. "He's on the rag again"—a condition occasioned, in this instance, by the fact that the cook on the morning shift had forgotten to thaw out the steaks. For the next eight hours, I run after the agile Gail, absorbing bits of instruction along with fragments of personal tragedy. All food must be trayed, and the reason she's so tired today is that she woke up in a cold sweat thinking of her boyfriend, who killed himself recently in an upstate prison. No refills on lemonade. And the reason he was in prison is that a few DUIs caught up with him, that's all, could have happened to anyone. Carry the creamers to the table in a monkey bowl, never in your hand. And after he was gone she spent several months living in her truck, peeing in a plastic pee bottle and reading by candlelight at night, but you can't live in a truck in the summer, since you need to have the windows down, which means anything can get in, from mosquitoes on up.

At least Gail puts to rest any fears I had of appearing overqualified. From the first day on, I find that of all the things I have left behind, such as home and identity, what I miss the most is com-

[3] *According to the Fair Labor Standards Act, employers are not required to pay "tipped employees," such as restaurant servers, more than $2.13 an hour in direct wages. However, if the sum of tips plus $2.13 an hour falls below the minimum wage, or $5.15 an hour, the employer is required to make up the difference. This fact was not mentioned by managers or otherwise publicized at either of the restaurants where I worked.*

etence. Not that I have ever felt utterly compe-
ent in the writing business, in which one day's suc-
ess augurs nothing at all for the next. But in my
riting life, I at least have some notion of proce-
ure: do the research, make the outline, rough
ut a draft, etc. As a server, though, I am beset by
equests like bees: more iced tea here, ketchup
ver there, a to-go box for table fourteen, and
here are the high chairs, anyway? Of the twen-

Want ads are not a reliable measure of available jobs but rather employers' insurance policy against relentless turnover

-seven tables, up to six are usually mine at any
me, though on slow afternoons or if Gail is off,
sometimes have the whole place to myself. There
the touch-screen computer-ordering system to
aster, which is, I suppose, meant to minimize
rver-cook contact, but in practice requires con-
ant verbal fine-tuning: "That's gravy on the
ashed, okay? None on the meatloaf," and so
rth—while the cook scowls as if I were invent-
g these refinements just to torment him. Plus,
mething I had forgotten in the years since I was
ghteen: about a third of a server's job is "side
ork" that's invisible to customers—sweeping,
rubbing, slicing, refilling, and restocking. If it
n't all done, every little bit of it, you're going to
ce the 6:00 P.M. dinner rush defenseless and
robably go down in flames. I screw up dozens of
mes at the beginning, sustained in my shame
ntirely by Gail's support—"It's okay, baby, every-
ne does that sometime"—because, to my total
rprise and despite the scientific detachment I am
oing my best to maintain, I care.

The whole thing would be a lot easier if I could
st skate through it as Lily Tomlin in one of her
aitress skits, but I was raised by the absurd Book-
r T. Washingtonian precept that says: If you're
oing to do something, do it well. In fact, "well"
n't good enough by half. Do it better than any-
ne has ever done it before. Or so said my fa-
her, who must have known what he was talking
bout because he managed to pull himself, and us
ith him, up from the mile-deep copper mines of
utte to the leafy suburbs of the Northeast, as-
ending from boilermakers to martinis before
ooze beat out ambition. As in most endeavors I
ave encountered in my life, doing it "better
han anyone" is not a reasonable goal. Still, when
wake up at 4:00 A.M. in my own cold sweat, I am
ot thinking about the writing deadlines I'm ne-
lecting; I'm thinking about the table whose or-
er I screwed up so that one of the boys didn't get
is kiddie meal until the rest of the family had
noved on to their Key Lime pies. That's the oth-
r powerful motivation I hadn't expected—the

customers, or "patients," as I can't help thinking of them on account of the mysterious vulnerability that seems to have left them temporarily unable to feed themselves. After a few days at the Hearthside, I feel the service ethic kick in like a shot of oxytocin, the nurturance hormone. The plurality of my customers are hard-working locals—truck drivers, construction workers, even housekeepers from the attached hotel—and I want them to have the closest to a "fine dining" experience that the grubby circumstances will allow. No "you guys" for me; everyone over twelve is "sir" or "ma'am." I ply them with iced tea and coffee refills; I return, mid-meal, to inquire how everything is; I doll up their salads with chopped raw mushrooms, summer squash slices, or whatever bits of produce I can find that have survived their sojourn in the cold-storage room mold-free.

There is Benny, for example, a short, tight-muscled sewer repairman, who cannot even think of eating until he has absorbed a half hour of air-conditioning and ice water. We chat about hyperthermia and electrolytes until he is ready to order some finicky combination like soup of the day, garden salad, and a side of grits. There are the German tourists who are so touched by my pidgin "Willkommen" and "Ist alles gut?" that they actually tip. (Europeans, spoiled by their trade-union-ridden, high-wage welfare states, generally do not know that they are supposed to tip. Some restaurants, the Hearthside included, allow servers to "grat" their foreign customers, or add a tip to the bill. Since this amount is added before the customers have a chance to tip or not tip, the practice amounts to an automatic penalty for imperfect English.) There are the two dirt-smudged lesbians, just off their construction shift, who are impressed enough by my suave handling of the fly in the piña colada that they take the time to praise me to Stu, the assistant manager. There's Sam, the kindly retired cop, who has to plug up his tracheotomy hole with one finger in order to force the cigarette smoke into his lungs.

Sometimes I play with the fantasy that I am a princess who, in penance for some tiny transgression, has undertaken to feed each of her subjects by hand. But the non-princesses working with me are just as indulgent, even when this means flouting management rules—concerning, for example, the number of croutons that can go on a salad (six). "Put on all you want," Gail whispers, "as long as Stu isn't looking." She dips into her own tip money to buy biscuits and gravy for

an out-of-work mechanic who's used up all his money on dental surgery, inspiring me to pick up the tab for his milk and pie. Maybe the same high levels of agape can be found throughout the "hospitality industry." I remember the poster decorating one of the apartments I looked at, which said "If you seek happiness for yourself you will never find it. Only when you seek happiness for others will it come to you," or words to that effect—an odd sentiment, it seemed to me at the time, to find in the dank one-room basement apartment of a bellhop at the Best Western. At the Hearthside, we utilize whatever bits of autonomy we have to ply our customers with the illicit calories that signal our love. It is our job as servers to assemble the salads and desserts, pouring the dressings and squirting the whipped cream. We also control the number of butter patties our customers get and the amount of sour cream on their baked potatoes. So if you wonder why Americans are so obese, consider the fact that waitresses both express their humanity and earn their tips through the covert distribution of fats.

Ten days into it, this is beginning to look like a livable lifestyle. I like Gail, who is "looking at fifty" but moves so fast she can alight in one place and then another without apparently being anywhere between them. I clown around with Lionel, the teenage Haitian busboy, and catch a few fragments of conversation with Joan, the svelte fortyish hostess and militant feminist who is the only one of us who dares to tell Jack to shut the fuck up. I even warm up to Jack when, on a slow night and to make up for a particularly unwarranted attack on my abilities, or so I imagine, he tells me about his glory days as a young man at "coronary school"—or do you say "culinary"?—in Brooklyn, where he dated a knock-out Puerto Rican chick and learned everything there is to know about food. I finish up at 10:00 or 10:30, depending on how much side work I've been able to get done during the shift, and cruise home to the tapes I snatched up at random when I left my real home—Marianne Faithfull, Tracy Chapman, Enigma, King Sunny Ade, the Violent Femmes—just drained enough for the music to set my cranium resonating but hardly dead. Midnight snack is Wheat Thins and Monterey Jack, accompanied by cheap white wine on ice and whatever AMC has to offer. To bed by 1:30 or 2:00, up at 9:00 or 10:00, read for an hour while my uniform whirls around in the landlord's washing machine, and then it's another eight hours spent following Mao's central instruction, as laid out in the Little Red Book, which was: Serve the people.

I could drift along like this, in some dreamy proletarian idyll, except for two things. One is management. If I have kept this subject on the margins thus far it is because I still flinch to think that I spent all those weeks under the surveillance of men (and later women) whose job it was to monitor my behavior for signs of sloth, theft, drug abuse, or worse. Not that managers and especially "assistant managers" in low-wage settings like this are exactly the class enemy. In the restaurant business, they are mostly former cooks or servers, still capable of pinch-hitting in the kitchen or on the floor, just as in hotels they are likely to be former clerks, and paid a salary of only about $400 a week. But everyone knows they have crossed over to the other side, which is, crudely put, corporate as opposed to human. Cooks want to prepare tasty meals; servers want to serve them graciously; but managers are there for only one reason—to make sure that money is made for some theoretical entity that exists far away in Chicago or New York, if a corporation can be said to have a physical existence at all. Reflecting on her career, Gail tells me ruefully that she had sworn, years ago, never to work for a corporation again. "They don't cut you no slack. You give and you give, and they take."

I haven't been lined up in a corridor, threatened with locker searches, and peppered with accusations since junior high

Managers can sit—for hours at a time if they want—but it's their job to see that no one else ever does, even when there's nothing to do, and this is why, for servers, slow times can be as exhausting as rushes. You start dragging out each little chore, because if the manager on duty catches you in an idle moment, he will give you something far nastier to do. So I wipe, I clean, I consolidate ketchup bottles and recheck the cheesecake supply, even tour the tables to make sure the customer evaluation forms are all standing perkily in their places—wondering all the time how many calories I burn in these strictly theatrical exercises. When, on a particularly dead afternoon, Stu finds me glancing at a *USA Today* a customer has left behind, he assigns me to vacuum the entire floor with the broken vacuum cleaner that has a handle only two feet long, and the only way to do that without incurring orthopedic damage is to proceed from spot to spot on your knees.

On my first Friday at the Hearthside there is a "mandatory meeting for all restaurant em-

ployees," which I attend, eager for insight into our overall marketing strategy and the niche (your basic Ohio cuisine with a tropical twist?) we aim to inhabit. But there is no "we" at this meeting. Phillip, our top manager except for an occasional "consultant" sent out by corporate headquarters, opens it with a sneer: "The break room—it's disgusting. Butts in the ashtrays, newspapers lying around, crumbs." This windowless little room, which also houses the time clock for the entire hotel, is where we stash our bags and civilian clothes and take our half-hour meal breaks. But a break room is not a right, he tells us. It can be taken away. We should also know that the lockers in the break room and whatever is in them can be searched at any time. Then comes gossip; there has been gossip; gossip (which seems to mean employees talking among themselves) must stop. Off-duty employees are henceforth barred from eating at the restaurant, because "other servers gather around them and gossip." When Phillip has exhausted his agenda of rebukes, Joan complains about the condition of the ladies' room and I throw in my two bits about the vacuum cleaner. But I don't see any backup coming from my fellow servers, each of whom has subsided into her own personal funk; Gail, my role model, stares sorrowfully at a point six inches from her nose. The meeting ends when Andy, one of the cooks, gets up, muttering about breaking up his day off for this almighty bullshit.

Just four days later we are suddenly summoned into the kitchen at 3:30 P.M., even though there are live tables on the floor. We all—about ten of us—stand around Phillip, who announces grimly that there has been a report of some "drug activity" on the night shift and that, as a result, we are now to be a "drug-free" workplace, meaning that all new hires will be tested, as will possibly current employees on a random basis. I am glad that this part of the kitchen is so dark, because I find myself blushing as hard as if I had been caught toking up in the ladies' room myself: I haven't been treated this way—lined up in the corridor, threatened with locker searches, peppered with carelessly aimed accusations—since junior high school. Back on the floor, Joan cracks, "Next they'll be telling us we can't have sex on the job." When I ask Stu what happened to inspire the crackdown, he just mutters about "management decisions" and takes the opportunity to upbraid Gail and me for being too generous with the rolls. From now on there's to be only one per customer, and it goes out with the dinner, not with the salad. He's also been riding the cooks, prompting Andy to come out of the kitchen and observe—with the serenity of a man whose customary implement is a butcher knife—that "Stu has a death wish today."

Later in the evening, the gossip crystallizes around the theory that Stu is himself the drug culprit, that he uses the restaurant phone to order up marijuana and sends one of the late servers out to



fetch it for him. The server was caught, and she may have ratted Stu out or at least said enough to cast some suspicion on him, thus accounting for his pissy behavior. Who knows? Lionel, the busboy, entertains us for the rest of the shift by standing just behind Stu's back and sucking deliriously on an imaginary joint.

The other problem, in addition to the less-than-nurturing management style, is that this job shows no sign of being financially viable. You might imagine, from a comfortable distance, that people who live, year in and year out, on $6 to $10 an hour have discovered some survival stratagems unknown to the middle class. But no. It's not hard to get my co-workers to talk about their living situations, because housing, in almost every case, is the principal source of disruption in their lives, the first thing they fill you in on when they arrive for their shifts. After a week, I have compiled the following survey:

• Gail is sharing a room in a well-known downtown flophouse for which she and a roommate pay about $250 a week. Her roommate, a male friend, has begun hitting on her, driving her nuts, but the rent would be impossible alone.

• Claude, the Haitian cook, is desperate to get out of the two-room apartment he shares with his girlfriend and two other, unrelated, people. As far as I can determine, the other Haitian men (most

of whom only speak Creole) live in similarly crowded situations.

• Annette, a twenty-year-old server who is six months pregnant and has been abandoned by her boyfriend, lives with her mother, a postal clerk.

• Marianne and her boyfriend are paying $170 a week for a one-person trailer.

• Jack, who is, at $10 an hour, the wealthiest of us, lives in the trailer he owns, paying only the $400-a-month lot fee.

• The other white cook, Andy, lives on his dry-docked boat, which, as far as I can tell from his loving descriptions, can't be more than twenty feet long. He offers to take me out on it, once it's repaired, but the offer comes with inquiries as to my marital status, so I do not follow up on it.

• Tina and her husband are paying $60 a night for a double room in a Days Inn. This is because they have no car and the Days Inn is within walking distance of the Hearthside. When Marianne, one of the breakfast servers, is tossed out of her trailer for subletting (which is against the trailer-park rules), she leaves her boyfriend and moves in with Tina and her husband.

• Joan, who had fooled me with her numerous and tasteful outfits (hostesses wear their own clothes), lives in a van she parks behind a shopping center at night and showers in Tina's motel room. The clothes are from thrift shops.[4]

The floor of the restaurant is slick with spills, forcing us to walk with tiny steps, like Susan McDougal in leg irons

It strikes me, in my middle-class solipsism, that there is gross improvidence in some of these arrangements. When Gail and I are wrapping silverware in napkins—the only task for which we are permitted to sit—she tells me she is thinking of escaping from her roommate by moving into the Days Inn herself. I am astounded: How can she even think of paying between $40 and $60 a day? But if I was afraid of sounding like a social worker, I come out just sounding like a fool. She squints at me in disbelief, "And where am I supposed to get a month's rent and a month's deposit for an apartment?" I'd been feeling pretty smug about my $500 efficiency, but of course it was made possible only by the $1,300 I had allotted myself for start-up costs when I began my low-wage life: $1,000 for the first month's rent and deposit, $100 for initial groceries and cash in my pocket, $200 stuffed away for emergencies. In poverty, as in certain propositions in physics, starting conditions are everything.

There are no secret economies that nourish the poor; on the contrary, there are a host of special costs. If you can't put up the two months' rent you need to secure an apartment, you end up paying through the nose for a room by the week. If you have only a room, with a hot plate at best, you can't save by cooking up huge lentil stews that can be frozen for the week ahead. You eat fast food, or the hot dogs and styrofoam cups of soup that can be microwaved in a convenience store. If you have no money for health insurance—and the Hearthside's niggardly plan kicks in only after three months—you go without routine care or prescription drugs and end up paying the price. Gail, for example, was fine until she ran out of money for estrogen pills. She is supposed to be on the company plan by now, but they claim to have lost her application form and need to begin the paperwork all over again. So she spends $9 per migraine pill to control the headaches she wouldn't have, she insists, if her estrogen supplements were covered. Similarly, Marianne's boyfriend lost his job as a roofer because he missed so much time after getting a cut on his foot for which he couldn't afford the prescribed antibiotic.

My own situation, when I sit down to assess it after two weeks of work, would not be much better if this were my actual life. The seductive thing about waitressing is that you don't have to wait for payday to feel a few bills in your pocket, and my tips usually cover meals and gas, plus something left over to stuff into the kitchen drawer I use as a bank. But as the tourist business slows in the summer heat, I sometimes leave work with only $20 in tips (the gross is higher, but servers share about 15 percent of their tips with the busboys and bartenders). With wages included, this amounts to about the minimum wage of $5.15 an hour. Although the sum in the drawer is piling up, at the present rate of accumulation it will be more than a hundred dollars short of my rent when the end of the month comes around. Nor can I see any expenses to cut. True, I haven't gone the lentil-stew route yet, but that's because I don't have a large cooking pot, pot holders, or a ladle to stir with (which cost about $30 at Kmart, less at thrift stores), not to mention

[4] *I could find no statistics on the number of employed people living in cars or vans, but according to the National Coalition for the Homeless's 1997 report "Myths and Facts About Homelessness," nearly one in five homeless people (in twenty-nine cities across the nation) is employed in a full- or part-time job.*

nions, carrots, and the indispensable bay leaf. I o make my lunch almost every day—usually ome slow-burning, high-protein combo like ozen chicken patties with melted cheese on top nd canned pinto beans on the side. Dinner is at ne Hearthside, which offers its employees a noice of BLT, fish sandwich, or hamburger for on- $2. The burger lasts longest, especially if it's eaped with gut-puckering jalapeños, but by mid-ight my stomach is growling again.

So unless I want to start using my car as a res- lence, I have to find a second, or alternative, job. call all the hotels where I filled out housekeep-ng applications weeks ago—the Hyatt, Holiday nn, Econo Lodge, HoJo's, Best Western, plus a alf dozen or so locally run guesthouses. Nothing. hen I start making the rounds again, wasting hole mornings waiting for some assistant man-ger to show up, even dipping into places so reepy that the front-desk clerk greets you from ehind bulletproof glass and sells pints of liquor ver the counter. But either someone has ex-osed my real-life housekeeping habits—which re, shall we say, mellow—or I am at the wrong nd of some infallible ethnic equation: most, but y no means all, of the working housekeepers I see n my job searches are African Americans, Span-h-speaking, or immigrants from the Central Eu-opean post-Communist world, whereas servers re almost invariably white and monolingually nglish-speaking. When I finally get a positive re-ponse, I have been identified once again as serv- material. Jerry's, which is part of a well-known ational family restaurant chain and physically at-ached here to another budget hotel chain, is eady to use me at once. The prospect is both xciting and terrifying, because, with about the ame number of tables and counter seats, Jerry's ttracts three or four times the volume of cus-omers as the gloomy old Hearthside.

Picture a fat person's hell, and I don't mean a place with no food. Instead there is every-thing you might eat if eating had no bodily onsequences—cheese fries, chicken-fried steaks, udge-laden desserts—only here every bite must be aid for, one way or another, in human discomfort. he kitchen is a cavern, a stomach leading to the ower intestine that is the garbage and dishwash-ng area, from which issue bizarre smells combin-ng the edible and the offal: creamy carrion, piz- barf, and that unique and enigmatic Jerry's cent—citrus fart. The floor is slick with spills, forc-ng us to walk through the kitchen with tiny steps, ke Susan McDougal in leg irons. Sinks every-here are clogged with scraps of lettuce, decom-osing lemon wedges, waterlogged toast crusts. ut your hand down on any counter and you risk eing stuck to it by the film of ancient syrup spills, and this is unfortunate, because hands are uten-sils here, used for scooping up lettuce onto salad plates, lifting out pie slices, and even moving hash browns from one plate to another. The regula-tion poster in the single unisex restroom admon-ishes us to wash our hands thoroughly and even offers instructions for doing so, but there is al-ways some vital substance missing—soap, paper towels, toilet paper—and I never find all three at once. You learn to stuff your pockets with napkins before going in there, and too bad about the cus-tomers, who must eat, though they don't realize this, almost literally out of our hands.

The break room typifies the whole situation: there is none, because there are no breaks at Jer-ry's. For six to eight hours in a row, you never sit except to pee. Actually, there are three folding chairs at a table immediately adjacent to the bathroom, but hardly anyone ever sits here, in the very rectum of the gastro-architectural system. Rather, the function of the peritoilet area is to house the ashtrays in which servers and dish-washers leave their cigarettes burning at all times, like votive candles, so that they don't have to waste time lighting up again when they dash back for a puff. Almost everyone smokes as if his or her pulmonary well-being depended on



it—the multinational mélange of cooks, the Czech dishwashers, the servers, who are all Amer-ican natives—creating an atmosphere in which oxygen is only an occasional pollutant. My first morning at Jerry's, when the hypoglycemic shakes set in, I complain to one of my fellow servers

that I don't understand how she can go so long without food. "Well, I don't understand how you can go so long without a cigarette," she responds in a tone of reproach—because work is what you do for others; smoking is what you do for yourself. I don't know why the antismoking crusaders have never grasped the element of defiant self-nurturance that makes the habit so endearing to its victims—as if, in the American workplace, the only thing people have to call their own is the tumors they are nourishing and the spare moments they devote to feeding them.

Now, the Industrial Revolution is not an easy transition, especially when you have to zip through it in just a couple of days. I have gone from craft work straight into the factory, from the air-conditioned morgue of the Hearthside directly into the flames. Customers arrive in human waves, sometimes disgorged fifty at a time from their tour buses, peckish and whiny. Instead of two "girls" on the floor at once, there can be as many as six of us running around in our brilliant pink-



and-orange Hawaiian shirts. Conversations, either with customers or fellow employees, seldom last more than twenty seconds at a time. On my first day, in fact, I am hurt by my sister servers' coldness. My mentor for the day is an emotionally uninflected twenty-three-year-old, and the others, who gossip a little among themselves about the real reason someone is out sick today and the size of the bail bond someone else has had to pay, ignore me completely. On my second day, I find out why. "Well, it's good to see you again," one of them says in greeting. "Hardly anyone comes back after the first day." I feel powerfully vin cated—a survivor—but it would take a long ti probably months, before I could hope to be cepted into this sorority.

I start out with the beautiful, heroic idea handling the two jobs at once, and for two da almost do it: the breakfast/lunch shift at Jerr which goes till 2:00, arriving at the Hearthsid 2:10, and attempting to hold out until 10:00. the ten minutes between jobs, I pick up a sp chicken sandwich at the Wendy's drive-thro window, gobble it down in the car, and cha from khaki slacks to black, from Hawaiian to r polo. There is a problem, though. When duri the 3:00 to 4:00 P.M. dead time I finally sit do to wrap silver, my flesh seems to bond to the se I try to refuel with a purloined cup of soup, I've seen Gail and Joan do dozens of times, bu manager catches me and hisses "No eatin though there's not a customer around to be fended by the sight of food making contact wi a server's lips. So I tell Gail I'm going to quit, a she hugs me and says she might just follow me Jerry's herself.

But the chances of this are minuscule. She h left the flophouse and her annoying roomma and is back to living in her beat-up old truck. B guess what? she reports to me excitedly later th evening: Phillip has given her permission to pa overnight in the hotel parking lot, as long as sh keeps out of sight, and the parking lot should totally safe, since it's patrolled by a hotel secu ty guard! With the Hearthside offering benefits li that, how could anyone think of leaving?

Gail would have triumphed at Jerry's, I'm sur but for me it's a crash course in exhaustion ma agement. Years ago, the kindly fry cook wh trained me to waitress at a Los Angeles truc stop used to say: Never make an unnecessa trip; if you don't have to walk fast, walk slow; you don't have to walk, stand. But at Jerry's th effort of distinguishing necessary from unnece sary and urgent from whenever would itself be to much of an energy drain. The only thing to d is to treat each shift as a one-time-only eme gency: you've got fifty starving people out ther lying scattered on the battlefield, so get out the and feed them! Forget that you will have to d this again tomorrow, forget that you will have t be alert enough to dodge the drunks on th drive home tonight—just burn, burn, burn! Id ally, at some point you enter what servers call rhythm" and psychologists term a "flow state," i which signals pass from the sense organs direc ly to the muscles, bypassing the cerebral corte and a Zen-like emptiness sets in. A male serv from the Hearthside's morning shift tells m about the time he "pulled a triple"—three shif in a row, all the way around the clock—and the got off and had a drink and met this girl, an

ybe he shouldn't tell me this, but they had sex
ht then and there, and it was like, beautiful.
But there's another capacity of the neuromus-
ar system, which is pain. I start tossing back
igstore-brand ibuprofen pills as if they were
amin C, four before each shift, because an old
use-related repetitive-stress injury in my up-
back has come back to full-spasm strength,
nks to the tray carrying. In my ordinary life,
s level of disability might justify a day of ice
ks and stretching. Here I comfort myself with
Aleve commercial in which the cute blue-col-
guy asks: If you quit after working four hours,
at would your boss say? And the not-so-cute
e-collar guy, who's lugging a metal beam on his
k, answers: He'd fire me, that's what. But for-

bara, didn't you see you've got another table out there? Come on, girl!" Among other things, she is hated for having replaced the whipped-cream squirt cans with big plastic whipped-cream-filled baggies that have to be squeezed with both hands—because, reportedly, she saw or thought she saw employees trying to inhale the propellant gas from the squirt cans, in the hope that it might be nitrous oxide. On my third night, she pulls me aside abruptly and brings her face so close that it looks as if she's planning to butt me with her forehead. But instead of saying, "You're fired," she says, "You're doing fine." The only trouble is I'm spending time chatting with customers: "That's how they're getting you." Furthermore I am letting them "run me," which means harassment by se-

ustomers prevent the smooth transformation of information nto food and food into money. They are the enemy

ately, the commercial tells us, we workers can
ert the same kind of authority over our
nkillers that our bosses exert over us. If Tylenol
sn't want to work for more than four hours, you
t fire its ass and switch to Aleve.
True, I take occasional breaks from this life, go-
home now and then to catch up on e-mail and
conjugal visits (though I am careful to "pay"
anything I eat there), seeing *The Truman Show*
h friends and letting them buy my ticket. And
ill have those what-am-I-doing-here moments
work, when I get so homesick for the printed
rd that I obsessively reread the six-page menu.
t as the days go by, my old life is beginning to
k exceedingly strange. The e-mails and phone
ssages addressed to my former self come from
istant race of people with exotic concerns and
too much time on their hands. The neighborly
rket I used to cruise for produce now looks
biddingly like a Manhattan yuppie empori-
. And when I sit down one morning in my
l home to pay bills from my past life, I am daz-
d at the two- and three-figure sums owed to out-
like Club BodyTech and Amazon.com.

Management at Jerry's is generally calmer and more "professional" than at the Hearthside, with two exceptions. One is Joy, a
mp, blowsy woman in her early thirties, who
ce kindly devoted several minutes to instruct-
me in the correct one-handed method of car-
ng trays but whose moods change disconcert-
gly from shift to shift and even within one.
en there's B.J., a.k.a. B.J.-the-bitch, whose con-
bution is to stand by the kitchen counter and
l, "Nita, your order's up, move it!" or, "Bar-

quential demands: you bring the ketchup and they decide they want extra Thousand Island; you bring that and they announce they now need a side of fries; and so on into distraction. Finally she tells me not to take her wrong. She tries to say things in a nice way, but you get into a mode, you know, because everything has to move so fast.[5]

I mumble thanks for the advice, feeling like I've just been stripped naked by the crazed enforcer of some ancient sumptuary law: No chatting for you, girl. No fancy service ethic allowed for the serfs. Chatting with customers is for the beautiful young college-educated servers in the downtown carpaccio joints, the kids who can make $70 to $100 a night. What had I been thinking? My job is to move orders from tables to kitchen and then trays from kitchen to tables. Customers are, in fact, the major obstacle to the smooth transformation of information into food and food into money—they are, in short, the enemy. And the painful thing is that I'm beginning to see it this way myself. There are the traditional asshole types—frat boys who down multiple Buds and then make a fuss because the steaks are so emaciated and the fries so sparse—as well as the variously impaired—due to age, diabetes, or literacy issues—who require patient nutritional counseling. The worst, for some reason, are the Visible Christians—like the ten-person table, all jolly and sanctified after Sun-

[5] In Workers in a Lean World: Unions in the International Economy (Verso, 1997), Kim Moody cites studies finding an increase in stress-related workplace injuries and illness between the mid-1980s and the early 1990s. He argues that rising stress levels reflect a new system of "management by stress," in which workers in a variety of industries are being squeezed to extract maximum productivity, to the detriment of their health.

day-night service, who run me mercilessly and then leave me $1 on a $92 bill. Or the guy with the crucifixion T-shirt (SOMEONE TO LOOK UP TO) who complains that his baked potato is too hard and his iced tea too icy (I cheerfully fix both) and leaves no tip. As a general rule, people wearing crosses or WWJD? (What Would Jesus Do?) buttons look at us disapprovingly no matter what we do, as if they were confusing waitressing with Mary Magdalene's original profession.

I make friends, over time, with the other "girls" who work my shift: Nita, the tattooed twenty-something who taunts us by going around saying brightly, "Have we started making money yet?" Ellen, whose teenage son cooks on the graveyard shift and who once managed a restaurant in Massachusetts but won't try out for management here because she prefers being a "common worker" and not "ordering people around." Easy-going fiftyish Lucy, with the raucous laugh, who limps toward the end of the shift because of something that has gone wrong with her leg, the exact nature of which cannot be determined without health insurance. We talk about the usual girl things—men, children, and the sinister allure of Jerry's chocolate peanut-butter cream pie—though no one, I notice, ever brings up anything potentially expensive, like shopping or movies. As at the Hearthside, the only recreation ever referred to is partying, which requires little more than some beer, a joint, and a few close friends. Still, no one here is homeless, or cops to it anyway, thanks usually to a working husband or boyfriend. All in all, we form a reliable mutual-support group: If one of us is feeling sick or overwhelmed, another one will "bev" a table or even carry trays for her. If one of us is off sneaking a cigarette or a pee,[6] the others will do their best to conceal her absence from the enforcers of corporate rationality.

But my saving human connection—my oxytocin receptor, as it were—is George, the nineteen-year-old, fresh-off-the-boat Czech dishwasher. We get to talking when he asks me, tortuously, how much cigarettes cost at Jerry's. I do my best to ex-

There are not exactly people here in the trailer park, bu canned labor, being preserved from the heat between shift

plain that they cost over a dollar more here tha at a regular store and suggest that he just tak one from the half-filled packs that are always ly ing around on the break table. But that would b unthinkable. Except for the one tiny earring sig naling his allegiance to some vaguely alternativ point of view, George is a perfect straight arrow— crew-cut, hardworking, and hungry for eye con tact. "Czech Republic," I ask, "or Slovakia?" an he seems delighted that I know the difference "Václav Havel," I try. "Velvet Revolution, Fran Zappa?" "Yes, yes, 1989," he says, and I realize w are talking about history.

My project is to teach George English. "Ho are you today, George?" I say at the start of eac shift. "I am good, and how are you today, Bar bara?" I learn that he is not paid by Jerry's but b the "agent" who shipped him over—$5 an hou with the agent getting the dollar or so differ ence between that and what Jerry's pays dish washers. I learn also that he shares an apartmen with a crowd of other Czech "dishers," as he call them, and that he cannot sleep until one of then goes off for his shift, leaving a vacant bed. We ar having one of our ESL sessions late one afternoo when B.J. catches us at it and orders "Joseph" t take up the rubber mats on the floor near th dishwashing sinks and mop underneath. " thought your name was George," I say lou enough for B.J. to hear as she strides off back t the counter. Is she embarrassed? Maybe a littl because she greets me back at the counter wit "George, Joseph—there are so many of them!" say nothing, neither nodding nor smiling, and fo this I am punished later when I think I am read to go and she announces that I need to roll fift more sets of silverware and isn't it time I mixe up a fresh four-gallon batch of blue-cheese dres ing? May you grow old in this place, B.J., is th curse I beam out at her when I am finally per mitted to leave. May the syrup spills glue your fee to the floor.

I make the decision to move closer to Ke West. First, because of the drive. Second an third, also because of the drive: gas is eating u $4 to $5 a day, and although Jerry's is as high-vol

[6] *Until April 1998, there was no federally mandated right to bathroom breaks. According to Marc Linder and Ingrid Nygaard, authors of* Void Where Prohibited: Rest Breaks and the Right to Urinate on Company Time *(Cornell University Press, 1997), "The right to rest and void at work is not high on the list of social or political causes supported by professional or executive employees, who enjoy personal workplace liberties that millions of factory workers can only daydream about. . . . While we were dismayed to discover that workers lacked an acknowledged legal right to void at work, [the workers] were amazed by outsiders' naive belief that their employers would permit them to perform this basic bodily function when necessary. . . . A factory worker, not allowed a break for six-hour stretches, voided into pads worn inside her uniform; and a kindergarten teacher in a school without aides had to take all twenty children with her to the bathroom and line them up outside the stall door when she voided."*

e as you can get, the tips average only 10 per-
nt, and not just for a newbie like me. Between
base pay of $2.15 an hour and the obligation
share tips with the busboys and dishwashers,
're averaging only about $7.50 an hour. Then
re is the $30 I had to spend on the regulation
slacks worn by Jerry's servers—a setback it
uld take weeks to absorb. (I had combed the
vn's two downscale department stores hoping
something cheaper but decided in the end
t these marked-down Dockers, originally $49,
re more likely to survive a daily washing.) Of
fellow servers, everyone who lacks a working
sband or boyfriend seems to have a second job:
ta does something at a computer eight hours a
; another welds. Without the forty-five-minute
mmute, I can picture myself working two jobs
d having the time to shower between them.
So I take the $500 deposit I have coming from
landlord, the $400 I have earned toward the
xt month's rent, plus the $200 reserved for
ergencies, and use the $1,100 to pay the rent
d deposit on trailer number 46 in the Overseas
iler Park, a mile from the cluster of budget
tels that constitute Key West's version of an in-
strial park. Number 46 is about eight feet in
dth and shaped like a barbell inside, with a
rrow region—because of the sink and the
ve—separating the bedroom from what might
timistically be called the "living" area, with
two-person table and half-sized couch. The
throom is so small my knees rub against the
ower stall when I sit on the toilet, and you
n't just leap out of the bed, you have to climb
wn to the foot of it in order to find a patch of
or space to stand on. Outside, I am within a few
ds of a liquor store, a bar that advertises "free
r tomorrow," a convenience store, and a Burg-
King—but no supermarket or, alas, laundromat.
reputation, the Overseas park is a nest of crime
d crack, and I am hoping at least for some vi-
nt, multicultural street life. But desolation
es night and day, except for a thin stream of
destrian traffic heading for their jobs at the
eraton or 7-Eleven. There are not exactly peo-
here but what amounts to canned labor, be-
preserved from the heat between shifts.

n line with my reduced living conditions, a
new form of ugliness arises at Jerry's. First we
re confronted—via an announcement on the
nputers through which we input orders—with
new rule that the hotel bar is henceforth off-
its to restaurant employees. The culprit, I
rn through the grapevine, is the ultra-efficient
who trained me—another trailer-home dweller
d a mother of three. Something had set her off
e morning, so she slipped out for a nip and re-
ned to the floor impaired. This mostly hurts

Ellen, whose habit it is to free her hair from its rubber band and drop by the bar for a couple of Zins before heading home at the end of the shift, but all of us feel the chill. Then the next day, when I go for straws, for the first time I find the dry-storage room locked. Ted, the portly assistant manager who opens it for me, explains that he caught one of the dishwashers attempting to steal something, and, unfortunately, the miscreant will be with us until a replacement can be



found—hence the locked door. I neglect to ask what he had been trying to steal, but Ted tells me who he is—the kid with the buzz cut and the earring. You know, he's back there right now.

I wish I could say I rushed back and confronted George to get his side of the story. I wish I could say I stood up to Ted and insisted that George be given a translator and allowed to defend himself, or announced that I'd find a lawyer who'd handle the case pro bono. The mystery to me is that there's not much worth stealing in the dry-storage room, at least not in any fenceable quantity: "Is Gyorgi here, and am having 200—maybe 250—ketchup packets. What do you say?" My guess is that he had taken—if he had taken anything at all—some Saltines or a can of cherry-pie mix, and that the motive for taking it was hunger.

So why didn't I intervene? Certainly not because I was held back by the kind of moral paralysis that can pass as journalistic objectivity. On the contrary, something new—something loathsome and servile—had infected me, along with

the kitchen odors that I could still sniff on my bra when I finally undressed at night. In real life I am moderately brave, but plenty of brave people shed their courage in concentration camps, and maybe something similar goes on in the infinitely more congenial milieu of the low-wage American workplace. Maybe, in a month or two more at Jerry's, I might have regained my crusading spirit. Then again, in a month or two I might have turned into a different person altogether—say, the kind of person who would have turned George in.

But this is not something I am slated to find out. When my month-long plunge into poverty is almost over, I finally land my dream job—housekeeping. I do this by walking into the



personnel office of the only place I figure I might have some credibility, the hotel attached to Jerry's, and confiding urgently that I have to have a second job if I am to pay my rent and, no, it couldn't be front-desk clerk. "All right," the personnel lady fairly spits, "So it's housekeeping," and she marches me back to meet Maria, the housekeeping manager, a tiny, frenetic Hispanic woman who greets me as "babe" and hands me a pamphlet emphasizing the need for a positive attitude. The hours are nine in the morning till whenever, the pay is $6.10 an hour, and there's one week of vacation a year. I don't have to ask about health insurance once I meet Carlotta, the middle-aged African-American woman who will be training me. Carla, as she tells me to call her, is missing all of her top front teeth.

On that first day of housekeeping and last da of my entire project—although I don't ye know it's the last—Carla is in a foul mood We have been given nineteen rooms to clean most of them "checkouts," as opposed to "stay overs," that require the whole enchilada of bed stripping, vacuuming, and bathroom-scrubbing When one of the rooms that had been listed a a stay-over turns out to be a checkout, Carla cal Maria to complain, but of course to no avail. "S make up the motherfucker," Carla orders me, an I do the beds while she sloshes around the bath room. For four hours without a break I strip an remake beds, taking about four and a half minute per queen-sized bed, which I could get down t three if there were any reason to. We try to avoi vacuuming by picking up the larger specks b hand, but often there is nothing to do but drag th monstrous vacuum cleaner—it weighs about thi ty pounds—off our cart and try to wrestle around the floor. Sometimes Carla hands me th squirt bottle of "BAM" (an acronym for some thing that begins, ominously, with "butyric"; th rest has been worn off the label) and lets me d the bathrooms. No service ethic challenges m here to new heights of performance. I just con centrate on removing the pubic hairs from th bathtubs, or at least the dark ones that I can see

I had looked forward to the breaking-and-en tering aspect of cleaning the stay-overs, th chance to examine the secret, physical existenc of strangers. But the contents of the rooms are a ways banal and surprisingly neat—zipped up shav ing kits, shoes lined up against the wall (there ar no closets), flyers for snorkeling trips, maybe a empty wine bottle or two. It is the TV that keep us going, from *Jerry* to *Sally* to *Hawaii Five-O* an then on to the soaps. If there's something espe cially arresting, like "Won't Take No for an An swer" on *Jerry*, we sit down on the edge of a be and giggle for a moment as if this were a pajam party instead of a terminally dead-end job. Th soaps are the best, and Carla turns the volume u full blast so that she won't miss anything from th bathroom or while the vacuum is on. In room 50 Marcia confronts Jeff about Lauren. In 505, Lau ren taunts poor cuckolded Marcia. In 511, Hele offers Amanda $10,000 to stop seeing Eri prompting Carla to emerge from the bathroom t study Amanda's troubled face. "You take it, girl she advises. "I would for sure."

The tourists' rooms that we clean and, beyon them, the far more expensively appointed inter ors in the soaps, begin after a while to merge. W have entered a better world—a world of comfo where every day is a day off, waiting to be filled u with sexual intrigue. We, however, are only gat crashers in this fantasy, forced to pay for our pre ence with backaches and perpetual thirst. Th mirrors, and there are far too many of them in ho

l rooms, contain the kind of person you would ormally find pushing a shopping cart down a ty street—bedraggled, dressed in a damp hotel lo shirt two sizes too large, and with sweat drib- ing down her chin like drool. I am enormously lieved when Carla announces a half-hour meal eak, but my appetite fades when I see that the g of hot-dog rolls she has been carrying around our cart is not trash salvaged from a checkout t what she has brought for her lunch.

When I request permission to leave at about 30, another housekeeper warns me that no one s so far succeeded in combining housekeeping

shared vocabulary, but I am called to the floor for a table. I resolve to give him all my tips that night and to hell with the experiment in low-wage money management. At eight, Ellen and I grab a snack together standing at the mephitic end of the kitchen counter, but I can only manage two or three mozzarella sticks and lunch had been a mere handful of McNuggets. I am not tired at all, I assure myself, though it may be that there is simply no more "I" left to do the tiredness monitoring. What I would see, if I were more alert to the situation, is that the forces of destruction are already massing against me. There is only one cook

couldn't hold on to two jobs even with advantages unthinkable o many of the working poor, and I couldn't get by on one

the hotel with serving at Jerry's: "Some kid did once for five days, and you're no kid." With at helpful information in mind, I rush back to mber 46, down four Advils (the name brand this ne), shower, stooping to fit into the stall, and at- mpt to compose myself for the oncoming shift. much for what Marx termed the "reproduction labor power," meaning the things a worker has do just so she'll be ready to work again. The on- unforeseen obstacle to the smooth transition m job to job is that my tan Jerry's slacks, which d looked reasonably clean by 40-watt bulb last ght when I handwashed my Hawaiian shirt, ve by daylight to be mottled with ketchup and nch-dressing stains. I spend most of my hour-long eak between jobs attempting to remove the ed- e portions with a sponge and then drying the cks over the hood of my car in the sun.

I can do this two-job thing, is my theory, if I can nk enough caffeine and avoid getting distract- by George's ever more obvious suffering.[7] The st few days after being caught he seemed not to derstand the trouble he was in, and our chirpy tle conversations had continued. But the last uple of shifts he's been listless and unshaven, and night he looks like the ghost we all know him be, with dark half-moons hanging from his es. At one point, when I am briefly immobilized the task of filling little paper cups with sour eam for baked potatoes, he comes over and ks as if he'd like to explore the limits of our

on duty, a young man named Jesus ("Hay-Sue," that is) and he is new to the job. And there is Joy, who shows up to take over in the middle of the shift, wearing high heels and a long, clingy white dress and fuming as if she'd just been stood up in some cocktail bar.

Then it comes, the perfect storm. Four of my tables fill up at once. Four tables is nothing for me now, but only so long as they are obligingly staggered. As I bev table 27, tables 25, 28, and 24 are watching enviously. As I bev 25, 24 glowers because their bevs haven't even been ordered. Twenty-eight is four yuppyish types, meaning everything on the side and agonizing instructions as to the chicken Caesars. Twenty-five is a middle-aged black couple, who complain, with some justice, that the iced tea isn't fresh and the tabletop is sticky. But table 24 is the meteorological event of the century: ten British tourists who seem to have made the decision to absorb the American experience entirely by mouth. Here everyone has at least two drinks—iced tea and milk shake, Michelob and water (with lemon slice, please)—and a huge promiscuous orgy of breakfast specials, mozz sticks, chicken strips, quesadillas, burgers with cheese and without, sides of hash browns with cheddar, with onions, with gravy, seasoned fries, plain fries, banana splits. Poor Jesus! Poor me! Because when I arrive with their first tray of food—after three prior trips just to refill bevs—Princess Di refuses to eat her chicken strips with her pancake-and-sausage special, since, as she now reveals, the strips were meant to be an appetizer. Maybe the others would have accepted their meals, but Di, who is deep into her third Michelob, insists that everything else go back while they work on their "starters." Meanwhile, the yuppies are waving me down for more decaf and the black couple looks ready to summon the NAACP.

n 1996, the number of persons holding two or more s averaged 7.8 million, or 6.2 percent of the workforce. was about the same rate for men and for women (6.1 ver- s 6.2), though the kinds of jobs differ by gender. About o thirds of multiple jobholders work one job full-time d the other part-time. Only a heroic minority—4 percent men and 2 percent of women—work two full-time jobs ultaneously. (From John F. Stinson Jr., "New Data on ultiple Jobholding Available from the CPS," in the onthly Labor Review, *March 1997.)*

Much of what happened next is lost in the fog of war. Jesus starts going under. The little printer on the counter in front of him is spewing out orders faster than he can rip them off, much less produce the meals. Even the invincible Ellen is ashen from stress. I bring table 24 their reheated main courses, which they immediately reject as either too cold or fossilized by the microwave. When I return to the kitchen with their trays (three trays in three trips), Joy confronts me with arms akimbo: "What is this?" She means the food—the plates of rejected pancakes, hash browns in assorted flavors, toasts, burgers, sausages, eggs. "Uh, scrambled with cheddar," I try, "and that's . . . " "NO," she screams in my face. "Is it a traditional, a super-scramble, an eye-opener?" I pretend to study my check for a clue, but entropy has been up to its tricks, not only on the plates but in my head, and I have to admit that the original order is beyond reconstruction. "You don't know an eye-opener from a traditional?" she demands in outrage. All I know, in fact, is that my legs have lost interest in the current venture and have announced their intention to fold. I am saved by a yuppie (mercifully not one of mine) who chooses this moment to charge into the kitchen to bellow that his food is twenty-five minutes late. Joy screams at him to get the hell out of her kitchen, please, and then turns on Jesus in a fury, hurling an empty tray across the room for emphasis.

I leave. I don't walk out, I just leave. I don't finish my side work or pick up my credit-card tips, if any, at the cash register or, of course, ask Joy's permission to go. And the surprising thing is that you *can* walk out without permission, that the door opens, that the thick tropical night air parts to let me pass, that my car is still parked where I left it. There is no vindication in this exit, no fuck-you surge of relief, just an overwhelming, dank sense of failure pressing down on me and the entire parking lot. I had gone into this venture in the spirit of science, to test a mathematical proposition, but somewhere along the line, in the tunnel vision imposed by long shifts and relentless concentration, it became a test of myself, and clearly I have failed. Not only had I flamed out as a housekeeper/server, I had even forgotten to give George my tips, and, for reasons perhaps best known to hardworking, generous people like Gail and Ellen, this hurts. I don't cry, but I am in a position to realize, for the first time in many years, that the tear ducts are still there, and still capable of doing their job.

When I moved out of the trailer park, I gave the key to number 46 to Gail and arranged for my deposit to be transferred to her. She told me that Joan is still living in her van and that Stu had been fired from the Hearthsi never found out what happened to George.

In one month, I had earned approxima $1,040 and spent $517 on food, gas, toilet laundry, phone, and utilities. If I had remaine my $500 efficiency, I would have been abl pay the rent and have $22 left over (whic $78 less than the cash I had in my pocket at start of the month). During this time I bough clothing except for the required slacks and prescription drugs or medical care (I did finally some vitamin B to compensate for the lac vegetables in my diet). Perhaps I could h saved a little on food if I had gotten to a su market more often, instead of convenience sto but it should be noted that I lost almost f pounds in four weeks, on a diet weighted hea ly toward burgers and fries.

How former welfare recipients and sin mothers will (and do) survive in the low-w workforce, I cannot imagine. Maybe they v figure out how to condense their lives— cluding child-raising, laundry, romance, a meals—into the couple of hours between f time jobs. Maybe they will take up residence their vehicles, if they have one. All I know that I couldn't hold two jobs and I could make enough money to live on with one. A I had advantages unthinkable to many of t long-term poor—health, stamina, a worki car, and no children to care for and suppo Certainly nothing in my experience cont dicts the conclusion of Kathryn Edin a Laura Lein, in their recent book *Making En Meet: How Single Mothers Survive Welfare a Low-Wage Work*, that low-wage work actua involves more hardship and deprivation th life at the mercy of the welfare state. In t coming months and years, economic conditio for the working poor are bound to worsen, ev without the almost inevitable recession. mentioned earlier, the influx of former welfa recipients into the low-skilled workforce w have a depressing effect on both wages and t number of jobs available. A general econon downturn will only enhance these effects, a the working poor will of course be facing without the slight, but nonetheless often savir protection of welfare as a backup.

The thinking behind welfare reform was th even the humblest jobs are morally uplifting a psychologically buoying. In reality they are lik ly to be fraught with insult and stress. But I d discover one redeeming feature of the most abje low-wage work—the camaraderie of people wh are, in almost all cases, far too smart and funn and caring for the work they do and the wag they're paid. The hope, of course, is that som day these people will come to know what they' worth, and take appropriate action.

SCRIBBLE, SCRIBBLE, SCRIBBLE

The literary impulse, its despair and delight

By Nicholas Delbanco

"Another damned, thick, square book! Always scribble, scribble, scribble! Eh! Mr. Gibbon?" So remarked the Duke of Gloucester, in a put-down and a send-up both at once. For in this story, surely, the speaker gets the best of it, turning from his slight acquaintance bent above the desk to matters that do matter: the purchase of horseflesh, the debate on the Crimea, the decanter of Château d'Yquem. His is the sort of epigrammatic utterance to which there can be no rejoinder.

But let us linger awhile. Let's first assume that the phrase is correct—that it wasn't improved in the telling or written long after the fact. It isn't clear, however, if the remark was part of sustained conversation or an effective one-liner—if it came at the end or the start of a meeting. Was there an answer made? What might the answer have been? The jibe is formulated as a question, after all; perhaps it's a matter of mere intonation and the rising inflection gave way to a snort. Or proffered pinch of snuff. Or inch of first-rate port.

The taunt wouldn't work as well, of course, were Gibbon not still famous. "Scribble, scribble! Eh! Mr. Smith?" has neither the ring of authority nor the power to amuse. What counts is the disparity between that mighty finished thing, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and the belittled process: children and illiterates may scribble, but not our renowned historian. He was too *serious*, surely; his ornamental sentences and massive buttressed paragraphs required an adept of penmanship; calligraphy, perhaps. And at the least a quill pen.

Nicholas Delbanco is the Robert Frost Collegiate Professor of English at the University of Michigan. He is the author of seventeen books of fiction and nonfiction; his most recent novel is Old Scores, *published by Warner Books.*

I'M HAUNTED BY THE SPECTER OF ABANDONED BOOKS AND THOSE WHO WROTE THEM: ONCE QUICK, NOW DEAD, THEIR LANGUAGE GONE MUTE

So the disjunction should amuse. It was intended to. "Still writing, M Gibbon?" is a polite question merely, and would not make us laugh. A Noel Coward, with his own "talent to amuse," observed: "If you've a mind at all, Gibbon's divine *Decline and Fall* sounds pret flimsy, no more than a whimsy. By way of contrast, Saturday last, I went to a marvellous party . . ."

All this by way of preface to a set of questions I think it fair ask: why bother with the enterprise of poetry or prose? Can writing taught and by everyone learned? How does one place a value on su texts? Will a first-rate teacher produce a first-rate student, and which a the terms of improvement; what's good, what's better, best?

Even such questions may well seem elitist, and the Duke of Gloucest has come to rule the day. For who in truth believes that language can taught? We learned it as children, not consciously, and by now it's clos to breathing and walking than a skill that need to have honed. The rules that still pe tain to the study of a foreign language longer apply to our own native tongue; wor like "ablative" or "gerundive" have bee thrown out of school. Yet English is the p sent lingua franca, and very few now recogn what those words signify or how their meani in translation has been changed. I don't me by this to engage in some high-flown lame as to the lowering of standards but only to o serve that "rhetoric" is in and of itself a su pect word. Whereas once it meant the art expressive speech or discourse, it now see an indulgence to avoid.



In this age of electronics—with easy acc to the personal computer and cell phone a home media center, television, voice mail a e-mail and the rest—it's simple enough to by without books. Not to mention the su sidiary skills of literacy: a knowledge of gra mar and ease with articulate speech. F adults today recite poems by heart; no one p adolescence still composes verse but tho who make of it a lifelong and poorly paid v cation. Too, the art of letter writing is alm wholly defunct. The powerful have langua produced for them by an oxymoronic speec writer, the TelePrompTer is the sine qua n of our nightly news. New houses have minir bookshelves built in, and even the assidu consumer will but scratch the surface of a s son's titles.

Let's say by a generous estimate that we read a book a week and cont ue to do so for forty years. This would amount to a little more than 2,0 books, approximately a hundredth of the titles offered by the indus each year. Not to mention those that are reprinted and outlast a sin publishing season and the shredder's blade. Or take the extreme a scholarly case; say we read five books a week for fifty years and keep th in our head and on the shelf. This would surely suggest a literate pers yet the number is still small: 13,000 volumes, not the first floor of a libr in any self-respecting town. And most of us don't read that much or r that long, and after twenty years or so we might as well begin again for we can remember of the books we read.

Some writers take pleasure in secondhand bookstores, those dusty

hirs rooms and barns where their predecessors moulder and, perhaps, a ng-sought or a half-remembered volume may be found. Some busily nt their own work on such shelves or delight in a new discovery to d to a collection. I do not. I'm haunted by the specter of these aban- ned pages and those who wrote them when quick, not yet dead: a aveyard of language gone mute. It is, I think, proof negative of the fol- ly of ambition; even Gibbon—still a household name?—is largely now remembered as the butt of another man's joke.

Nonetheless we may with justification surmise (this footnoted Dr. Johnson, Volume II, by the solicitous and quasi-ubiquitous swell, in whose honor we here momentarily deploy an imitative Gib- nesque and *soi-disant* Johnsonian diction if not rhetoric, the former yond us, the latter behind) that the response in due and proper urse would have arrived in the affirmative, and that our author anced up from his work desk, polishing his spectacles, inclining his ead, smiling, weary, purse-lipped, pretending affability, secure in the reknowledge of attainment and the satisfaction of the day's work ne, and well, and perhaps already knowing that this Duke so fatuous- baiting him would fade into obscurity, or not so much obscurity as at particular limbo reserved for the querulous (the self-proclaimed t and the buttonholing and lapel-pulling windy bore, the meddle- me person from Porlock), a semicircle and half-hell of indeterminate d quasi-anonymous, not to say parenthetical, identification (which uke of Gloucester was it, after all, and old or young and in what pri- te home or public library or club?), whereas he himself, the historian *i-même*, the great aggrieved and weary Edward Gibbon, would outlast is upright and chattering sedulous ape, survive this jape, from boot to pe caparisoned in language, lovely language, always scribble, scribble, ribble, yes indeed.

Here's another way to put it. Edward Gibbon wrote a lot, and one day acquaintance asked him why. You write too much, says the Duke.

Outside it's cold, it's sleeting maybe, rattling at the windows of the club he Reform, the Garrick, the Athenaeum?), and the poor are huddled to e coal grate by the porter's door in the alley where the night soil reeks nd horseshit steams. In that corner barely visible beyond the mullioned indow behold a toothless rag-wreathed creature squabbling with the dogs r scraps while in the library we light our pipes, and later on there's danc- g girls, my favorite is Mimi, why bother with that quill pen, Ed, when e's so much more entertaining to tickle with this ostrich feather instead? o pass the bottle, there's a good fellow, and sample a bit of this Stilton, I d it sent down particularly, now what were we saying? Oh yes. Let me ve you a piece of advice. All work and no play keeps the devil away, and there's deviltry in Mimi and, what's the expression, you're a great one for expressions, the devil's in the details and the details are what's fun.

Some years ago I had a conversation that I carry with me still as a utionary tale. I stopped a farmer—call him Everett Saunders—on his actor in the road. The lane was little traveled, dirt and dust; it was July. e had been commended to me as a man who would cut wood, mow fields, o neighborly labor for a fair price. I had more land than I could handle nd was in any case incompetent at farming; I needed help. Everett recog- ized me also; in that village any stranger was discussed.

"You're the one they call Nick," he said, and killed the motor and lit up is pipe. Puffing, he kept silent while I blundered on about which cows I'd asture in which field, what kind of grass I planned to plant and how uch he could cut. When I said I was a college teacher and therefore ransparent excuse!—couldn't farm full-time, he perked up. He had seven

THE WRITER, CAPARISONED IN LANGUAGE, LOVELY LANGUAGE, IS CERTAIN OF HIS ATTAINMENT AND THE FUTURE OBSCURITY OF THOSE WHO DOUBT HIM

Illustrations by Elvis Swift

THE TRIPPING COMELINESS ON THE TONGUE OF THE RHETORICAL TROPE AND RIPE RODOMONTADE LEAVES TRIFLERS BUT THE TASTE OF TRIPE

children; one of them was soon to enter nursing school. We had a lo discussion, and he took eager part in it: the benefits of education, the v ue of a degree, the particular instruction that his daughter would recei the scholarship money available, the high cost of tuition, the risk a yield and loss. He was behind her, Everett said, behind her all the way .

Emboldened by such newfound friendship, I offered a personal tru "I'm a college teacher," I announced, "but that's not all I do. What I re ly love is writing. I'm a writer, I write books."

His eyes glazed. "Books," he said. He knocked his pipe bowl empty the steering wheel. "Don't mean nothing to me." He started the trac

and left. For the five years that I worked at my trilogy the farmer's life, I tried to remember his answer, disinterest and cap-tipping scorn.

Or because he is not used to playing second fiddle in any su ensemble—because his is the title here and he has commissioned t performance—Gloucester clears his throat. Loudly. To embark upon th most tedious of exercises, self-justification. Wherein he will avail hims of the very weapon of his seated adversary and also wield the pen. will call for ink and paper and produce a monograph on ancestor worsh in Mesopotamia, on weaving in the Hebrides, primogeniture in Spa He will demonstrate once and for all that the gulf that spreads betwe them—the man of words and the man of action—is, to the sufficien capacious intellect, a dimple of a ditch. He will write his own essay, co pose his own speech.

It is not difficult.

It takes no time at all.

It is the sort of challenge a gentleman should rise to; the casual y causal deployment of skills, the anagrammatic mustering of just the wo or, as those froggies call it, *le mot juste*.

He clears his throat.

Then, no doubt thinking better of the prospect, disheartened in a vance by what he can already taste is and as the ash of half-felicitous a wholly pointless utterance, the rhetorical trope and ripe rodomonta whose tripping comeliness upon the tongue leaves triflers but the taste tripe, that busy tinkering with language for which he does not give a ti ker's damn, he lifts his white kid gloves instead from the proferred silv salver. He shrugs himself into his greatcoat and nods at the footm preparing to leave. His carriage waits outside. The stars, could he s them, are bright. The gutter has been sluiced. The horses stamp a snort. He is promised elsewhere, and time and tide won't wait. There' matter of some urgency and—though he be too discreet to state it—sta

Still, to have the last word is too great a temptation, and Glouces can't resist. He does not don his hat. Who can refuse an exit line; wh actor willingly gives his back to the curtain before the curtain falls?

One final rejoinder, perhaps. One small last thing to say. Therefo surrounded by his retinue and negligently, condescendingly addressi himself again to Gibbon, the Duke avers: I hunt, I ride, I court and fen and dance with more accomplishment than you. I have many achiev ments of which you don't dream and to which you cannot attain. Wh walking in the gallery or counting in the countinghouse I stand or sit ease; the highborn and the low approach and turn by turn requ

money, council, comfort in the battlefield or the bed night. To each his own, sir: you to your inkwell and I to volume of cares . . .

All authors have been students; many teach. We have an indu try of advice on everything from investment portfolios to spiritual grow to weight loss to golf swings and how to correct what's gone wrong. Boo stores bulk large with "how-to" books, and books on writing are now

ception; instruction rules the day. Where there used to be just Strunk White, or Fowler's *Modern English Usage*, there are programs to purase, from spell-check to syntax, that guarantee an improved vocabulary thirty nanoseconds, much less thirty days.

The academy, of late, has served as patron for the writer much the way e court or wealthy individual did before. It is, I would guess—though I ow of no statistical survey—the largest employer of those who make eir life, if not their living, by the pen. But the poet in the Renaissance, even in the early years of this present century (consider Yeats and lke and how often they traveled from country house to castle), did not agine that their verse would prove literally entitling; it was a business, is "singing school," and not one that granted degrees. We have moved ne distance from the notion of a guild, but all those MFA programs and iting festivals and writers' conferences that spring up in such profusion oscribe at least implicitly to the idea of advancement: apprentice yourf to an author and earn your working papers until you, too, attract apentices who come in turn to class . . .

And though the current wave of interest in writing programs is likely to est and diminish, it will no doubt accumulate once more. The desire of e human animal to express itself in language is inhering and enduring; om the first mark incised in stone to the contemporary microchip, we nt to fashion utterance and leave it behind us for others to scan. "In e beginning was the word," may be a loose translation, but it does serve genesis for the people of the book, and ibis-headed Thoth is god both speech and its scribes.

The only way to learn one's art—a craftsman's paradox—is through ck-breaking labor that must not seem like work. Like the dubber in a reign-language film who most succeeds when no one knows he's ound. Or like those Zen masters of the martial arts. After the body has en trained to achievement, trained so that what earlier seemed impossle is difficult, the difficult habitual, and the habitual easy—at the int where everything is instinct, true mastery begins. The highest dan nnot be attained; the highest attainable dan is reached through meditation. So we have the spectacle of the ancient jujitsu sensei, sitting on s tatami in the sun. And a disciple—full of health and radiant muscurity—comes up and assumes an attack stance and says, "Master, I must ll you now," and raises the axe. But the sensei pulls out the rug from der his student's feet.

Therefore I urge myself to practice, trusting to the notion of perfection ter on. We are all of us apprenticed to a fast-vanishing guild; the species endangered and much mastery is specious nowadays. Hunt that old codger in the sun, I tell myself, but don't swing your axe if you find him. Look up his sleeves with reverence, and keep at a respectful distance from the mat.

Or perhaps there's an admission here, a wry-faced yet modest avow: the Duke doesn't care to read. He never got the hang of it, he never acired the taste. He has, as someone once remarked though in another conxt, small Latin and less Greek. And therefore this grave history that ibbon labored hard to write is something of a threat to Gloucester, or at ast an implicit reproach: you understand what I fail to; what accrues to ur credit lies lodged to my debt. You command language as I do the ser ants, you make a phrase sing whilst I cough. A proper man—so goes the old saying—can build a house, can plant a field and father sons and write a book. The three first tasks present no difficulty to me, sir. But *language*, there's the rub . . .

My elder brother is a doctor, and a very good one. We may ave our disagreements as to politics or wine, but he is always right in atters medical, and I follow his advice. Some time ago I had the habit of

THE DESIRE OF THE HUMAN ANIMAL TO EXPRESS ITSELF IN LANGUAGE ENDURES—FROM THE FIRST MARK INCISED IN STONE TO THE MICROCHIP

THE WRITER GLEANS WIND SCRAPS, LISTENS WHERE HE CAN; WHAT COUNTS—AS WITH ALL STIMULI—IS THE SYMPATHETIC RESPONSE

puns, and the more atrocious the better; no subject escaped my sonorou attention or grasping verbal reach.

An example: if the review of a novel by a *prose pro* were negative, w would have a *conte contretemps*. The contraction of professional to "pro" i more or less self-evident, as is the contraction of convict to "con." To b pro or con, as in the voice-vote yea or nay, is not the same as to be a pai baseball player or criminal who perpetrates a trick. The translation of *l cons* is unprintable in these proper pages, but contract it to *leçons* and i seems merely instructive. English profits from the sidelong glances of suc pigeon-kicking pidgin-quickening; the echoic aspect of language, it echolalic resonance, proved important to the bard of Beowulf as well a among others, Milton and Sir Thomas Browne. It would be easy equall to play on "gibbon" as a primate's name and perhaps ancestral ape c cousin of the cadet branch, as in gorilla, orangutan, mandril, chimpanze a monkey who batters at Shakespeare on his battered Smith Corona be neath the gibbous moon . . .

Then my brother said that punning was a clinical condition, and asked of what. Of disorders in the frontal lobe, he told me, and it coul mean many things, syphilis for instance. If a patient comes into your offic who's punning uncontrollably, he said, you know that the patient's i trouble. He grinned. I have made few atrocious puns since.

It's fun, nevertheless, such babble; we ought admit to that. If ther weren't pure pleasure in the way words edge up against one another, in th way paragraphs fit, in learning how catechresis can prove serviceable— then we'd all have to be a higher- and bloodier-minded bunch. Because th average wage is maybe a penny a page, or a dime each twenty hours, an the average reward is anonymity. If your name is well enough known to b taken, then it's likely to be so in vain, or misspelled; vanity and sottishnes and the deep paralysis of repetition await those who truly succeed. W dream of influence; it's effluence instead. Those who hunt success too con sciously are conscious of too little else; those to whom it comes unbidden d its bidding soon. It's easy to inveigh against the scribbler's rotten lot, to sa we're blessed or cursed or necessary prophets without honor and to few who're honorably with. But there are other profession and most professional wordsmiths could find some other jo They don't; they won't. Why not? One answer is, it's fun.

The writer gleans wind scraps; he listens wherever he can. Eac day is full of instances; what counts, as with all stimuli, is the sympatheti response. The death of Anna Karenina has more enduring resonance tha does the death of a flea. Yet Tolstoy's transcendent novel took flight fro a newspaper story; James built elaborate fictions upon the chance dinne party remark. It is seldom possible to gauge beforehand what will prove fruitful topic or which anecdote will fire the imagination; some matte move us, some do not.

This is not to say that the writer need do research of the spirit- back-breaking kind. It should not be forced. Here Gibbon cannot hel us much, for his entire enterprise depends upon the research done an information accrued. Will the discerning reader note that, very well, contradict myself, that Gibbon and Gloucester here fuse at the lip? Th poet and the novelist deploy a methodology separate from the histor an's, and this is appropriate; we don't play tennis with a basketball football with a bat. Nonfiction and the mass-market saga rely on dat principally; reportage is but one component of the imagination's work There are better road maps to Dublin than Joyce's *Ulysses*, and w would believe the snowstorm in "The Dead" if it had not snowed tha day.

But if a character's a carpenter his author has to know the differenc between a jig and band saw; if the heroine's an Avon lady we shoul know what products she sells. When we use up our store of available d

ja—the stuff of childhood, then youth—the professional writer is left with one profession to describe. Then it grows imperative (or every book would be about its own construction) for us to practice "reach."

We should train our ears and accents as do actors if we hope to play more than one part. Inflection is as various as fingerprints. The intonation of "self-conscious," for example, has grown pejorative, but few would feel the same about the Greek injunction "Know thyself." Self-consciousness is necessary; it is not sufficient. My argument therefore resolves into this: when the contemporary scribbler casts about for subject matter, he should pay attention to the visible, audible world.

From the Duke of Gloucester we may move to the Compte de Montesquieu, whose definition of the writing life equally endures:

> "Author: A fool who, not content with having bored those who have lived with him, insists on tormenting the generations to come."

Finally, there are two modifiers we must finally address. Both of the Duke's sentences begin with an exasperated, aerated A. "Another" and "Always" bespeak true compulsion, and not so much upon the speaker's as the writer's part. What is it, we should ask ourselves, that keeps him keeping on? Too many trees have been leveled to furnish this ream of blank paper and realm of fool's gold; too much language has been already expended on the Roman Empire. It is enough, my semblable—oh, surely, much more than enough. That those who do not know their history are doomed to repeat it but compounds the authorial problem: this repetition compulsion of sitting to the work of words day after day after day.

"Another damned, thick, square book! Always scribble, scribble, scribble! Eh! Mr. Gibbon?"

How is it he replies?

I write because I must.

I write because what's said is fleeting, though we imagine it lasts.

I write for the reasons adduced here above: the fun of it—"Another blessed thin rectangular book"—the sense of commonality, the chance to shape what's shapeless and know what is not known.

And because the word "adduced" itself stands rooted in the fading past; it means "brought forward, led toward," and we will not advance as a species without the advantage of hindsight, foresight: both retrospect and prospect fused in what's composed.

For the shape of it, the sound of it, though silent, the feel of the print on the page.

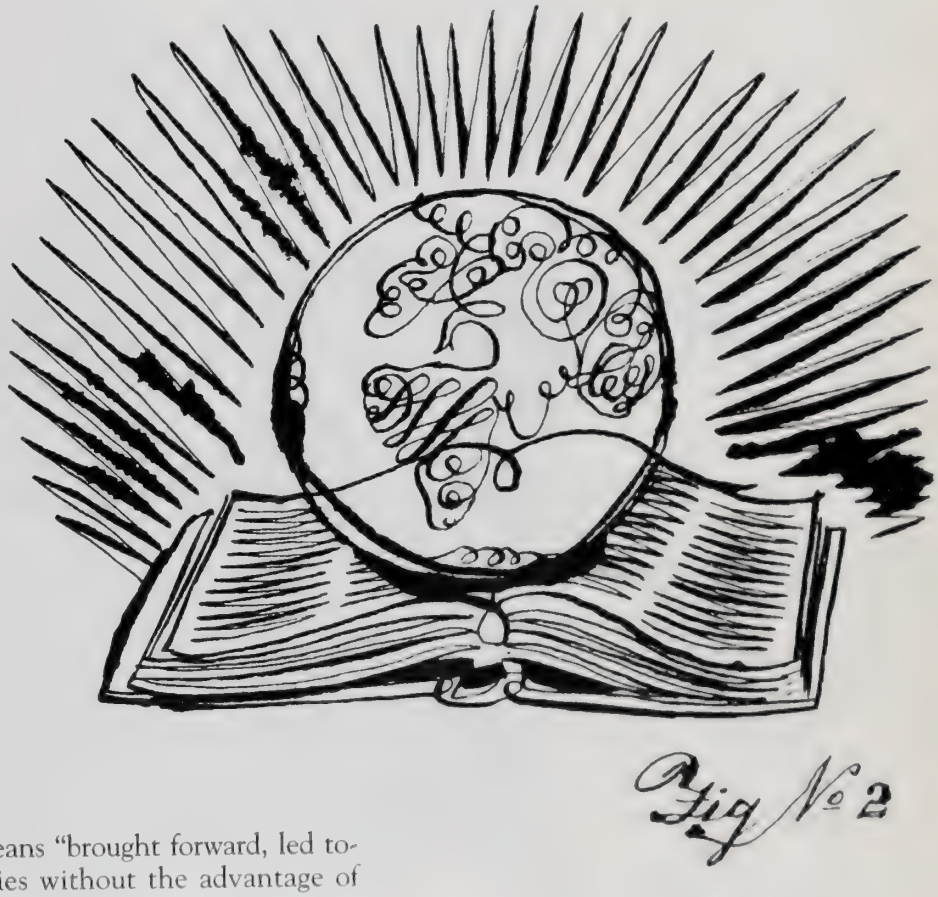
Out of habit too, and hard to break, the taste and smell of it, the way steam rises from my coffee cup before dawn while I wake to dream, the sixth, if only intermittently available, sense that just beyond the reach of these first five is a republic of letters where the lords of language walk.

I write because "Another" means we've been this way before.

I write in the hope that "Always" means we'll go this way again.

And that you will read. ■

ARE THERE ALREADY WORDS ENOUGH? HAVE NOT TOO MANY TREES BEEN LEVELED TO FURNISH THIS REAM OF BLANK PAPER, THIS REALM OF FOOL'S GOLD?





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BUT IS IT ADVERTISING?

Capitalist realism at the Clio Awards

By Jonathan Dee



American television is
urfeited with awards shows,
fact that may account for
he mood of existential
oubt, of boosterism and flop
weat, pervading the rare
wards show that hasn't
anaged to get itself tele-
ised. In any case, the fa-
iliar, louche sense of im-
ort ("we're running a little
vertime") one associates
ith the Oscars or the
rammys is missing from
he opening night of the
998 Clio Awards, the ad-
ertising industry's self-ad-
inistered honors for artis-
ic excellence. A jazz trio
lays onstage as we find our
eats in the orchestra of the
mallish Henry Hudson
heater just off Broadway;
ales of the $75 tickets, a
ackward glance reveals, have scarce-
y been brisk enough to necessitate
pening the balconies.

The Clio Awards International Fes-
ival confers its honors over two con-secutive evenings in May: the first night's ceremony is devoted to print ads, posters, billboards, and package design; the second, to TV, radio, and Web sites. TV, of course, is the *ne plus ultra* of creative advertising; still, Andrew Jaffe, the affable, curly-haired executive director of the Clios, does his best, as the print ceremony's opening speaker, to rouse the audience to a comparable pitch of anticipation. Print, he says not once but twice, is "the soul of our craft." His efforts are seriously undercut, however, by the second speaker on the program, the fetchingly stern Marie-Catherine Dupuy, chief creative officer of the French agency BDD/Conseil and chairperson of this year's Clio jury. "All of us," she says in heavily accented English, "felt that print this year was a little disappointing"; and on that chilly note, the passing out of awards commences.

In a 1984 speech to the National Arts Club, John Updike compared the craftsmen of modern advertisements ("the aesthetic marvels of our age") to the anonymous Anglo-Saxon poets and Paleolithic cave painters: "one can only regret," he said, "that except within narrow professional circles the artists involved . . . are unknown by name." Along those lines, one might guess that the rationale for celebrating artistic excellence in advertising would be to lift the artists themselves out of that

onathan Dee is the author of the novels St. Fa-
nous, The Liberty Campaign, *and* The
Lover of History. *This is his first essay for*
Harper's Magazine.

Illustration by Russell O. Jones

anonymity, for one night at least. Alas, the awards are presented not to individuals but to their agencies; and as for acceptance speeches, Jaffe has genially forbidden them in the interests of time. As each winning ad is flashed on an overhead video screen, its creators (or their bosses) walk up the stairs stage left, accept their statuette from the award-girl without breaking stride (though some seize the opportunity to double-kiss Ms. Dupuy, who looks like Jeanne Moreau), and head downstairs again stage right. The thirty seconds or so of each pop song ("Sunshine of Your Love," "We Are the Champions," "Satisfaction") played by the pit orchestra to cover this exchange turns out to be fifteen seconds too long; we wait awkwardly for the conductor to lift his head, notice the empty stage, and stop the music.

The other members of the Clio jury—creative executives from around the world—seem to have been right on Ms. Dupuy's parsimonious wavelength; although the Clio guidelines call for the awarding of Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals in each of a hundred or so categories, the jurors frequently bend the rules with an authoritarian whimsy to show their disdain for the work they're honoring, such as in the Public Service Print category, in which they award no Golds, no Silvers, but *seven* Bronzes. The honorees find their own ways to express their disrespect for the proceedings: some saunter onstage at this black-tie-optional event wearing jeans and sneakers, and a few winners, Brando-like, don't show up at all, leaving the presenter squinting into the audience while the band plays "Satisfaction" again.

Technical glitches abound. Even the centerpiece of the evening—a tribute to Bill Bernbach (the father of advertising's "Creative Revolution" of the 1950s, which overthrew the hard sell in favor of the more subtle persuasions of art) and the announcement of a scholarship fund for minorities established in his name—is marred when the wrong slide is flashed on the screen above. And when the Grand Clio for print work goes to the Leo Burnett agency in London for a Mercedes ad titled "Skidmarks," no one seems troubled by the fact that the copy for this best advertisement of the year is illegible on the video screen. In all, seventy-two awards are handed out in an hour and five minutes, a pace most awards shows can only dream of. The whole thing is over by 8:15, and when Jaffe says in closing that the evening seems to have run a bit ahead of schedule, he looks almost relieved.

Such a cheesy and dispirited Part One of the two-day Clio gala is enough to raise doubts as to whether the Clios have yet bounced back from the ignominy of their own recent history. On June 13, 1991, the Clios, already thirty-one years old and a seeming institution, disintegrated in spectacular fashion at a print-awards gala much like this one. An audience of 300 waited hours for that ceremony to start, unaware that neither bankrupt, crack-addicted Clio chairman Bill Evans, nor the unpaid event staff, nor a complete list of winners, was anywhere on site. When at length the crowd grew surly, the evening's emcee, P.R. man Don Catterson, deputized a caterer named Steve, and the two of them went onstage and began passing out awards, working from a partial script that in many cases had the name of the winning commercial but not the agency that produced it. But when Catterson ran out of names with more than eighty Clios still unpresented (he tried to announce an "intermission," during which he would presumably have made a run for it), the exasperated attendees stormed the stage in their evening clothes, making off with the remaining statuettes by the fistful. "Advertising's own *Day of the Locust*," writer Trip Gabriel called it. The subsequent night of TV awards—for which 1,500 people had paid $175 for tickets they never received, and which Fox had contracted to televise—was canceled. In the wake of that catastrophe the Clio organization changed ownership but still suffered the loss of much of its prestige; although it remains, in Jaffe's words, "the or advertising award your mother h ever heard of," it competes wi several other industry awards sho as well as with year-end honors sued by trade magazines such as *A vertising Age*.

But on the second night of t year's Clios, at Lincoln Center's A ice Tully Hall, it's much easier believe that the bad times are ov The dress is more elegant, the h d'oeuvres are fancier, the warm- jazz trio has been replaced by regg legend Toots and the Maytals; t charisma of television warms t room, and the previous night's p ceedings suddenly seem the equi lent of the second-tier "ceremo held earlier" referred to in t course of the Oscars or the Tonys. buzz of youth and hipness coexi easily with the sleekness that con of sitting atop a $200 billion ind try. The evening feels, as a go awards show should feel, like t center of the cultural universe—d spite the fact that tonight is coin dentally also the night of the *Se feld* finale, interspersed w million-dollar commercials. Inde the proceedings start with Jaffe's s isfied announcement that NBC h agreed to mail a free videocassette the final *Seinfeld*, commercials a all, to everyone holding a ticket tonight's ceremony.

The Clios in no way reflect an a impact on the sales of the produc promotes—a relationship that is v tually impossible to quantify anyw The awards are intended solely a measure of aesthetic excellence; a in the year just past, a somew mollified Dupuy reports to the L coln Center audience, aesthetic cellence was synonymous with mor. "Our public wanted to laug she says soberly, "and the creat community responded. There w many ads this year which made laugh but very few which made cry or even think."

Well, this may be true in c way: very few of the 120 prize-w ning ads we then sit through s designed to make us think. I while watching three or four co mercials in a row may, if o

ough force of habit, preclude ught, watching nearly three ght hours of the year's best com- cials from around the world can- help but make you think a great . What does the idea of "aes- ic excellence" really mean in unction with the craft of adver- g? Can advertising be discussed, out condescension, as an art? nd just because something is art, does that mean it's good for you?

Early in the evening, a Silver in Entertainment Promotion cate- goes to an ad for the Washing- State Lottery, a witty execution type of mini-fable familiar to one who watches TV. Three dies sit in a modest living room ching the closing minute of a ball game. The home team has a ial call to make: while two of the dies excitedly shout conflicting ce at the screen, the third calm- ctivates a red-buttoned intercom; see the coach onscreen answer headset, and the buddy—who, realize, has bought the team with lottery prize money—calls the ning play from his chair.

A thirty-second comedy, lightly sing and discrete. The fact that man's "entertainment" may be ther man's regressive tax on the r doesn't keep this government- missioned fantasy of empower- nt from going down like candy. ll, seeing it take its place in ight's unbroken parade of TV ads ds of a very different nature, on face of them—casts the lottery t in another, more paradigmatic ht. We watch, for instance, a mercial in which a boy's loving tionship with his Down syn- me–afflicted brother is symbol- l by the former teaching the latter proper method for eating an o. A wealthy man receives a no- from his wife's attorney. "Half? gets half?" he says. "I'll give her f," and he proceeds to chainsaw two every item in his mansion, il he reaches the garage and lays s on his beautiful Infiniti, where- on he says softly, "On second ought, maybe we can work this ." A "Performance" Clio, cynically enough, goes to a Hewlett-Packard spot that offers the genuine autobiographical reminiscences of Negro League legend John "Buck" O'Neil, grandson of a slave, who talks about the death of racism in his lifetime and links it with the wonders of the Internet; "That's progress," he says.

Although the doctrine, as it applies to Russian art, has blessedly passed from the earth, the term "socialist realism" is still one with which many people are familiar. Socialist realism describes an art, whether visual or literary, that is realistic in form but whose fealty is less to actual or individual experience than to a set of prescribed values—values that are repeatedly, didactically, seen to triumph. Such art is scornful of privacy; the characters who populate it are less individuals than abstractions, if not types, so that the capacity of its audience to see themselves in those characters, in their dilemmas and their solutions, might be maximized. Its focus is on the present, and on facilitating the acceptance of certain ideas about the future; it will, however, from time to time assist in the re-evaluation of certain ideas about the past. The production of this art, though still in the hands of individuals, is heavily subsidized—and its availability determined—by those in positions of power. Such art is usually simple to understand, not because its creators are dolts but because their aim is to communicate their message to the greatest number of people. The artists' hope is not that this portrait of society will be accurate but that society will be inspired to resemble the portrait.

An evening at the Clios makes more or less inescapable the connection between this sort of sponsored art and the art of the American television commercial: an aesthetic, in the term suggested by sociologist Michael Schudson, of "capitalist realism." Of course there are important semantic differences (Soviet art glorifies the producer; American advertising, the consumer), as well as a near reversal of the values such art is commissioned to protect—except, perhaps, to the degree that power itself can be considered a value. But the central value of American capitalist realism remains, for all its staggering refinement, as old as Marx: the fetishism of commodities. Capitalist realism amounts to an insistent portrait of the world as a garden of consumption in which any need—no matter how antimaterial, how intimate, or how social—can be satisfied by buying the right things. The relationship between the human qualities with which this art animates a given commodity and the commodity itself is a wholly fictional one, and it is upon that fiction, you could say, that our economy rests.

If you take a moment to think which ads, if any, you can recall from fifteen or twenty-five years ago, chances are they fit this profile seamlessly. The peaceful teenagers of all races gathered on the hilltop, holding Cokes, who wanted to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony? The black guy who lost his legs in Vietnam, falling to the ground in a pickup basketball game and refusing to be helped up, then sinking a basket on his brand-new artificial limbs? (Who even remembers that this was an ad for Du Pont?) John Hancock's "Real Life, Real Answers" series: the unnerving, vérité-style dramas of a couple at the closing for their first house or a son deciding how to provide nursing care for his elderly father? "You've come a long way, baby"? The relative heavy-handedness of these landmark ads may render them old-fashioned, but their technique is hardly outdated; this transubstantiation of consumer goods is still, as it's always been, the way most advertising works.

A campaign too current to qualify for the 1998 Clios, for Saturn automobiles, provides a museum-quality specimen. A black Saturn dealer reminisces about the day his own father bought a new car: "I don't think he was treated fairly," the man says over what looks like actual home movies, though they may well not be. "Those were the times we lived in. . . . And when I decided I wanted to go into the car business, I wanted to make him proud of me. Saturn is totally an extension of [illegible] personal values. We treat

all of our customers the same. And that's the way it should be. . . . Had Saturn been around then, it would have been entirely different. I think Dad would have come home smiling." Another Saturn ad features factory workers *dancing* as they assemble car radios. Is it really such a leap to think of this corporate portrait of ecstatic laborers as a kind of official a

"Why do I use the card?" says Jake B[illegible], the man who invented the [illegible]n snowboard, in a recent [illegible]erican Express ad. "All my life, [illegible]ve done things my own way. American Express never questioned that." To which one might well respond, Well, why the hell would they? But this individualist, who feels only gratitude for the non-interference in his private life of a multinational corporation, is the perfect capitalist-realist hero—a "rebel" whose dissent is confined to the products he chooses to buy.

If there's one great obstacle to understanding advertising art this way, it's that commercials' dominant aesthetic quality—humor—is the last thing we tend to associate with officially sanctioned art under Stalin or Hitler or Mao. But the rise of humor, especially self-deprecating humor, in advertisements goes hand-in-hand with what *The Conquest of Cool* author Thomas Frank has established as advertising's (and capitalism's) great achievement in the years since the 1960s: incorporating the idea of dissent from the doctrine of consumption into the doctrine itself. When Canon markets a new camera by naming it the Rebel, when Burger King tells us that "sometimes you've gotta break the rules," when, on the screen at Lincoln Center, a Gold Clio–winning ad for the software company Oracle intones that "a revolution is in our destiny," what these ads are really promoting is the idea of restlessness as a kind of conformity, of the endless pursuit of what's "rebellious" as the very engine of our economy. It's easy to understand, then, why humor should be the dominant signifier of this pseudo-rebellion; it lets us impose an ironic distance between ourselves and our own decidedly unrebellious behavior.

Not surprisingly, the capitalist-realist worldview is unshy about applying itself to other cultures ("How do you keep a rhino from charging?" one African "native" asks his peers in a current TV spot; the answer: give it an American Express card). Its reach extends backward into history, in ways that become more disturbing as technology grows more amazing: one Clio-winning Mercedes ad features actual historical black-and-white footage of German autoworkers, race-car drivers, housewives, etc., whose faces have been computer-altered so that they all appear to be singing "Falling in Love Again" in unison. It extends to the animal world (the ad in which a skydiver sports with a Pepsi-drinking Canadian goose garnered three 1998 Clios; the spot ends with a flock of geese forming the Pepsi logo), which is really a way of extending itself into the realm of the divine—of asserting that our order is the natural order. Sometimes the stretch into the divine is more explicit: a Clio-winning spot for Delta Airlines titled "My Word" pictures citizens releasing into the atmosphere helium balloons whose strings are attached to cards bearing words like "Success" and "Home." Or this for Volvo: "The people you've been looking at all share a common belief. That a car saved their lives." Or Evian: "Inside me lives an eternal life force. Natural spring water from the French Alps . . ."

In a world where this parallel reality is so firmly established, it's no wonder corporations have come to feel that, in the words of advertising critic Leslie Savan, "the news is just advertising by the other side."

Three 1998 Clios go to one of the most horrifying commercial raids on history of this or any year: Apple's "Think Different" campaign, which shamelessly pimps the images of Einstein, Gandhi, Picasso, Martin Luther King, Amelia Earhart, and pretty much any other dead genius who lived in the age of photography. The current of self-idolatry underlying these "tributes" surfaces for a moment with the disclosure, on the Lincoln Center video screen, that one of the writers of the Richard Drey voice-over ("Here's to the misfits, rebels, the troublemakers. . . . W some may see them as the crazy o we see genius") is none other t Apple founder and prodigal C Steve Jobs; indeed, the campai co-creators have said that they honor Mr. Jobs's decision not t the subject of an ad himself.

But there's another quality makes the "Think Different" s so perversely compelling, a stra that identifies it, in an adverti context, as thoroughly modern. though there has always been so thing capricious, not to say arrog about commercials' willingnes endow material objects with mag properties—the summoning into istence, say, of the Pepsi Gen tion—at least the ads themse were demonstrably about the p ucts they advertised; that is, t Pepsi ads portrayed a bunch young, beautiful, racially diverse, surdly upbeat people drinking lo Pepsi. In recent years, though, connection between a given ad tisement and the product it oste bly promotes has been stretc thinner and thinner, and now se finally to have given way entire mean, is an archival photograp Martin Luther King in any way r appropriate to the sale of compu than to any other product? Or sider one of the most talked-a ads of the past year (and a Br Clio winner), Volkswagen's "Su Afternoon"—more colloqui known, after its soundtrack musi "Da Da Da"—in which two guys car pick up a discarded chair, dis er it smells, then discard it ag How exactly does this comme hawk Volkswagens? (I suppose two silent characters are dri around in a Volkswagen, but if weren't, I wouldn't notice.) Is t anything, in theory, to prevent vignette from serving as an ac any car, or indeed any product a

In Leslie Savan's book *The S sored Life*, she describes the mo of research in 1990 that culmin in the corporate introduction o "six key adjectives" that best pressed the "brand personality Converse athletic shoes: the w

Haverhills' Best Sellers*

*But read this ad for an even better deal!

Still the greatest watch value: in the air, on land, at sea, and underwater...

Navigator™ Watch only $49.95*



•Don't be fooled by look-alike imitations. There is only one genuine Navigator™ Watch.

Wear this watch to work, to play, to swim and dive—and to rally. The *Navigator™ Watch* is steered by a sophisticated, ultra-accurate Japanese quartz movement that is powered by a tiny mercury cell. The *Navigator™* has both luminous analog dial and LCD display. It gives you dual time capability. The LCD display shows time continuously—in 12-hr. or 24-hr. mode. Push the button and you display day and date. There is a subtle yet insistent alarm and a switchable hourly time signal. The stopwatch/chronograph reads to 1/100 secs. and has "interrupt" and "lap" modes. A light switch illuminates the display.

The *Navigator™ Watch* is available in black metal execution (as per illustration, with linked black metal band) and silvertone (stainless steel execution, with linked silvertone metal band). It is water resistant to 150 ft. The crystal is "mineral glass"—it is virtually scratch-proof. ***Navigator™ Watch* #1005E400a for black and #1039E400b for silvertone execution.**

A spyglass in the great naval tradition...

Adm Nelson's Telescope™ (with table tripod) just $59.95*



When Horatio Nelson fought the battle of Trafalgar, he used a telescope just like this to monitor the movements of the French-Spanish fleet. Our manufacturer has created a faithful replica of this famous scope. *Admiral Nelson's Telescope™* measures about five inches in its "collapsed" position. When you extend the four sections to full length, the scope will be fifteen inches long and focused to infinity with needle sharpness. Everything will appear twenty-five times larger than it would to the naked eye. Compare that to standard binoculars which give you only 6x or 8x magnification. If you have ever wanted to own a fine telescope, but found prices a little steep, *Admiral Nelson's Telescope™* should be your choice. You'll get many years of good use and enjoyment from it. ***Admiral Nelson's Telescope™* #1069E400c**

•*The optics of* Admiral Nelson's Telescope™ *are "25x30" which means 25x magnification and the great light gathering capacity of a 30-mm objective lens. Admiral Nelson's telescope was made of brass. This replica is heavily chrome-plated for extra beauty and protection. The scope comes with a belt-looped vinyl carrying case. For permanent mounting the scope comes with an extendable table tripod.*

Rid your home of varmints and pests once and for all...

Rodelsonix IX™ only $69.95*



Mice, rats, roaches, bats, fleas, spiders and other pests make life miserable at home or at the plant. Old-fashioned poisons get rid of them—but only temporarily, and they are a hazard to you and to your pets. *Rodelsonix IX* works on a different principle: It delivers a tremendous blast of ultrasound—inaudible to you and your pets—that disrupts the nervous systems of those pests. They'll leave your home within a few weeks—never to return. No poison and no mess.

•Rodelsonix IX *is an industrial-type unit, the most powerful you can get. It's a humane and effective system to get rid of pests—once and for all*

Rodelsonix IX™ is an industrial-type unit designed and engineered to be effective in restaurants, factories, and food-processing plants. It protects up to 10,000 sq. ft. (70,000 cu. ft.). It has six variable pitch and "loudness" settings. You can even adjust it to keep larger pests, such as raccoons or rabbits, at bay. ***Rodelsonix IX™* #1007E400d**

Increase your hearing range by a factor of at least 10X, with...

PowerVox IV™ only $39.95*



• PowerVox™ *is state-of-the-art in sound amplification. It does for hearing what binoculars do for seeing. It brings everything 10-times closer.* PowerVox™ *is not a medical hearing aid. It is a way for you to better enjoy the world of sounds around you.*

The instructions to the *PowerVox IV™* caution you to have the control on "very low" when you first try the instrument. If you do not, it could scare the daylights out of you. The thing is truly astonishing and in a way almost unbelievable until you try it and convince yourself. Put the *PowerVox* in your shirt pocket or clip it to your belt and realize to your amazement you can hear people talking up to 50 feet away, a pin drop 10 feet away, and every little sound in your surroundings. A walk through the woods will reveal birds, deer, squirrels, and even little crawly things that you never would have known about otherwise. *PowerVox IV™* comes with a full complement of attachments: Belt/Pocket Clip and Earphones. The 9-volt battery is included of course! ***PowerVox IV™* #1050E400e**

A whole new world of listening pleasure with...

MR-307A™ PLL Digital AM/FM Radio only $59.95*



•*The MR-307A works on two AAA cells and, yes—they are included! It measures 2.5 x 4 inches and weighs less than five ounces. Fidelity is crisp; it's astonishing especially for a radio of its size.*

•*Consider the MR-307A as a corporate gift. We can silkscreen your logo on quantities of 100 units or more.*

You won't believe it until you actually hear it. Here is a radio so small that it comfortably fits into your shirt pocket; but it has sound so clear and so crisp that you'd think you were in a concert hall or listening to an elaborate sound system. Here are some of the other great features of this breakthrough receiver:

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- High-Impact Case
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- 10 Memory Presets
- Stereo Earphones
- Stereo Phone Jack
- Stereo/Mono Switch
- Key-Lock Function
- Batteries Included

Get most advanced technical features, "shirt pocket" AM/FM reception as you never had before, and enjoy a whole new world of listening pleasure. *MR-307A PLL Digital Radio* **#1057E400f**

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(the complete vestpocket optical system)

still only $59.95*



Remove the *Episcope™* from its fitted leather case and it's a 30-power microscope. A twist of the wrist converts it to a 3x telescope, or a unique 3x telescope-loupe. Another twist, and you have a choice of magnifiers and loupes: 5x, 10x, and 15x powers. The *Episcope™*, only 2" long, was developed in Wetzlar (Germany), the home of world-famous Leica cameras; it's now being made by one of Asia's finest lens makers. The optics are superb: brilliant luminosity, needle-sharp focus, absolute planarity, total chromatic correction, and fully anastigmatic. The *Episcope™* is the first choice of geologists, biologists, numismatists, philatelists, engineers, and just anybody who likes to see the infinite detail in his/her surroundings. It comes with a plastic "tripod" for extended observations at 15X or 30X magnifications. *Episcope™* **#1062E400g**

Even at its highest magnification at 30x, the Episcope resolves as distinctly as any laboratory microscope, yet it is only 2" long. An optical miracle.

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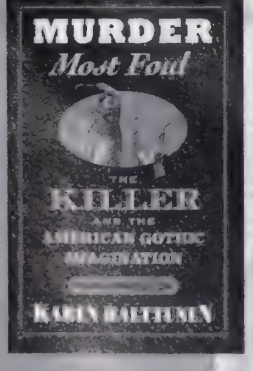
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MURDER MOST FOUL

The Killer and the American Gothic Imagination

KAREN HALTTUNEN



In *Murder Most Foul*, Karen Halttunen explores the changing view of murder from early New England sermons read at the public execution of murderers, through the nineteenth century, when secular and sensational accounts replaced the sacred treatment of the crime, to today's true crime literature and tabloid reports. Early narratives were shaped by a strong belief in original sin and spiritual redemption. The Gothic imagination later seized upon the murderer as a moral monster, separated from the normal majority by an impassable gulf. This view has provided a set of conventions surrounding tales of murder that remain with us today. Halttunen's penetrating analysis reveals how our stones have failed to make sense of the killer and how that failure has constrained our understanding and treatment of criminality today.

[illegible]ftones • $29.95 cloth
Illustrations: Courtesy American Antiquarian Society

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were "confident," "genuine," "h
working," "tough," "unselfish,"
"passionate." The relationship
tween these words and the ob
they describe, notwithstanding
"research" that went into them,
only be called arbitrary—and s
arbitrariness, for advertisers as
the Surrealists, is the goverr
principle of language. Ever since
days of patent medicine, the c
mon and easy knock against ads
been that they tell lies; and w
occasionally a corporation is ca
in that lie (as when, for insta
12,000 gallons of orange juice n
from concentrate were confisc
by the FDA because the w
"fresh" appeared on the carton)
feel that the wizard has been
posed. But to call a sneaker '
selfish," or even just to propose
putting it on your foot will re
you thus, is not a lie exactly;
more of an uncoupling of the
nection between language and r
ty. The real condition of adverti
speech is not falsehood as much
kind of truthlessness.

The gradual disappearance, t
of products from the commer
that promote them is just a matt
advertising following the logic c
own form. As the relationship
tween a commodity and its supp
qualities becomes more ethe
moving from a trumping-up of a
qualities ("helps build strong b
12 ways") to wholly invented
("Coke adds life"), so the celebra
of those particular qualities—h
ism for Apple, anomie for Volk
gen—is less and less dependent u
the presence of the commodity i

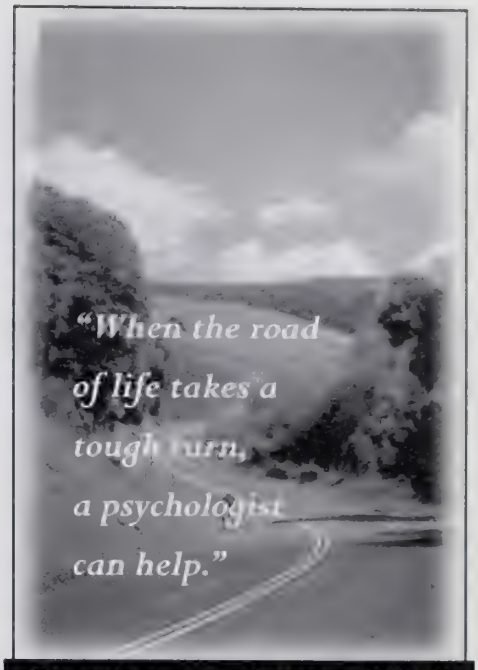
"Physics says," the critic and
elist George Steiner once told a
terviewer, "—and I don't unders
what it means but it's lovely—
there is a universe of antimatte
actly mirroring ours and that w
matter and antimatter collide
annihilate each other. I trie
show [in his novel *The Portage t*
Cristobal of A.H.] that . . . there
anti-language, that which is t
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and meaning." If advertising ca
said to do any sort of harm, thi
tion of anti-language gets at the
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itself; the harm is in the ex-
nge, in the collision of ad lan-
ge, ad imagery, with other sorts of
guage that contend with it in the
lic realm. When Apple reprints
old photo of Gandhi, or
neken ends its ads with the
ds "Seek the Truth," or Winston
gests that we buy cigarettes by
posing (just under the surgeon
eral's warning) that "You have to
reciate authenticity in all its
ns," or Kellogg's identifies itself
n the message "Simple Is Good,"
se occasions color our contact
h those words and images in their
er, possibly less promotional ap-
ations. It's a truism that advertis-
encroaches upon public discourse
endlessly privatizing every cranny
public space: the sides of school
es, water towers, just above uri-
s, banana peels, the pages of
va's income-tax booklet, even
ch sand, which can now be tem-
arily imprinted with corporate lo-
. The real violence, though, lies
in the ways in which these mes-
es are forced upon us but in the
ion they embody that words can
made to mean anything, which is
rd to distinguish from the idea
t words mean nothing.

n that same vein it comes as no
prise to learn that the eponymous
o is not some catchy acronym or
ne beloved industry figure but is
ne other than the ancient Greek
se of history and heroic poetry.
not hard to figure why the show's
nders chose forty years ago to
ch their project to Greek mythol-
for the patina of class and eruditi-
n it provides—that's exactly the
nd of colonization of value at
ich advertising excels—but if you
nder whether, by invoking this
rticular muse, advertisers were also
pressing some longing for a sense
historical memory in this most
f-effacing of the arts, you're ap-
oaching the problem from the
ong angle. The salient fact about
io in this context is that, of all the
uses, she has the shortest name.
st imagine trying to sell the public
awards show called the Terpsi-
ores or the Polyhymnias. The
nvented Clio—muse of appropria-
n, and of the alchemy by which
depth is turned to account as surface—turns out to be the perfect muse for advertising after all.

Every generation, every subculture, has its own icon of misappropriation by the advertising industry: Nike's use of the Beatles' "Revolution," for example, or Munch's "The Scream" reanimated to sell Pontiacs, or Aaron Copland's "Rodeo" used to encourage people to eat more beef, or Fred Astaire dancing with the vacuum cleaner, or Jack Kerouac posthumously hawking khakis. Sitting in the audience at Alice Tully Hall, I get to feel just that sort of overly personalized cultural despair as I watch the men and women of Wieden & Kennedy walk onstage to accept their honors for the Microsoft campaign built around David Bowie and Brian Eno's brilliant 1977 song "Heroes." The two-note drone and locomotive rhythm of that dirge for individualism in the age of crowds are now employed as the soundtrack for a series of classic capitalist-realist dramas in which various small-business owners grow rich by surrendering to the higher will and becoming part of the global fiefdom of Microsoft. The campaign's rapid cuts and elegant visual style win it two Clios for Best Editing.

It's a familiar story: a respected artist who is usually rich already agrees to the recontextualization of his or her work (or image, or voice) in exchange for a bushel of money—Bob Dylan, Spalding Gray, Kurt Vonnegut, Lena Horne, the Pretenders, Maurice Sendak, Beck, William Burroughs, Meryl Streep, Jimmy Stewart, Salvador Dalí, Laurie Anderson, ad infinitum. One imagines that in some cases the culturally sacred character of the work itself is precisely what the artist is pleased to destroy. If the meaning of the work in its original form isn't permanently altered, it certainly experiences a kind of vertigo; I find it hard to imagine, for example, that when Bowie and Eno sat down to write "Heroes" they had in mind the derring-do of venture capitalists. In fact, by using only one line from the song's chorus ("We could be he-

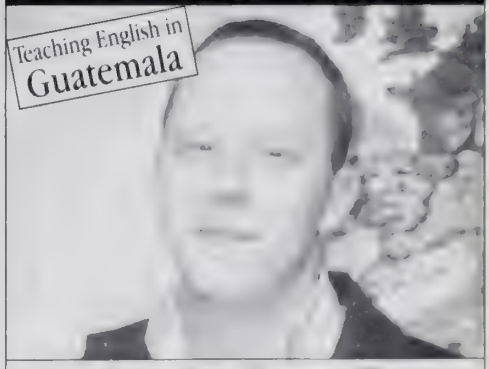


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roes") to accompany what is in effect a series of fables about people who have learned to stop worrying and love monopoly, the ad's makers have attached a meaning to the song something very like the direct opposite of its original meaning. But who cares? One feels like a Puritan for even bringing it up. Sometimes there's a brief and vaguely formulated backlash against the artist (usually focusing on the fact that he or she didn't really need the money anyway); but the outcry passes.

Should it? Take the case of William Burroughs, who was much vilified for appearing in a Nike ad in 1994. In his eleven novels, Burroughs posited a psychic landscape, as Vince Passaro wrote in the pages of this magazine, in which "the self . . . become[s] a constant battleground between forces of unseen invasion and occupation and some other force, call it language . . . that is capable of revealing the invaders and rendering them harmless." For him then to have participated in the assimilation of his voice and his image by a multinational conglomerate, to have lent it his own air of anticorporate subversiveness when in fact nothing could have been less appropriate, less *true*, was indeed a genuine and shameful public repudiation of everything Burroughs purported to believe in, everything he implicitly asked others to value by valuing his work. It should be a source of horror to everyone who admired him.

At the same time, as Burroughs may well have foreseen, the difference between himself and, say, a Douglas Coupland or a Julia Alvarez (both of whom have written short stories commissioned to serve as advertisements for Absolut Vodka) is that Burroughs's work was strong enough in the first place to survive all sorts of cultural damage, even the degradations of its own creator. John Dos Passos, to cite a comparable case, wrote the trilogy of novels entitled *U.S.A.* and then spent some thirty years working to disavow the anticapitalist ideals those novels espoused; today, twenty-eight years after Dos Passos's death, *U.S.A.* is one of the supreme achievements of twentieth-century American literature, and its creator's subsequent contradiction of it something like a scholarly footnote.

But what's even more discomfiting than this sort of belated sellout by a cultural hero such as Burroughs or even Bowie is a modern phenomenon exemplified by "Bittersweet Symphony," the debut single by a young British rock band called The Verve. Backed by a hypnotic tape loop of a single musical phrase scored for strings, the song proved popular enough to land The Verve on the cover of *Rolling Stone* magazine this spring. In the video for the song, lead singer Richard Ashcroft is the picture of rebelliousness, tall, gaunt, fashionably unwashed, walking down a city street unapologetically knocking aside anyone who happens to step in his path. Even while this video, at the apex of its popularity, was still in heavy rotation on MTV, "Bittersweet Symphony" could be heard elsewhere, in another context: as the soundtrack to a Nike commercial.

While it's true that the commercial used only the song's first line ("'Cause it's a bittersweet symphony, this life"), editing out the second ("Try to make ends meet, you're a slave to the money, then you die"), in fact such selectiveness hardly matters. Because by establishing this double life for itself—on one channel, it's an expression of defiant nihilism; on another, it's a recommendation to buy sneakers—the song has in effect written its own antilanguage; it *has* no meaning for them, no substance that a misappropriation might violate. "Bittersweet Symphony" is concerned not with feeling or belief but with the expert simulation of these things. Its audience expects nothing more from it. This is the condition of most contemporary popular art. It has assimilated the sensibility of advertising. As it happens, The Verve themselves have publicly decried this commercialization of their work; indeed, they have gone so far as to donate their Nike fee to charity. Lest we feel too sorry for them, though, the reason the commercial use of "Bittersweet Symphony" is out of their control in the first place is t the song's music—that catchy chestral tape loop—turns out have been lifted, or "sampled," as expression goes, from an old alb of Rolling Stones music. In the l bartering that made this permissi The Verve were in effect disow by the song that made them fam virtually from the moment it composed, "Bittersweet Sympho was the property of people disin ested in its conception.

Other recent ads have featu the music of bands whose popula hadn't even advanced as far p the starting line as The Verv The Crystal Method (Gap), L cious Jackson (Gap again), Elastica (Budweiser). The stand model of explanation for this p nomenon in which obscure art are considered ideal product pit men would cite the refinement the process of co-optation, with cynical adman hacking his v Marlow-like up the River of Coo search of the mythical source. this explanation doesn't account the eager participation of those ing "co-opted." The better expla tion is that popular art has come model itself after advertising in sense that it can be presumed have no subject; like advertising is now concerned with the appe ance of engagement rather than gagement itself.

It wouldn't be accurate to say t these bands have "sold out," beca at that early point in their care they had nothing to sell, no iden to betray—only their fame, whic hardly a principle or a value. Th again, when your work has no c tent—which is to say, no connect between the language you use your actual conviction—you h nothing to lose anyway. Consi the case of Emily XYZ, an "unc ground" poet who was invited Nike to write a work celebrating of the female athletes in the 1 Winter Olympics, with the und standing that this "poem" wo constitute the copy for a Nike "c mercial film." Up to that point, one outside of a small circle l heard of her or knew what her w concerned. Now that situation

HARPER'S MAGAZINE
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Every now and then, the advertising industry wonders what sort of people read one or another of the nation's leading journals of opinion, and in compliance with the most recent inquiries, Harper's Magazine *assembled a standard questionnaire. The magazine pays the cost of the fax transmission. The first fifty readers who send their responses by January 29, 1999, will receive a free gift.*

1) Sex

1. Male
2. Female

2) Age

1. Under 18
2. 18–24
3. 25–34
4. 35–49
5. 50–64
6. 65+

3) Current household income

1. Less than $24,999
2. $25,000–$49,999
3. $50,000–$99,999
4. $100,000–$174,999
5. More than $175,000

4) Nature of primary business

1. Education
2. Engineering
3. Finance
4. Insurance
5. Law
6. Medicine
7. Telecommunications
8. Government
9. Journalism

5) Best description of job or profession

1. Owner/Partner
2. President/CEO
3. Doctor/Physician
4. Attorney
5. Educator
6. Journalist/Editor

6) Number of employees in your company or firm

1. 1–9
2. 10–24
3. 25–99
4. 100–499
5. 500–999
6. 1,000+

7) Hours spent on the Internet per week

1. Less than 2
2. 2–5
3. More than 5

8) Planned travel in the next 12 months

1. United States
2. Canada
3. Europe
4. Asia

9) Hours spent reading *Harper's Magazine* per issue

1. Less than 1
2. 1–2
3. 2–3
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1. Less than 2 years
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3. More than 5 years
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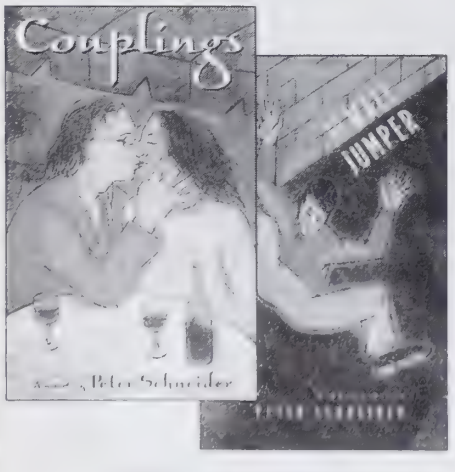
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longer obtains: millions have heard and seen her—she's the poet from the Nike television commercial—and as for what her work concerns, the question is moot, since she has demonstrated that the content of that work is arbitrary; that is, it's for sale.

It's easy, perhaps, to make examples of individual artists without knowing all the circumstances surrounding their decisions. Easy, too, to punish kitsch just for being kitsch: little has changed about the superficiality of most popular art since Clement Greenberg wrote in 1939, "Kitsch is vicarious experience and faked sensations. . . . Kitsch is the epitome of all that is spurious in the life of our times. Kitsch pretends to demand nothing of its customers except their money—not even their time." But Greenberg also wrote that "the precondition for kitsch . . . is the availability close at hand of a fully matured cultural tradition" whose aesthetic discoveries kitsch eventually waters down and draws upon. What does that tradition consist of today? Say you're a talented young filmmaker like Kevin Smith (*Clerks*, *Chasing Amy*), who directed two Diet Coke commercials in 1997. Say, hypothetically, that in spite of the siren call of directorial fees as high as $25,000 per day, and of production budgets that work out on average to $10,000 per second of film (versus the $5 per second you spent shooting *Clerks*), you're haunted by the specter of artistic compromise. You might then look over your shoulder, figuratively speaking, at the following list of elder directors who also made ads while they were making feature films: Spike Lee, Woody Allen, Adrian Lyne, Ridley Scott, David Lynch, John Frankenheimer, Federico Fellini, Jean-Luc Godard, and on and on. What's "close at hand" for today's younger artists is not the example of a few cynical predecessors, nor a simple and timeworn kitsch sensibility, but the legacy of a corrupted aesthetic: an aesthetic that imagines the separation of form and content is not a renunciatory path to a greater understanding of the processes of art (as it was for Picasso, Mondrian, Pollock, Gertrude Stein) but instead a ma of moral expedience. It's the g

Modernist impulse, rep ed as farce.

And it echoes throughout the arts. Pop music, for instance, hardly be taken to task for shall ness: in the right hands, an affec for surface can be pop's grea virtue. But how to account for ascendancy of an artist like S Combs, a.k.a. Puff Daddy? artists have always appropriated work of others in order to put gether a kind of sonic pastiche, the best work of this kinc thrillingly inventive. But Puff Da simply *plays* entire songs by o artists (The Police's "Every Br You Take," Led Zeppelin's "K mir") and raps unimaginatively them, not unlike what many o might have done in our bedro when we were twelve and our ents were out of the house. W the aesthetic difference between way a commercial "appropriate pop song and the work of Puff dy? His is not a recontextualizat not an homage, but a boldly sin confiscation of the work of othe a way of increasing his own value advertisement for himself. If don't watch enough MTV to k how well this strategy has worke Puff Daddy, ask your children.

Much "highbrow" visual art in time is art that recontextual rather than makes: Rachel Wh read's water tower, Damien Hi dead shark, Jeff Koons's basket Smirk if you want at the reputat of Cy Twombly or Jean-Mic Basquiat; at least they were brin something into the world that w there before, which I would cons a kind of baseline definition f work of art. But a mattress or a of bricks or a suit of clothes hanger, placed in a museum wit artist's credit on a nameplate b it, feels awfully like the triumph art of the advertising sensibility: rapacious, ironic, wholesale ap priation of that which isn't yours way of enhancing not so much object's value as your own.

Movies, too, come increasing resemble commercials, and not

he relatively brutish form of oduct placement" (a practice that been around since the 1930s). yone who has sat through a kbuster like *Twister* or *Indepen-e Day*—or, for that matter, well-ewed films like the execrable *Fiction* or *Boogie Nights*—knows t it is to encounter a work of art n no subject, or whose "subject" with the porn industry in *Boogie its*) elicits no opinion, no emo-al response on the part of the st: it's simply a pretext for the play of humorous old clothes, uely humorous old music, and e nudity. These movies are not *like* ads; they *are* ads. The prod-they are selling is themselves.

The clearest expression of this cegenated aesthetic is MTV, ose "programming" (music eos) consists of advertisements: ensive, creative little films fi-ced by record companies to ex-the sales of their real commodi-records. That's not to say music eos are hypocritical, or unenjoy-e, or subliminally evil. The prac-oners of this relatively new form not transgressing the presumed ndary between art and advertis-ing: for them, that bound-ary is simply not there.

And the withering away of this thetic Berlin Wall is in turn what unbound, in the last few years, creative animus of advertising. viously, commercials were little rks of art that aspired to resemble l life; now it is enough that they emble works of art. Take any of famous Absolut vodka ads, in ich well-known artists (Warhol, scha, Motherwell, etc.) offer their terpretation" of the familiar bot-design, a campaign that won four ios this year. Or Nissan's "Pi-ons" spot, an elaborate gag that k home a Clio for the efforts of llywood special-effects power-use Industrial Light & Magic. Or stunning *1984*-ish production of urrent ad for a Reebok running e called DMX, which ends with a ner literally bursting through his n skin. The contrast between the istic brilliance lavished upon ese tributes to commodities and the pedestrian nature of the commodities themselves is not an issue to the artists involved: the function of art in advertising, after all, whether original or appropriated, is to inject with value that which intrinsically has no value. The absolute, if superficial, creative freedom this provides is well suited to most of advertising's creators; as E. B. White conjectured years ago, a great deal of the advertising we see every day is a reflection not of scientific business principles but of "the simple desire of people who write and draw to write and draw." The men and women who make ads are not hucksters; they are artists with nothing to say, and they have found their form.

Still, if there's one moment at Alice Tully Hall when I think I hear the hoofbeats of the horsemen of the cultural apocalypse, it's the screening, toward the end of the evening, of a gorgeous two-minute commercial for the BBC, a Gold Clio winner, entitled "Perfect Day." The ad consists, in its entirety, of Lou Reed singing his song of the same name, joined via editing by Elton John, Bono, Tom Jones, Emmylou Harris, Laurie Anderson, David Bowie, Robert Cray, Dr. John, Shane MacGowan, and a dozen others. Reed, an avatar of hip recently anointed by PBS as an "American Master," cheerfully treats his own work like a found object, oblivious to the idea that it had an original intent that might be violated or that the song's integrity, or his own, might be injured by this radical recontextualization. "You're going to reap/Just what you sow," the chorus goes, and as the author of those words goes about proving that they're meaningless to him, I have a feverish feeling of useless passion, something like the feeling you get as a child when you accidentally let go of a balloon and have to watch it disappear.

And I realize why that story of the Clio debacle in 1991 is so satisfying: the thousands of dollars spent on tickets, tuxes, entry fees, and in the end everyone just scrambles onstage and grabs a statue, or a few statues. In a ceremony promising the rigorous judgment of aesthetic success, the prizes wind up being distributed randomly—symbols of excellence,

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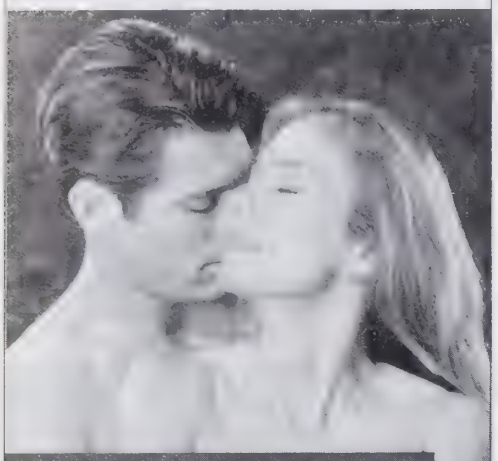
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stripped of their relation to that which they symbolize. They should give out the Clios that way every year.

By the time the lights come up in Alice Tully Hall, there's no gainsaying Dupuy's analysis; humor was in last year. So what's funny to advertisers? In a word, sincerity: ad after ad functions by creating a kind of straw man of oversincerity whom we can all join in affectionately mocking. Clios go to the creators of the Weather Channel ads wherein weather fanatics with painted faces sit in a "weather bar" and scream like rabid football fans at a TV screen showing temperatures and the movements of warm fronts; the Miller Lite beer ad (one of the series authored by the fictional creative genius "Dick") in which a guy at a chick movie bursts into tears when he drops his beer; the Cartoon Network's "Cartoon Crisis Center," whose staff talks with heart-pounding intensity to animated characters in trouble (to a caller who's suspended in midair after running off the edge of a cliff: "Don't look down . . . No, I said *don't* look down"); the HBO-obsessed barber who never takes his eyes from the screen, even while cutting hair, so that the whole small town in which he works looks like a collection of circus freaks. I may fetishize my commodities, one imagines the viewer of these ads saying, but at least I'm not as bad as *that* guy.

To their credit, advertisers don't exempt themselves from these cartoons of earnestness. The funniest ads of the evening are those that mock their own purposes. A commercial for Mizuno running shoes purports to settle the question of which shoe is better, Mizuno or Nike, by putting the former on the right foot of a sprinter and the latter on the left. With each stride, the announcer intones quickly and with gravity, "Mizuno in the lead. Nike in the lead. Mizuno in the lead . . ." As the sprinter's right foot crosses the finish line first, the announcer says, "Mizuno is the winner. Nike is last." An even more amusing spot for the fast-food chain Jack in the Box opens with a [illegible] wearing the restaurant's famili[illegible] ant puppet head knocking o[illegible] door of a stereotypical surfer [illegible] and saying he'd heard tha[illegible] surfer had been referring t[illegible] restaurant as "Junk in the Box [illegible] the surfer tries to slam the do[illegible] him, the puppet-head kicks it [illegible] chases the man through his l[illegible] and into the yard (followed [illegible] *Cops*-style handheld camera), [illegible] les him, force-feeds him the [illegible] improved Jack in the Box b[illegible] and fries, and literally beats a [illegible] monial out of him. This disar[illegible] bit of self-burlesque got the [illegible] sustained applause of the night.

It's a great joke, all right; but [illegible] long will it stay funny? Debate [illegible] whether or not advertising is a[illegible] amounts to little more than s[illegible] mishness. Vacuous, fundamen[illegible] compromised, advertising is n[illegible] theless America's most ascen[illegible] homegrown influence on the [illegible] thetic legacy of this century. [illegible] any art, it follows the internal [illegible] of its own historical developm[illegible] and the problem confronting [illegible] the apex of its effectiveness, i[illegible] same problem that confronts li[illegible] ture, painting, music: is ther[illegible] such thing as a terminal poin[illegible] irony? The notion that irony i[illegible] proaching a kind of critical ma[illegible] our culture has led some y[illegible] artists to wonder mutinously a[illegible] the hipness of insincerity. The [illegible] versive deadpan that powered [illegible] art by Roy Lichtenstein and R[illegible] Coover and Talking Heads [illegible] withered into a cultural refl[illegible] complicity; the smirk of ironic[illegible] engagement exchanged betw[illegible] artist and audience now refe[illegible] nothing but itself, like two mi[illegible] held face to face. Might the [illegible] few years see the advent of a [illegible] principled, unhedged, lyrical, [illegible] ingly guileless sort of art?

Should that day come, advert[illegible] will, no doubt, learn to simu[illegible] those qualities just as well as it s[illegible] lates anything else. But per[illegible] when it does it will look more [illegible] ly—even to its practitioners—[illegible] the unsmiling propaganda it ha[illegible] ways constituted, never more th[illegible] its most cheerfully ironic hour.

AGAINST THE ODDS

By William Trevor

Mrs. Kincaid decided to lie low. ere had been a bit of bother, noth- much but enough to cause her to ange her address. From time to time e was obliged to do so.

She wondered about Portrush. It s May, which meant t the holiday accom- dation would still be ailable at low-season rms. She wondered out Cushendall, which e would have preferred cause she preferred the there, but only three ars had passed since her t visit, and somehow ree years didn't feel ite long enough. ushendun, Ballygally, rtstewart, Ardglass, ngor, Kilkeel. Mrs. ncaid had breathed the in all of them.

This time, though, e decided on an in- nd town. She knew any of these also: Ar- agh and Lisburn in rticular, but Bally- ena, Magherafelt, Lurgan, and rtadown almost as well. She was a lfast woman herself but long ago d made all the territory of the Six ounties her business ground. Only nce, in 1987, had she strayed out- de the North of Ireland, taking the arne crossing to Stranraer, then traveling on to Glasgow, an episode in her life she regretted and preferred not to dwell upon. Equally regretted was a suspended sentence in the Derry courts in 1981, since it had ruled out as a place to do business a city she was particularly fond of.



Mrs. Kincaid—with no claim to that name other than her occasional use of it—was just over eleven stone, and tall. Although well covered, she gave no impression of plumpness; no bloated or sagging flesh seemed superfluous beneath her clothes. Her arms were sturdy, her legs looked strong. In her own opinion her biggish face was something she got away with, no feature in it particularly objectionable, neither a fallen-away chin nor protruding teeth. Modest in her dress, careful not to overdo her use of perfume and makeup, she was sixty years old, admitting to fifty-one. Her easy smile worked wonders.

"Well, isn't that great?" she remarked to the driver of the Ulsterbus that was taking her to the inland town she had finally chosen, one she neither knew nor was known in. Her display of elation as she entered the bus had to do with the declaration of peace in the Six Counties. A double cease-fire had been announced in the thirty years' war that was not called a war; politicians from within the North of Ireland and from London and Dublin, advisers from America, had drawn up a long agenda that had since been agreed to by referendum on both sides of the border. Mrs. Kincaid had not herself suffered more than inconvenience during the years of conflict; the trouble in her life had been a personal one. Yet the havoc that occurred with such weary repetition and for so long had naturally impinged; she would be glad to see its end.

"Great?" the bus driver responded to her optimism.

"The peace."

"There's maybe something in their bits of paper." Nonchalantly, the driver turned on the ignition. Windscreen wipers lumbered across the curved glass in front of him, clearing away a few drops of rain. "We'll see,"

illiam Trevor is the author of the novel eath in Summer and the story collection fter Rain, both from Viking. His last story r Harper's Magazine, "Gilbert's Mother," peared in the May 1993 issue.

ustration by Gwyn Stramler

he said, a reminder in his tone that whatever agreements had been reached, whatever pledges given, there were gunmen who had not gone away, who still possessed their armory and were used to calling the tune. "We'll see," he said again.

"Hope for the best."

"Aye."

"Isn't it cold, though, for May? Whenever I looked out first thing I said you'll be needing your wool, Mabel."

The bus driver agreed that the weather was unseasonable, then started his engine. Mrs. Kincaid passed on to a seat. She never liked leaving Belfast. Its streets were hers, its intonations always a pleasure to hear again when she returned from an exile never made through choice. The bombs that had battered its buildings, blown its motorcars to pieces, maimed and killed its citizens, had never, in thirty years, caused her to wish to live elsewhere. Child of a Belfast boardinghouse, she had salted away the wealth that property had fetched when she inherited it, only later to be parted from her gains, which was the personal circumstance that had colored her life since.

She sat alone on the bus, her two brown suitcases on the rack above her. As always, she traveled light. Rented rooms with furniture supplied were what she liked, someone else's taste. She lived in that way, and although she guessed that in the town she was going to there wouldn't be a soul who did so, too, she would manage not to stand out. Not yet composed, whatever story came to her on her journey would see to that for her.

Blakely crushed the peas beneath his fork, then mixed them into a mush of potato and gravy. There was one piece of meat left, its size calculated to match what was left of the potatoes and peas. Since first being on his own he had got into this way of eating, of gauging forkfuls in advance, of precisely combining the various items on his plate. It was a substitute for [illegible], for invariably, these days, Blakely ate alone.

Six days a week he drove in from the farm and sat down at the same table in Hirrel's Café, never looking at a menu but taking whatever was on specially for that day. On Sundays he sat down with the Reverend Johnston in the manse, having brought with him whatever eggs he could spare, or buttermilk, which the Reverend Johnston was partial to, once a month a turkey. In December he supplied Hirrel's with turkeys also.

The *Belfast Telegraph*, folded and propped up against two Yorkshire Relish bottles, was full of the recent political developments and the prospect for the future. Fourteen years ago Blakely's wife and daughter had been killed in error, a bomb attached to a car similar in make and color to the would-be victim's, the registration number varying by only a single digit. Promptly, he had received an apology, a telephone call of commiserations that sounded genuine. Two wreaths were sent.

He pushed his knife and fork to the side of the plate, and a few minutes later Mrs. Hirrel brought him a plate of rhubarb and custard and a pot of tea. He thanked her, folding the newspaper away. The men of violence were still in charge, no doubt about it. He'd said that to Mrs. Hirrel the time the cease-fires were predicted, and she'd agreed with him. They'd talked about it for a long while; today, as yesterday and the day before, there was nothing left to say on the subject. Mrs. Hirrel remarked instead that the rhubarb was all young shoots, grown under plastic, the first that had come up out the back. "See to that woman, Nellie," she called out to her waitress, for a woman had entered the café, bringing with her a stream of bitterly cold air.

All the tables were taken, as they always were at this time. Shop people came to Hirrel's at lunchtime, commercial travelers took advantage of being in the town in the middle of the day. Toomey from the Northern Bank was always there, with the lady clerk with whom he was going out. Van drivers, occasionally a lorry driver, looked in.

"Can you wait a wee minute?" Nellie enquired of the newcomer. "There's several finishing up."

"D'you know who that is, Mr. Blakely?" Mrs. Hirrel asked him, and he said he didn't, and Mrs. Hi said nor did she. "Would she there a minute with you while drink your tea?"

Sometimes this happened bec of the empty chair opposite him. never minded. Travelers in draper hardware items would fall into c versation with him, giving him s idea of the current ups and dowr the commercial world, usually as him what line he was in himself.

"Are you sure?" Led to the ta Mrs. Kincaid was hesitant before sat down. "I wouldn't want to bu on you."

"You're doing rightly," Blakely assured her. He was a nervous with strangers and often expre himself not quite as he meant t order to get out any words at all. tea was hot and he would have li to pour it onto the saucer. But wouldn't do in Hirrel's.

"Homey," Mrs. Kincaid remar looking around her at a familiar pect—the laminate tabletops, ch knives and forks, plates of bread butter, faces intent on masticatio toothpick occasionally spear trapped shreds: many times she frequented cafés like this. The opposite her at least had taken of cap, which often men didn't w they ate in such places. He had t gray hair cut short and a lean, nar face with a deep flush in both che A healthy-looking, outside man, enough dressed, with a collar and In Mrs. Kincaid's childhood if a not wearing a collar and tie cam the boardinghouse after a room was turned away at once.

"Isn't it chilly today, though?" remarked, noticing that a plat rhubarb and custard had been ished quite tidily, a little left beh spoon and fork kept together. I fifties, she put him down as; fin nails a little grimed but nothin write home about.

"There's a few more days of it, said, and then the waitress was th asking her what she'd like, say the mutton was finished. Mrs. H caid ordered a plate of bread butter, and tea.

"Have we peace at last?" asked, and the man replied civ enough that you wouldn't know.

opinion was that there was a
way to go, and she could feel
being careful about how he put
n how he chose his words: not
wing about her, not knowing
ch foot she dug with, as her fa-
used to say, he held back. He
red himself another cup of tea,
ed milk, and stirred in sugar, two
nfuls of granulated.

'Ach, it's been going on too
," she said.

'Maybe it's the end so."

He folded his newspaper into a
pocket of his jacket. The jacket
of dark tweed and needed a press,
tle tear where a button had come
You could tell from his way with
waitress that he was a regular. He
nted out the money for his bill
left a five-p piece and some cop-
as a tip. "Good day," he said be-
he went to pay at the counter.

rom force of habit rather than
thing else, Mrs. Kincaid contin-
to wonder about Blakely after
gone. She wondered if he could
a road surveyor, since something
ut him reminded her of a road
veyor she'd once briefly known.
imagined him with a road gang,
nell of tar in the air, fresh chip-
gs still pale on the renovated sur-
e. Then Mrs. Kincaid reminded
self that she wasn't here to inter-
herself in a man she didn't know,
from it. She had left her two suit-
es in the newsagent's shop where
bus had put her down. When
'd had something to eat and had
de enquiries she'd go back and
lect them.

'Try Bann Street," the waitress
said. "There's a few that
let rooms there."

Leave it, Mrs. Kincaid warned
rself again when she noticed
kely coming out of Hirrel's Café
r days later, repeating her re-
nder to herself that she was not
e for anything like that. She'd
a month, she had decided: from
perience a month was long
ugh for any bit of trouble to qui-
n. Talk of solicitors' letters, of
lking straight round to a police
tion, threats of this and that, all
mered away to nothing when a
le time went by. Frayed tempers
mended, pride came to terms with whatever foolishness she'd taken advantage of in the way of business. Not that much had mended in her own case, not that pride had ever recovered from the dent it had received, but her own case was different and always had been. Eighty-four thousand pounds the boardinghouse had realized in 1968, more like ten times that it would be now. "We'd put the little enterprise in your name," the man she'd thought of as her fiancé had said. "No hanky-panky." But somehow in the process of buying what he always called the little enterprise the 84,000 had slipped out of her name. Soon after that it had disappeared and he with it. The little enterprise it was to purchase was a bookmaker's in Argyle Street, an old bookie retiring, two generations of goodwill. A chain took it over a couple of months later.

These days Mrs. Kincaid did her best to take the long view, telling herself that what had happened was like a death and that you couldn't moan about a death forever, not even to yourself. In her business activities she did not seek vengeance but instead sought to accumulate what was rightfully hers, keeping her accounts in a small red notebook, always with the hope that one day she would not have to do so, that her misfortune in the past would at last free her from its thrall.

Walking against a steady east wind on the day she saw Blakely for the second time, she recalled his lean face very clearly, his tufty hair, the tear in his jacket where the button had come off. He'd be a bachelor or a widower, else he wouldn't be taking his dinner in a café every day. You could tell at once the foot he dug with, as decent a Protestant foot as her own, never a doubt about that.

The room she had taken—not in Bann Street but above a butcher's shop in Knipe Street—smelt of meat and suet. She had an electric ring to cook on, a sink for the washing of clothes and dishes, lavatory and bathroom a flight up. There was a television, a gas fire, a single bed under the window, and when she fried something on the electric ring the butchery smell disappeared for a

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while. Mrs. Kincaid had been in worse places.

She brought back from the shops a bar of Kit Kat, *Woman's Own*, *Hello!*, *The Lady*, and a film magazine. She ate the chocolate bar, read a story about a late flowering of romance, made tea, slipped out of her skirt and blouse, slept, and dreamed she had married a clergyman to whom she'd once sold back the letters he'd written her. When she woke she washed herself, fried rashers and an egg, and went out again.

She sat alone at a table in the bar of Digby's Hotel, listening to tunes of the Fifties, all of which she was familiar with. Occasionally someone smiled at her, a man or a woman, the girl behind the bar, but generally they just went by. She heard talk about a dance. She would have gone on her own when she was younger, but those days were over now. She drank vodka with no more than a coloring of port in it, which was her tipple. She bought a packet of cigarettes, though as a general rule she didn't smoke anymore. She wasn't going to be able to resist what had been put in her path: she knew that perfectly.

She knew it again when she woke up in the middle of the night and lay for a while awake in the darkness. The smell from the shop below had come back, and when she dropped back into sleep she dreamed that the man she had met in the café was in butcher's clothes, separating lamb chops with a cleaver.

There was a traveler on his own by the table at the window, but that was the smallest table in the café and he had his samples case on the other chair, out of the way of people passing. Otherwise, Blakely's was the only table that wasn't shared.

"Only she said go on over," the same woman who'd shared it with him before said.

"You're welcome. Sure, there's nowhere else."

"Isn't that the bad news?" She nodded at the headline in his paper. A taxi driver had been shot dead the evening before, the first murder since the cease-fires.

"Aye," Blakely said. "It is that."

She was dressed as she'd been before, in shades of fawn and brown, a skirt and cardigan, cream blouse, under the coat she'd taken off. There was a brooch, made to look like a flower, in her blouse.

"The plate's hot, Mr. Blakely," Nellie warned, placing roast beef and potatoes and cabbage in front of him. She wiped the edge of the plate where gravy had left a residue.

"Bread and butter and tea, Nellie," Mrs. Kincaid ordered, remembering the name from the last time. "I don't take much," she informed Blakely, "in the middle of the day. And jam," she called after the waitress.

"It's my main meal," Blakely explained, a note of mild justification in his tone.

"Convenient, to go out for it."

"Ach, it is."

"You live in the town, Mr. Blakely?"

"A bit out."

"I thought maybe you would. You have the look of the open air."

"I'm a turkey farmer."

"Well, there you are."

He worried a piece of beef into shreds, piled cabbage and potato onto his fork, soaking up a little gravy before conveying the lot to his mouth.

"Not bad," he responded when he was asked if turkeys were fetching well.

"Time was when turkeys were a Christmas trade and no more. Amn't I right? Not that I know a thing about poultry."

"Oh, you're right enough."

"I like the brown of a turkey. I'm told that's unusual."

"It's all white flesh they go for these times."

"You'd supply the supermarkets, would you?"

"The most of it goes that way all right. Though there's a few outlets locally."

"I have a room above Beatty's."

"I sell to Beatty for Christmas."

"Well, there's a coincidence for you!"

"He's a decent man, Henry Beatty."

"It's not a bad little room."

Further details were exchanged—about the room and then about the rearing, slaughtering, and plucking of turkeys, the European regulations there were as regards hygiene and r frigeration. Divulging that she wa Belfast woman, Mrs. Kincaid talk about the city. Blakely said he had been there since he lost his wife. S used to go for the shopping, he sa Brand's, he said.

"Oh, a great store, Brand's. You w always on the farm, Mr. Blakely?"

"Aye, I was."

"I was sorry to hear there ab your wife."

"Aye."

The plate of bread and butter rived, with tea, and a small glass d of gooseberry jam.

"I'm a widow myself," Mrs. K caid said.

"Ah, well—"

"I know, I know."

That comment, spoken in a wh per, contrived to make one of t two widowings, contrived to isol with quiet poignancy a comm ground. There was for an instant t feeling at the table that death h struck almost simultaneously. T feeling, for Mrs. Kincaid, was a th atrical effect, since in her case death, no widowing, had occurr For Blakely, it was real. He finish the food he had been brought. Je with sponge cake in it was placed b fore him, with a pot of tea.

"Are you far out of the town Mrs. Kincaid asked.

"Ah, no. Not far."

"I sometimes come to a quiet to for a rest. A resort most times. E this time of year they're lone enough yet."

"They would be surely."

Shortly after that Blakely fold his newspaper into the side pocket his jacket. He picked up his cap fr the knob at the top of his chair. I said good-bye to Mrs. Kincaid a went away to pay his bill at t counter.

"Who is she, that woman?" M Hirrel asked him in a whisper, a he said that Mrs. Kincaid was loo ing above Beatty's butcher's sho He didn't know her name, he said Belfast woman in the to for a rest.

After that, Blakely found hi self running into Mrs. Kincaid qu often. She sat at his table in Hirr

e even when on one occasion
e was an empty table just inside
loor. She was in Blundell's News
Confectionery when he went in
is paper one day. She was a mile
on the road when he was driving
to the farm, and he waved at
nd she waved back. A few days
she was there again with an
rella up, and he stopped, feeling
ould offer her a lift.
Well, now, that's very nice of
" she said.
Where're you heading?"
rs. Kincaid said nowhere in par-
lar. Just a daunder, she said, to
in the afternoon. "My name's
Kincaid," she added, since this
rmation had not been given be-
, and went on to enquire if he
felt that afternoons hung heavy.
lakely replied that any hour of
day was the same to him. He
l to sound polite, picking out the
t words, not wishing to seem
que. "That's Madole's," he said as
passed a field with the gate wide
n. Spring ploughing was in
gress, Madole's man, Quin, on the
tor. Madole had a lot of land,
kely explained, some of it stretch-
right back to the town's outskirts.
Here's my own few acres," he said
n his pink-washed roadside farm-
se and turkey sheds came into
v. "Would I drop you? I'd say the
's stopped." Specks had come on-
he windscreen after he'd turned
the wipers five minutes ago, but
eady they were drying away.
re used to be a Kincaid in Lower
lge Street one time, a dentist, be-
the present man came.
It'll be a nice walk back," she
l, getting out of the car when
kely drew it up before turning in-
his yard. She thanked him.
hat's on ahead, though?"
Loughdoon. Three quarters of a
e."
I'll take a look at it."
It's only small."
I like a small place."
The Lacky sisters—twins of forty-
e—were in the plucking shed,
h the birds that were ready strung
along a rafter. The sisters were in
ir similar black-and-gray overalls,
ir similarly crowded teeth hugely
posed as soon as their employer

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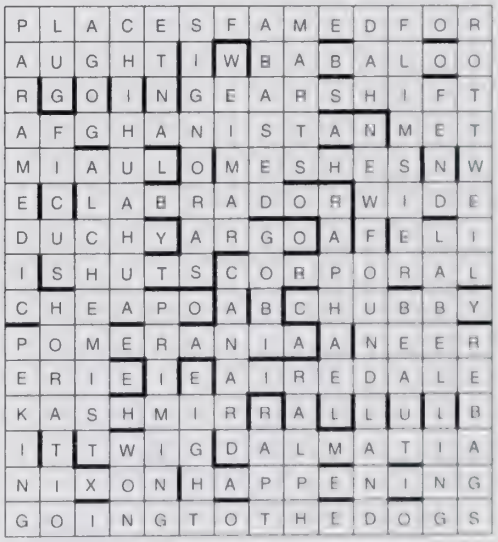
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SOLUTION TO THE DECEMBER PUZZLE



NOTES FOR "44 ACROSS":

Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).

ACROSS: 10. *; 11. B.A.-B.A.-loo; 12. *; 15. me(h)t, rev.; 16. mia*-u-l; 18. me-she's; 20. w(I.D.)e; 21. pun and homophone; 22. (c)Argo; 24. hidden; 26. S(heep)-huts; 27. Corporal; 28. *; 31. c-hubby; 33. ne'e-(f)r(ee); 35. hidden; 38. Kashmi*-r; 40. t-wig; 42. Nix-on, pun; 43. h.-appening*.

DOWN: 1. *; 2. two mngs.; 3. a-go-g(o); 4. *; 5. sign-or-A's; 6. ab(as)ed; 7. M. Arts, S. rev., 9. *; 13. fen-d; 14. f(i)cus; 17. *; 19. Rapha*-el; 23. Gob-l; 25. la(bell-in)g, rev.; 27. c(an)ard; 29. H-oratio(n); 30. p(rim)ing; 32. homonym; 34. *; 36. hidden; 37. R(acho)-el F-h; 39. homonym; 41 reversal.

SOLUTION TO DECEMBER DOUBLE ACROSTIC (NO. 191). STEPHEN BIRMINGHAM: THE REST OF US. Each strike and riot . . . sparked a new Red Scare. . . . Informers abounded, ready with lists of Known Reds and Suspected Reds, on which they placed the names of all the people they didn't like. Innocent gatherings to hear lectures were translated as cell meetings.

CONTEST RULES: Send the quotation, the name of the author, and the title of the work together with your name and address, to Double Acrostic No. 192, *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by January 15. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. The solution will be printed in the February issue. Winners of the November Double Acrostic (No. 192) are Katharine B. Mountcastle, New Canaan, Connecticut; Lisa Brailey, Chapel Hill, North Carolina; and Lynne Murphy, Hewitt, Texas.

entered the shed, their reddish hair bulging out of the cloth caps they wore. They had been plucking Blakely's turkeys for him for twenty-nine years, since their childhood. Quin came over when Madole gave him his time off, to help around the place in any way that was necessary.

Blakely nodded at the two women. They'd done well. He counted the prepared turkeys, sixteen of them. Two dozen were to be ready for the carrier when he called at four, and they'd easily make that. The Lacky sisters threw back their heads and acknowledged his compliment by laughing shrilly. They couldn't have seen the woman he'd given a lift to, they wouldn't have heard the voices. People would be talking in Hirrel's about the way she always sat at his table, but what could he do about it? And he couldn't have passed her by on the road with rain falling. He put the car away in the lean-to and set off to repair a fence that had been in need of attention for a long while. His two sheepdogs went with him, loping along at his heels.

The job took longer than he'd estimated. By the time he'd finished it the carrier had been and the Lackys had gone home. The dogs began to bark when he was mixing the evening feed.

"Now that's for you," Mrs. Kincaid said, holding out something in a brown paper bag. It was raining lightly, but she'd taken her umbrella down. "I sheltered in Mullin's," she said. "That's a comfy wee bar he has there."

Blakely stared at the bag she held out to him. "What is it?" he said.

She smiled, shaking her head to indicate he'd have to find out himself. "Cheer you up, Mr. Blakely."

He didn't want to accept a present from her. There was no call for her to give him a present. There was no call for her to come into the yard, looking for him.

"No need," he said, taking a bottle of Bushmills whiskey from the damp paper bag. "No," he protested. The two sheepdogs, which he had pointed into a corner, had begun to creep forward on their haunches. "Ah, no," he said, handing back the bottle and the bag. "Ah no, no."

The rain was getting heavier. "Would you mind if I stood in your turf shed for a minute?" she said. "You get on with your work, Mr. Blakely. The little offering's for your kindness, letting me share your table and that. Mullin said you took a glass like the next man."

"I can't take this from you."

"It's nothing, Mr. Blakely."

"Come into the kitchen till it clears."

She said she didn't want to interrupt him, but he led the way into the house, not saying anything himself. In the kitchen he pulled the damper out on the Raeburn to warm the place up. The bottle and the bag were on the table.

"You're looking frozen, Mr. Blakely," she said, surprising him by taking two glasses from the dresser. She opened the bottle and poured whiskey for both of them. It was nothing, she said again.

It wasn't an evening when Quin came, which Blakely was glad about. The Lackys couldn't have missed her on the road, but they wouldn't have known who she was, and they'd never have guessed she'd turn into the yard.

"He told me about you," she was saying now. "Mr. Mullin did."

"I go in there the odd time."

"He told me about the loss of your wife. How it was. And your daughter, of course."

Blakely didn't say anything. The whiskey was warm in his chest. In spite of what Mullin had said he wasn't a drinking man, but he appreciated a drop of Bushmills. A going-away present, she said.

"You're going back soon?" he asked, not pressing the question, keeping it casual.

She had taken her coat off. She was wearing a blue dress with tiny flashes of red in it, like pencil dots. There was a scarf, entirely red, tucked in at the top. At the table one leg was crossed over the other, both knees shiny because the stocking material was taut. Her umbrella was cocked up on the flagstones to dry.

"Sooner or later," she said. "Cheers!"

She added more to both their glasses when he'd taken another mouthful. She looked round the kitchen and said it was lovely. "M
bel," she said.

"What?"

"Mabel Kincaid."

The rain was heavy now, ratt
on the windowpanes. The Raeb
had begun to roar. He got up to p
the damper in a bit.

"That's the mother and father
shower," she said.

"Yes."

"You never smile, Mr. Blakely."

Blakely was embarrassed by t
"I think maybe I'm a dour kind
man."

"You're not at all. But after wh
heard I wouldn't blame you."

She asked if he had always li
in this house, and he said he h
His father bought the few fields fi
Madole, farming pigs in those d
It was the Madoles who'd built
house, and they'd built it with
foundations, which his father di
know until after he'd bought
didn't know that was why he'd g
cheap.

"A big family was it, Mr. Blakel

He shook his head. A family
four, he said, one more than his c
family, later on. "I have a brot
Willie John."

As soon as he mentioned Wi
John's name Willie John laug
silently in Blakely's recall, his
jaw split, the freckles around his e
merging as the flesh puckered. R
haired and ungainly, ham-fisted t
father called him before the f
fruits of those same hands were c
pleted: a twin-engined Dewoit
510, built from a kit.

"We used to fly them out in
fields." He didn't know why he
her; he hadn't meant to, but so
times, with whiskey, he was garrul
even though he still hadn't dr
much. Drink had a way of bring
things to life for him, and he fel
doing that now. A Messerschm
came to rest in a clump of nett
and Willie John gingerly rescue
noting the damage to the tailpi
and one of the wings. His own Bl
Widow took off, airborne until
lighter fuel in the engine ran ou
glided down onto the cropped gr
Bloody marvelous, Willie John sai

"Just the two of you," she said
was an only myself."

Willie John got out when the
bles began. I get a card, Christ-
ime. Denver, Colorado."
ne telephone rang in the hall. It
Nathan Smith from Ulsterfare
the order for next week. When
finished talking about the
eys Nathan said his daughter
got herself engaged.
heard it. Isn't that great,
ian?"
is surely. All we need now is
quiet'll last for the wedding.
rsday will we say for the order?"
No problem, Nathan."
the kitchen she was on her feet
the frying pan in her hand. The
g pan had the breakfast fat con-
ed on it. She'd taken rashers out
ne fridge and had lifted up one of
covers of the Raeburn. There
knives and forks on the table.
was hoping you'd be longer,"
said. "I had a surprise planned."
Oh, look—"
Sit down and take another drop.
till at it cats and dogs. You have
ages in there. Would you take a
ple?"
The rain's no worry. I can run
back."
he shook her head. She'd never
a man who'd been drinking to
e. She spread four rashers on the
f the pan and put the pan on the
t. She pricked four sausages on
draining board. "Have you eggs?"
said.
le brought in a bowl of eggs from
scullery. A woman hadn't cooked
the kitchen since Hetty and
queline died. He couldn't remem-
that a woman had even been in
house since the last of the funeral
sts stepped out of it, certainly not
Lackys. He shouldn't have talked
ut Willie John like that. Talk had
ouraged her. He shouldn't have
en the Bushmills.
When it clears up I'll walk it,"
said. "I'm only filling in the time,
Blakely."
I'll drive you in," he insisted. "I'm
well-known. They won't
stop me."

Mrs. Kincaid undressed herself,
nking about him. He was a fin-
ed man. The man in the bar had
as much. He'd been destroyed by

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the Troubles, but even so he kept going, with his turkeys and the two queer-looking women she'd met on the road working for him, feathers all over their overalls. His dinner every day in a café that overcharged you, his memories of toy airplanes, the wife and daughter never talked about: that was it for him. A Christmas card from Denver kept his spirits up.

Removing the last of her underclothes, Mrs. Kincaid guessed that he was thinking about her also, that he might even be seeing her as she was this very minute. Finished or not, there was always a spark that could be kindled. An old hand at that, Mrs. Kincaid didn't have to ask herself whether or not, today, she had done so. She had broken her resolve, and she wondered as she buttoned her nightdress if she had the will to draw back now, to move on tomorrow, before anything went further. She lay for a moment with the bedside light on, then reached out and turned it off. She felt as she had often felt when she reached this stage in a bit of business—that some shadow of herself was having its way with her, that if 84,000 pounds hadn't been lifted off her she'd be a different woman entirely.

"Left high and dry," she murmured in the darkness, applying the expression to the turkey farmer, dozily remembering that it was the one she had used about herself when she'd suffered her calamity.

On the morning after the evening of Mrs. Kincaid's visit to his house Blakely was aware of not minding if people had seen her in his car when he'd driven her to her room above Beatty's shop. Her company in his kitchen had not, in the end, been disagreeable. She had washed up the dishes from which they had eaten the food she'd cooked. She had been sympathetic about several matters, and before they left he had shown her the plucking and dressing sheds even though he'd told himself he shouldn't. "Isn't it lonely for you?" she'd said.

She wasn't in Hirrel's that day, nor the next. She'll have gone, Blakely thought. She had bought him the bottle and now she'd gone back to Belfast. He hadn't been welcoming; he'd been cagey and suspicious, worried in case the Lackys knew she'd cooked his food, worried in case Quin walked in. He was thinking about her when he heard the dogs barking and her voice quietening them.

"I was passing by," she said.

The friendship that began for Blakely when the Bushmills was poured again and when for the second time a meal was shared in his kitchen was later remarked upon in Hirrel's and in the turkey sheds. Because of his trouble in the past people were pleased, and pleased again when the two were seen together on the steps of the Stella Four-Screen. Reports went round that they'd danced, one Friday night, in the Crest Ballroom; a corner of the bar in Digby's Hotel became known as theirs.

The tear in Blakely's jacket was repaired. The Lackys met Mrs. Kincaid, and Quin did; she was brought to Sunday lunch with the Reverend Johnston. One morning Blakely woke up aware of a deep longing for Mrs. Kincaid, aware of a gentleness when he thought about her, of an impatience with himself for not declaring his feelings before this.

"Oh no, dear, no."

She said he was too good for her. Too good a man, she said, too steady a man, too well-set-up, too decent a man. She could bring nothing, she said, she would be coming empty-handed, and that was never her style. Kincaid had left her no more than a pittance, she said, not expecting to be taken so soon, as no man would in the prime of his life. A few years ago she heard talk of a Belfast man who'd electrocuted himself drilling holes in an outside wall: as the cause of Kincaid's demise, that did well enough.

"No, I never could," she repeated, surveying the astonishment she had known would appear in the lean features, the flush of the cheeks darkening. "You have your life the way it is," she said. "You have your memories. I'd never upset the way things are with you."

He went silent. Was he thinking he'd made a fool of himself? she wondered. Would he finish his drink and that would be the end of it?

"I'm on my own here," he said

They were in the bar of the h the quiet time between six and en. The day before she'd said s definitely be off at the end of week. Refreshed and invigora she'd said.

"I'm alone," he repeated.

"Don't I know you are? Did say you'd be lonely?"

"What I'm saying to you—"

"I know what you're saying t What I'm saying to yourself is y set in your ways. You're well-to- haven't much. Isn't it about too?"

"It's not money—"

"There's always money."

The conversation softly becam gument. Affection spread throug real and contrived. It had been knowing him, Mrs. Kincaid said. come to a place, you gain a fri nothing was nicer. But Blakely stubborn. There were feelings in he insisted; she couldn't deny it.

"I'm not. I'm not at all. I'm trying to be fair to you. I ha Belfast woman's caution in me."

"I'm as cautious myself as any in Ulster. I have a name for it."

"You're trusting the unknow the same. Fair and square, ha that to be said?"

"You're never unknown to me

"When the cards are down I woman you don't know from a tin

Blakely denied that with a ges He didn't say anything. Mrs. Kin said:

"If I asked you for money, would you give it to me? I wou do it, but if I did. Who'd blame for shaking your head? If I said me a cheque for 2,000 pou who'd blame you for saying no man in his senses would say thing else. If I said to you I'd that cheque by me, that I'd n pass it into the bank because it only there as a bond of trust tween us you wouldn't believe n

"Why wouldn't I trust you?"

"That's what I'm saying to I'm a woman turned up in the t to get away for a little while fron noise and bustle of the city. W blame you if you'd say to yourse wouldn't trust her as far as an i

n there's trust between us, is I'm saying, we'll maybe talk t the other. D'you understand ear?"

'e know each other well."

'e do and we don't, dear. Bad s have happened to us."

s. Kincaid spoke then of the trou- her past, speaking only the truth, as always she did at this stage in the proceedings.

lakely felt in the inside pocket s jacket and took out a North- ank cheque-book. He wrote the ue. He dated it and signed it ore it out. He handed it to her. took it, staring at it for as long ninute. Then she tore it up.

lease," he said. "I mean it."

never knew a straighter man," Kincaid said, and for a moment r the open cheque-book lay be- n them on the barroom table. n he reached for it again she said: bank under my maiden name." gave him a name, which he d to the *Mabel* he had written e she was speaking. "That will r be cashed," she said. "I ise you that."

ey would not correspond, she laid . They would wait two months, hen they would meet again at the they were at now, the table they made their own. They chose a date and a time, Tuesday at the end of July.

he cheque was for the amount Kincaid had mentioned. She it into her bank as soon as she back in Belfast and recorded the unt in her notebook. Two days it reached Blakely's bank and covered by his standing instruc- that if his current account ever not have sufficient funds in it a sfer should be made from his de- account. He received his next bank statement sixteen days later.

he could have married the man. clergyman she'd been intro- d to would have done the job. could have been the wife of a ey farmer for the rest of her days, she wondered about that—about ing in the farmhouse and the sheepdogs in the yard, about conversations there might have been, their common ground as the victims of gangsters.

Regret nagged Mrs. Kincaid then. She felt she had missed a chance she hadn't even known was there. Her instinct was to write a letter, though what she might say in it she didn't know. The more she wondered if she should or not, the more her confidence grew that inspiration would come to her, that in the end she would fill a page or two as easily as she made an entry in her notebook. Time would pass, and she had faith in the way time had of softening anything that was distressful. Naturally the poor man would have been distressed.

Sadness afflicted Blakely, which eased a little while that time went by. Resignation took its place. It was his fault; he had been foolish. His resistance had been there, he had let it slip away. But even so, on the day they had arranged to meet, he put on his suit and went along to Digby's Hotel.

He waited for an hour in their corner of the bar, believing that against the odds there might somehow be an explanation. Then he went away.

Somewhere in him as he drove out of the town there was still a flicker of optimism, though he did not know where it came from or even if what it promised was sensible. He did not dwell upon his mood, it was simply there.

The Troubles had returned since Mrs. Kincaid had traveled back to Belfast. There had been murder and punishment, the burning of churches, violence again across the barricades of Drumcree, the destruction of the town of Omagh. Yet belief in the fragile peace persisted, too precious after so long to abandon. Stubbornly the people of the Troubles honoured the hope that had spread among them, fierce in their clamor that it should not go away. In spite of the quiet made noisy again, its benign infection had reached out for Blakely; it did so for Mrs. Kincaid also, even though her trouble was her own. Weary at last of making entries in a notebook, she wrote her letter. ■

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Unrelenting pressure is being applied on Prime Minister Netanyahu to make ever-more-dangerous concessions to the Palestinians. The recent Wye Plantation Conference was only a foretaste of what is going to be demanded from Israel in the so-called "final status negotiations." What follows are some areas in which demands will be made and pressure will be applied.

What are the facts?

Land for Peace. The whole concept is absurd. Never in the history of the world has any nation returned lands to those who have attacked it. Even so, in line with the Camp David accord, Israel has yielded the vast Sinai to Egypt. It has yielded Gaza and about 40% of the "West Bank" to the Palestinians. Over 90% of the Arab population of the territories is under the control of the Palestinian Authority. What else is expected of a country that occupies only a fraction of 1% of the lands occupied by the Arabs? And shouldn't land for peace work both ways? Shouldn't the Arabs give up some land to get peace? Or why not just simply "peace for peace"?

A Palestinian State. Israel could not survive if Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") were in unfriendly hands. There can be little question of the enduring hostility of the Arabs. The "West Bank" mountain ridges dominate the narrow waist of Israel, in which over 70% of the Jewish population, 80% of its industrial base, and the most important military installations are located. The Palestinians would not need an army to make life in Israel impossible. Moveable Katyusha rockets would dominate the area. Israel needs to keep strategic control of the "West Bank," without which it would not be defensible.

Return of the "Refugees". Population transfers have occurred throughout history. In 1945, the resettlement of 3 million Germans from Poland and Czechoslovakia was arranged. Following the collapse of its North African empire, France accepted close to 1.5 million people. More than 12 million(!) Muslims and Hindus were exchanged between India and Pakistan. Israel has recognized this historical necessity. But the "Arab Nation", with its enormous wealth and vast under-populated lands, has stubbornly refused to face facts. Instead of allowing the Palestinians who left Israel in 1948 (and their descendants) to be integrated into their societies, they have, for the past fifty years, kept them in miserable "refugee camps" and have encouraged them to plot vengeance and terrorism. Return of these people to Israel, including the "West Bank" is impossible. Neither Israel nor any Palestinian entity could absorb them. There is not enough land and not enough water. It would be as unthinkable as for those 3 million Germans to return to Poland and the Czech republic or, for that matter, for the 800,000 Jews who fled or were expelled from the Arab countries to return to their original homes.

> "By not yielding to pressure and by not allowing Israel to be strategically weakened, Mr. Netanyahu will bring peace with security, *shalom batuach,* to Israel and to the entire Middle East."

Jerusalem. Before the end of the 1967 Six-Day War, no claims to Jerusalem being a Moslem holy city or the capital of any Arab country were asserted. But for over two thousand years, Jews have been living in Jerusalem and they have been the majority population since the 19th century. Why should they give up their capital, their holy city as far back as memory goes—or even any part of it? The Moslems have their holy cities, Mecca and Medina, and they have 22 Arab capitals. There are important Arab cities in the "West Bank," under full control of the Palestinian Authority. But Jerusalem is the eternal and indivisible capital of the Jewish State.

These are the most important issues that Netanyahu and his government will have to confront in the final status talks. As to Jewish "settlements" in the "West Bank": Jews have the right to live in any part of the land of Israel. And why not? How could 160,000 Jews living among 1 million Arabs in the "West Bank" be an obstacle to peace if over 1 million Arabs live within the "green line" of Israel? Nobody considers them an obstacle to peace. By not yielding to pressure from any source, and by not allowing Israel to be strategically weakened, Mr. Netanyahu will be true to his campaign promise and will bring peace with security, *shalom batuach,* to Israel and to the entire Middle East.

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LETTERS

Continued from page 9

spent the past few years worl
first as a union organizer in so
west Louisiana, then as a deve
ment worker in Zimbabwe, I ali
ed early this year in the cesspo
craven schmoozing, self-inte
and greed that is Washington,
What was a young idealist to
scoured the classifieds, I sen
sumés cold, I *networked.*

Alas, few employers were inte
ed in my existential commitmer
social justice. "I'm a little conce
with the brevity of your w
tenure," a representative of one
gressive organization told me i
interview. "We generally like to
candidates who have stayed
something for a couple of year
rejoined that I had excelled at e
position I held, and urged ther
check with my former emplo
They could not be convinced, a
began to wonder how radical I c
really afford to be.

Disgust does little to fill the
nomic gap that continues to w
beneath our feet. It makes toadi
far too many, and those of us wl
conscience won't allow us to n
the leap are ever in danger of fal
into the precipice.

Neil F. Carlson
Washington, D.C.

Lewis Lapham's advice to the
didates for a life of privilege and
was so insightful that it made me
for a more complete list of guideli
And then I remembered Balt
Gracián's manual. The follow
samples of this early-seventee
century Spanish Jesuit's aphorisms
evidence that such common sen
timeless.

> Be shrewd, but not too shre
> Something not to be assumed, n
> less exposed: all artfulness mus
> concealed, for it is suspect.
>
> Know the meaning of evasion.
> the prudent man's way of keepin
> of trouble.
>
> Without lying, do not speak
> whole truth. There is nothing tha
> quires more careful handling than
> truth: for it is a bleeding from
> heart; just as necessary to know

atter the truth as to know how to
h it.
Know how to beg. Nothing more
cult for some, and nothing easier
others.
What you have must exceed the re-
ements of your office, and not the
er way about. For however high
be your post, in your person you
t show yourself superior to it.

onard Madey
Rock, Ark.

nin' in the Wind

e beery reminiscences of Don
ice ["Freedom Fighters," Octo-
eft me frustrated. His sort of
—narcissistic, onanistic, soaked
e vapor of Sixties memories—is
o common in America. His gen-
n is so concerned with the ha-
aphy of their weed-fogged ado-
nt years that they have made
ry and cultural journals nearly
dable for their children. Ratio-
is usually conspicuously absent
work by members of this gener-
, who write with metaphoric
r always in metaphoric hand.
allace falls prey to a literary
ness of those who catalogue
Sixties memories: the belief
an inventory of one's chemical
ce is prima facie evidence of
ual transcendence. "Oh man,
ere so stoned" is neither a state-
of philosophy nor a valid nar-
e springboard.

Freeman
beth, N.J.

fering Fools

m disappointed and fed up with
Harper's Letters section. Month
month, writer after writer is
onally attacked for no higher
e than telling his or her story. In
ember, we read that Vince Pas-
is repugnant for sharing his
gles of living in New York City
hat should be a decent income
o'll Stop the Drain?" August].
heard a while back about the
entered illegitimacy of a writer
escribing the journalistic allure
ar-torn Lebanon and Chechnya
soner of War," by Scott Ander-
January 1997]. And if your read-
adn't already battered these
poor people enough, we again in November witnessed leftover indignation for the infertile couple whose only sin was to suffer physically and emotionally, and to share that story with *Harper's* readers ["Missing Children," by Bob Shacochis, October 1996]. I find it hard to imagine what mean callousness compels us to attack those already in pain. Whose writing is sufficiently profound and upright and authentic enough to forestall such vitriolic response?

As a family doctor, I have learned to accept suffering on the sufferer's terms. When an athlete comes to me with knee pain, I don't tell him that he has no right to cry because cancer patients bear burdens far greater. I can't tell a depressed person that she has no right to sorrow because others' sorrows are worse or because she has played a role in her own distress. I don't mock an obese patient's weakness of resolve, and I certainly don't shame him because others are starving. And when an infertile couple comes to me hoping for a child, I don't angrily point out their selfishness or their susceptibility to culturally imposed pressures.

I read *Harper's* for a different point of view. Do others read in order to confirm that they are morally and intellectually superior to the fools who dare to write?

I am hesitant to send this letter. Naturally I wonder, if it is published, how many will eagerly leap from the crowd to attack my sentence structure, my weak intellect, and my notions of civility?

Joshua Steinberg, M.D.
Syracuse, N.Y.

So much earnest outcry and everyone willing to yank the Passaro children out of expensive private schools because they don't think it can be afforded. (Not wondering *why* they're in private school, only wishing they weren't.) Vince Passaro can write but one essay at a time. He wasn't writing about class or Marxism or the growing chasm between the haves and the have-nots. He was reflecting on his own absurd life (and we all have one), about how he's going broke and here's why. The Passaros' lifestyle is a ratified one, but that's a given, that's the point. Ha ha.

I remember reading years ago in *Harper's* about a man who'd lost his job and was seen to be buying expensive shrimp, with food stamps, for his daughter's birthday ["Winter Work," by Don J. Snyder, November 1995]. How offended others in the store were; who did this guy think he was? Someone who could afford good food?

The two stories differed, but the busybody response was the same.

Beret Borsos
Vancouver, British Columbia

Correction: In the December issue, Sheaffer Pens was misspelled on page 8 of the Letters section. We regret the error.

January Index Sources

1 Huckaby-Davis and Associates (Alexandria, Va.); **2** Feingold Senate Committee (Middleton, Wis.)/Federal Election Commission/Georgia Secretary of State (Atlanta); **3** Library of Congress (Washington)/Professor Gary Jacobson, UC San Diego; **4,5** AFL-CIO (Washington); **6** Office of the Vice President (Washington); **7,8** Disney World (Orlando, Fla.); **9** Campbell Mithun Esty (Minneapolis); **10** *National Journal* (Washington); **11** Center for Media and Public Affairs (Washington); **12** *Balkan Media & Policy Monitor* (The Hague, Netherlands); **13,14** *The Ecologist* (London) **15** Boston Public Library; **16** Latin America Working Group (Washington); **17** National Security Archives (Washington); **18,19** *Build Our Nation*, Houghton Mifflin (Boston); **20** Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation (East Hanover, N.J.); **21** NBA Store (N.Y.C.); **22** Embassy of Japan; **23** Federal News Service (Moscow); **24** Center for Religious Tolerance (Ontario, Canada); **25** *Nature* magazine (Washington); **26,27** Professor Jerome M. Segal, University of Maryland (College Park); **28** The Unity Center of Peace Church (Chapel Hill, N.C.); **29** Alaska Public Offices Commission (Anchorage); **30** National Abortion Federation (Washington)/People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Norfolk, Va.); **31** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Washington); **32** Fox News/Opinion Dynamics poll (N.Y.C.); **33** The Pentagon (Arlington, Va.); **34** Mattel, Inc. (El Segundo, Calif.); **35** James "Bubba" Ball (Columbus, Ga.); **36** America's Health Network (Orlando, Fla.); **37** Don King Productions (Deerfield Beach, Fla.); **38** Obertraun Tourism (Obertraun, Austria); **39** U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (Bethesda, Md.).

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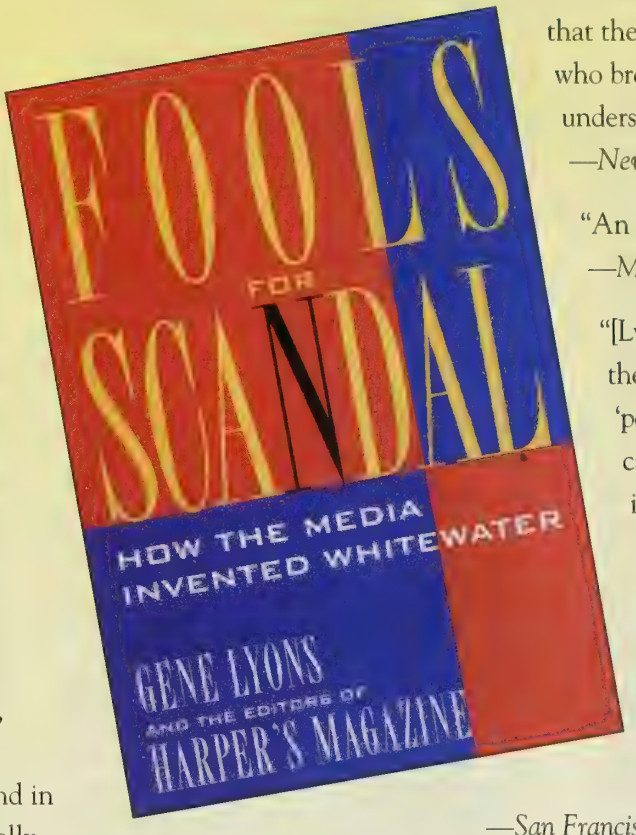
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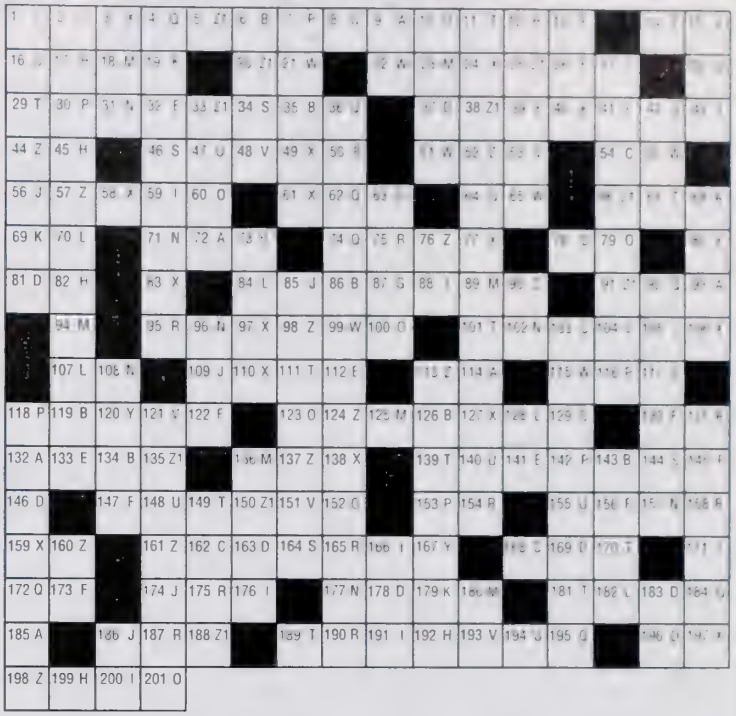
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DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 192

By Thomas H. Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: the first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken. The letter in the upper right-hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 77.



CLUES — WORDS

A. Pacify, calm, gladden — 9 132 68 114 72 185 93

B. Hamlet near Ayr, Scotland; Robert Burns's birthplace — 35 134 119 6 126 86 143

C. Mongrel; simpleton — 103 162 168 54

D. Marine sculpin, genus *Hemilepidotus* (2 wds.) — 196 37 78 146 169 163 81 178 / 183

E. Fish-eating, diving bird — 133 32 141 112

F. "Minnehaha, —— Water" (Longfellow, "The Song of Hiawatha") — 156 130 145 26 122 41 147 173

G. Singer played by Doris Day in "Love Me or Leave Me" (last name) — 184 63 64 8 129 87

H. Biblical book of 150 songs, hymns, and prayers — 192 45 199 12 82 17 73

I. "The —— shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden" (2 wds., Eccl. 12:5) — 2 200 191 59 166 105 176 171 / 88 27

J. —— pea: peanut — 56 186 174 109 104 85

K. Sack — 40 69 179 19

L. Lay to rest — 107 182 84 128 70

M. Inflexible, unyielding — 23 89 136 180 94 18 125

N. 1924 hit play by George Kelly (hyph. after *The*) — 108 31 102 157 96 1 177

O. Mission — 152 60 123 10

P. Yellow — 7 39 142 30 116 153 118

Q. Strange, rare, curious — 172 36 92 195 62 4 74

R. Fortunate, promising — 158 187 50 131 165 95 75 193

S. Fine, hard-twisted cotton thread — 164 34 144 46 117 / 175 154

T. Comeliness — 189 181 11 101 29 111 43 149 / 67 139 170

U. Miss Vye in Hardy's *The Return of the Native* — 47 194 16 42 155 28 140 148

V. Tributes for fun — 151 193 48 15 53 121

W. Demanded, was particular about (2 wds.) — 22 115 65 55 99 21 81

X. Statement of total opposition (4 wds.) — 58 24 127 3 97 106 197 / 83 49 61 113 138 159

Y. Hungarian political leader (1896–1958); premier, 1953–55, 1956 — 80 120 167 13

Z. Pet, favorite, darling (4 wds.) — 14 1 161 87 44 82 76 113 / 137 124 160 198 92 98

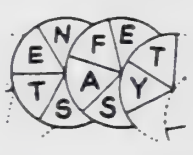
/1. Lacking in imagination or sophistication — 38 25 188 20 66 91 135 150 / 33 9

Inner Circles

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.
(with acknowledgments to John De Cuevas)

The overlapping circles in the diagram are numbered to correspond to the clues. All the clues have two answers, and all the answers are of six letters. In each clue there is a main answer defined normally (i.e., definition plus subsidiary indication), plus a secondary answer indicated by a definition only.

Now imagine that each of the circles is divided into six sections. If two of these sections were not hidden, then the main answer to the clue could be entered in the circle, one letter in each section, reading in a clockwise direction. But because two sections are hidden, two letters must be entered in the appropriate section of the outer wheel instead. The letters in the overlapping sections of the following circle will, however, mesh with the letters of the first circle to form another word, also reading clockwise, which will be the secondary answer in the clue.

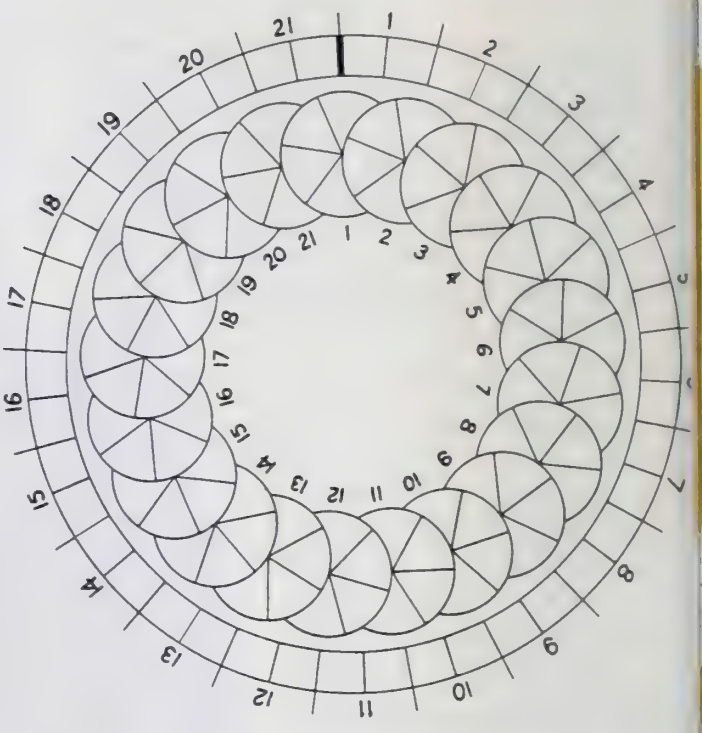


To illustrate: suppose the main answer to Clue 1 is TENNIS, the secondary answer is FASTEN, and the secondary answer to Clue 2 is SAFETY, then the letters would be entered in the circle as in this example.

The N and the I of TENNIS would be entered in section 1 of the outer wheel.

The solver must determine the order in which to enter the two letters of each answer in the outer wheel so that when the diagram is complete, an appropriate quotation of ten words, from Wallace Stevens (slightly modified), will appear, again reading in a clockwise direction.

Clue answers include three foreign words and one proper name. Main answers at 3, 5, and 17 are uncommon, and the secondary answer at 17 is of two words. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 77.



CLUES

1. Polish-French menace that can be fatal for each one getting into fight
2. Troikas' horse in forest lands
3. Type an audited call for foreign businessman in China
4. Workers dealing with bonds strike—hotels can't stand
5. Library blocks attaches at leaving stains
6. Sketches with a bit of Rococo in them—they are found in cross-country racing circles
7. Name redefining pure tea hasn't got a prayer in Paris
8. Matchmaker holding one engaged with locks
9. Demonstrator sounds like supporter, right
10. Knowing the Spanish to get tied up with football team
11. Bloody body bag comes first off holy mountaintop in Spain
12. Launches back right up to be loaded into newly designed SST jets
13. Write music declared negative by the British Museum
14. Medical man punches slavers—sounds like a Southerner
15. He makes Big Bands ring—Hollywood's home for big promotions
16. Secret a keyhole holds: one way to resurface for another shot at a movie studio
17. Hide that's in part lowlier, or jowlier, or duller
18. Infinite but not related? I'm most petrified!
19. Marie Saint Arnaz nearly raises ducks
20. End of a fight sadly speaks to your health—bears being given an incorrect nomenclature
21. Part of a Western franchise, he sells people laser off-set printing (about a thousand dollars)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Inner Circles," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by January 11. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the March issue. Winners of the November puzzle, "Misprints—III," are Dwight D. Freund, Sacramento, California; Ruth Brown, Pullman, Washington; and William P. Michaels, Hopewell, New Jersey.



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LETTERS

Flunking History

Christopher Hitchens quite correctly decries our younger generation's abysmal ignorance of history in "Goodbye to All That" [November]. When Chester Finn Jr. and I wrote the 1987 book that Hitchens cites, *What Do Our 17-Year-Olds Know?* making the point that this ignorance coexists with a popular thirst for some sort of intelligible past, we were besieged by critics who said, in effect, that since adults didn't know any history, children didn't need to either. Periodically, some defender of the status quo will point out that students forty or fifty years ago were equally uninformed, as if this were proof that ignorance is irremediable. We also heard from educators who insisted that history was unimportant, irrelevant, or boring.

Hitchens is right to insist on the value of controversy in the classroom and to reject the packaging of history as a parade of settled, inert facts. The problem with his solution (as he acknowledges) is that most of today's history teachers did not themselves specialize in the subject they now teach. Educators who have not mastered their subject are not likely to challenge students and risk exposing their own superficial knowledge. The abiding mystery is why our states, which set the requirements, continue to certify many who do not know what they will be expected to teach. This is so true, by the way, in areas other than history.

Diane Ravitch
Research Professor of Education
New York University

Perhaps teachers, if they avoid controversial topics at the high school level, are partly to blame. But our children's incomplete education is but half the problem of teaching. It sides with students who aren't motivated to learn. Even if history were taught in a more enriched and sophisticated manner, does it follow that it would be learned this way by students?

One problem is the complacency bred by the practice of grade inflation; another is ready access to lower education—why bother to work unless you want to apply to Harvard? In China, for instance, where there are relatively few spots at the university level and admission is based on tough entrance exams, those who want to advance beyond the high school level don't regard entertainment value as a condition of learning.

Uldis Kruze
Associate Professor of History
University of San Francisco

With regard to Christopher Hitchens's essay: One evening

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er and my cousin were watch-
televised ceremony taking
in Red Square. My mother
"You know, Lenin is buried
," to which my cousin replied,
h, and his son just came out
a new album."

ance Underhill
nto, Ontario

Sludge Report

was with nose-pinching pleasure
I read about the etymological
of "biosolids," with Merriam-
ster as midwife ["Let Them Eat
i-Cake" by Sheldon Rampton,
ember].
the local euphemism-eschew-
ibrarian, I have been concerned
"health censorship," illustrated
ws against food libel (witness
h's legal troubles after allegedly
lering beef), a technicality for-
ng additive-free cigarettes from
ying that such tobacco is more
ary than the usual sort, the res-
tion of Olestra as Olean despite
owing accounts of such side ef-
as "anal leakage," the post-pub-
ion banning by the Federal Drug
inistration of three books about
natural sweetener Stevia, and
ist goes on and on.
here is even more to the Or-
an, Carrollian meaning-muck-
f the word "organic" than your
e exposé allowed. As Rampton
ested in his closing paragraph,
USDA decided last year to ap-
riate the word "organic" in order
nclude food grown on human
solids" and food that had been
liated or bioengineered—and
ermore to prohibit actual organ-
rmers from (correctly) applying
appellation to their own pro-
. Although this audacity was de-
d due to concerted protest by
umers, co-ops, and others, the
r volume of health-defying pro-
nda in the past few years has
dizzying.

l Reid
ny, N.Y.

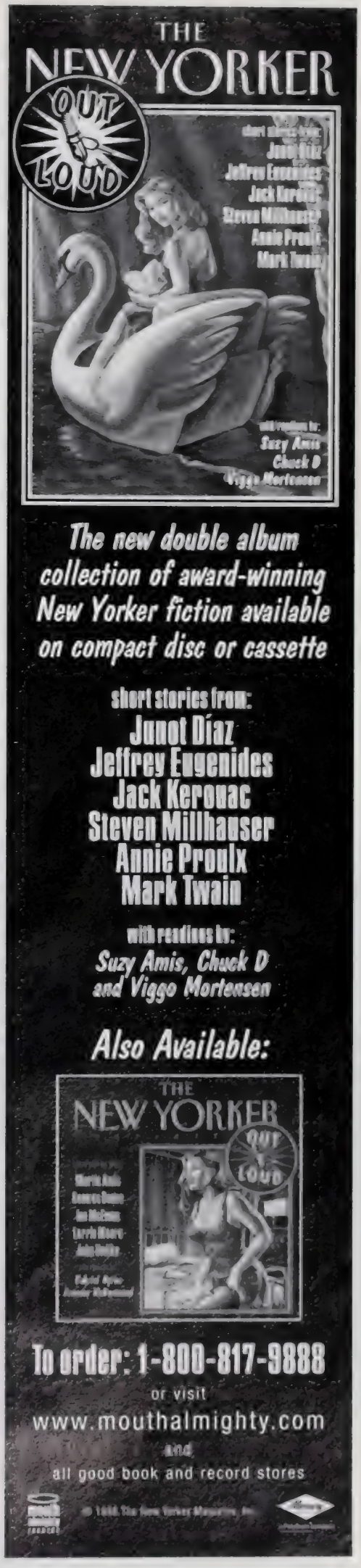
lthough your readers may have
d some amusement in Sheldon
pton's opinion, facts regarding the history, science, and practice of residuals management were conspicuously absent. Webster's had it right: "biosolids" is a term for highly treated wastewater solids and should not be confused with "sludge." It is a distinction not unlike the considerable difference between gasoline and crude oil. More than twenty years of research have demonstrated that biosolids, unlike raw-sewage sludge, can be recycled safely and efficiently.

Moreover, Rampton's reference to the public servants who manage society's residuals as the "sewage industry" is sadly inaccurate. Yes, there are profit-making companies involved with aspects of treatment and management, because the material must be processed in order to be used safely. On the other hand, public wastewater-treatment plants, like many other government programs, are struggling for funds in order to continue performing a valuable public service, in this case cleaning the nation's (including Rampton's) wastewater.

Nancy L. Blatt
Public Information Director
Water Environment Federation
Alexandria, Va.

While zealots such as Sheldon Rampton are busy being outraged that thousands of publicly owned wastewater-treatment agencies across the United States are recycling biosolids as fertilizer, they have missed the big news of the decade: the metals levels in biosolids have dropped to inconsequential levels because of industrial-waste pretreatment programs that work. Of course, Rampton claims that biosolids may contain toxins and heavy metals. As every writer knows, "may" is one of the elastic words frequently used by the very industry that Rampton so thoroughly detests, public relations, to imply something that isn't. Besides, the same metals that Rampton notes with such fear are called micronutrients when they're listed on the back of a vitamin jar

Recycling biosolids makes sense. It reduces costs for citizens and benefits farmers. And biosolids are



when used as directed—just like aspirin. Biosolids only get a bad rap because they started out as sewage.

Even if all the biosolids in the country were applied as fertilizer, they would in fact fertilize only 2 percent of the nation's arable land. Since farmers in forty-six states are using biosolids, they must know something that Rampton doesn't.

Stephan D. Frank
Littleton, Colo.

Sheldon Rampton responds:

Nancy Blatt's objection to my use of the phrase "sewage industry" is a telling example of her organization's preoccupation with changing the names of things, which explains what led them to coin the term "biosolids" as a euphemism for sewage sludge. It also explains why the wholesome-sounding Water Environment Federation—formerly known as the Federation of Sewage and Industrial Wastes Association—has rechristened itself in a way that obscures its identity as the main U.S. trade and lobby association for sewage-treatment plants. And I fail to see why WEF objects to using the word "industry" to describe an association of for-profit businesses and government programs. Does Blatt have similar objections to the term "health-care industry"?

Regarding the argument that "'biosolids' . . . should not be confused with sludge," the WEF's own members seem unable to tell the two apart. The Nevada Division of Water Planning, for example, has produced a *Water Words Dictionary* whose entry for "biosolids" states, "The terms biosolids, sludge, and sewage sludge can be used interchangeably."

As for Stephan Frank's suggestion that the farmers who use biosolids must know something that I don't, I find it interesting that the sewage companies offering their sludge to farmers transfer much of the legal liability for environmental damage to groundwater, harm to neighbors, and other hazards associated with their product to the unsuspecting landowners. Maybe they know something that farmers don't.

Good Girls Do

Jack Hitt's interpretation of 7
pergate ["Isn't It Romantic?" Re
ings, November] gets stuck
shameless stereotyping. He arg
that Bill Clinton, a good ole Sou
ern boy, segregates women into
camps: the educated and theref
desexualized feminist you br
home to mama, and the hyper-h
moned floozy you meet for a g
time.

Hitt's reduction of Hillary Cl
ton and Monica Lewinsky to o
dimensional caricatures diminis
all women. As every female an
few lucky males know, the good
and the bad girl are one and
same.

Sela J. Skolnick
Watertown, Mass.

Jesus, Get Your Gun

What Jayne Anne Phillips show
in her evocative account of the fur
al of three girls in Paducah, Kentu
["Home After Dark," November],
more to do with our failure to com



The running boards are lighted. The suspension lowers itself to help you enter and exit.* And now, at the proverbial push of a but
the brake and accelerator pedals inside Lincoln Navigator move closer or farther from you. Just to make you even more comfort

s with our violent culture than it
with the danger of any sort of
lominant "gun culture"—despite
judgment of *Paducah Sun* reporter
es Zambroski, who says, in a stri-
Northern voice, "It's about guns
vailability of guns is what this is
bout."
he South is a violent place; it's
e as violent as other regions if
index of slain police officers
ns anything. Guns simply serve
ie handy implements of a violent
ple, but taking away their handy
lements would not make them
violent. And it might not make
n any less lethal.
ambroski points out that "Jesus
n't carry a gun," and he's right, of
rse. Since guns were still more
n a millennium away, his con-
nporaries used the supplies at
nd—wood, nails, a crown of
rns. Human history is crowded
h tales of using the technology of
day in the name of righteous and
rehensible causes: the coloniza-
n of the New World, wars of reli-
us intolerance (including the
isades), etc.

I hope that Michael Carneal, the accused killer of the Paducah teenagers, receives the full weight of the justice his act warrants. I hope for charges of negligence against some of his careless neighbors for the ease with which he stole the guns he used. But I would not disarm a free people because of the acts of such a small, sad group.

James C. Fraser-Paige
San Francisco

The Suicidal Mind

In his reflection on the suicide of his mentor John Berryman ["The Survivor's Question," Readings, November], Peter Stitt shares his suspicion "that a kind of selfishness, a selfishness born of self-pity, plays a crucial role in the final decision to act. Certainly John Berryman was not thinking of his wife and daughters when he jumped off that bridge." I would counter that suicide is *often* born of a love for others. Those who are depressed and unhealthy enough to contemplate suicide inhabit an altered reality in which they often perceive themselves as overwhelming burdens to their families and friends (the same families and friends who Stitt hypothesizes could save the victim with love).

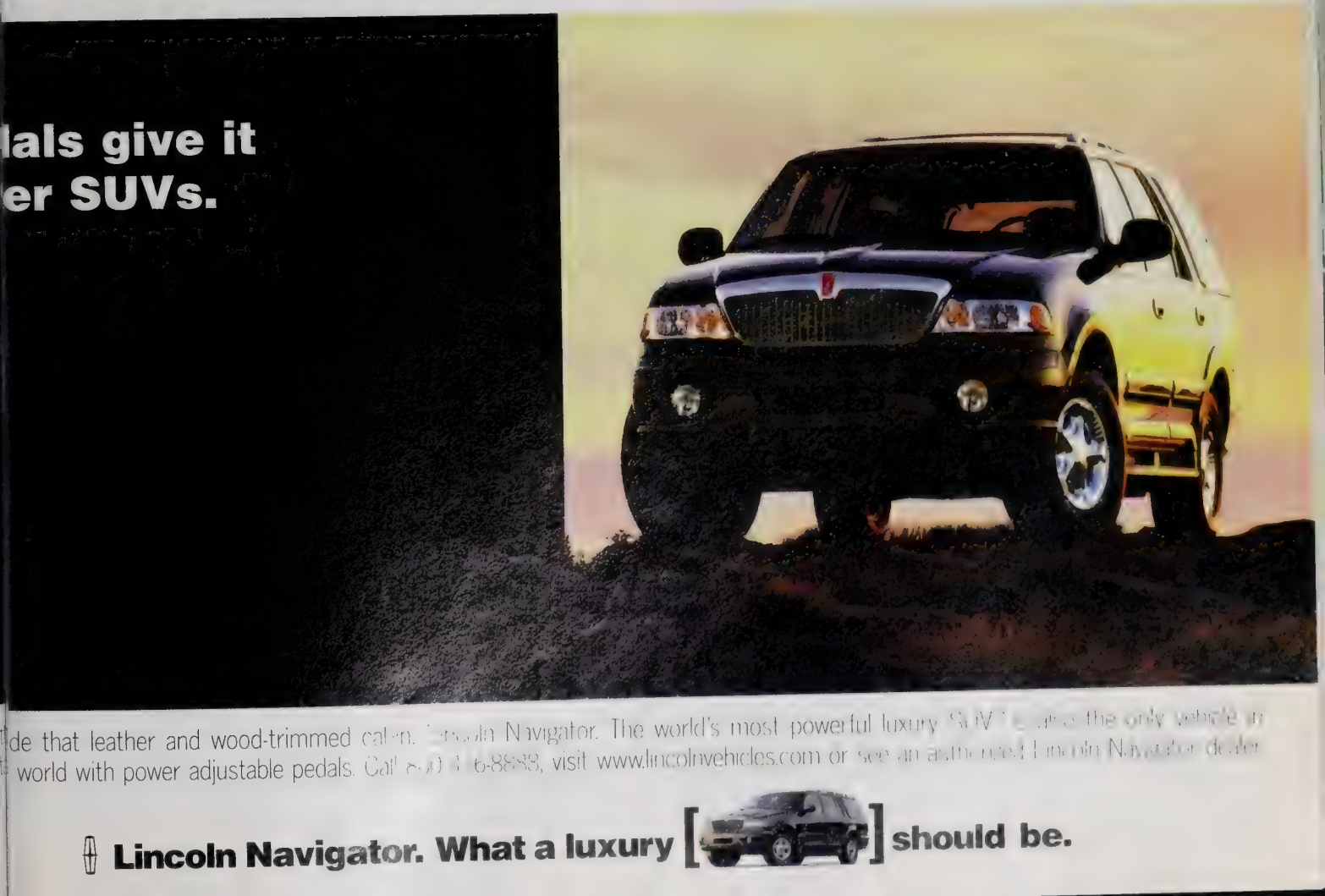
To posit that the suicidal impulse is a wholly evil one, then, seems to me to be a shortsighted view.

Melissa Root
Washington, D.C.

Correction: Due to a printer's error, several words were omitted from "Home After Dark," by Jayne Anne Phillips, in the November issue. The two sentences that begin at the bottom of page 78 should read:

> ["]But that's the kind of girl Nicole was," Sams says, and he asks Nicole's "twin sister" to stand up. She does, a black girl, not tall, wearing a dress with a big white collar; she turns and waves at everyone, a big wave, to include the back of the church and the wraparound balcony.

We regret any confusion this omission may have caused.



NOTEBOOK

God's spies

By Lewis H. Lapham

So we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too—
Who loses and who wins; who's in, who's out—
And take upon 's the mystery of things
As if we were God's spies. . . .
—William Shakespeare, *King Lear*

Testifying before the House Judiciary Committee last November 19, Kenneth W. Starr presented himself in the character of four medieval heroes—the Just Prosecutor come to impeach a faithless tyrant, the Humble Clerk bent on expounding the metaphysics of the law, the Wise Magistrate affirming the blessedness of his own innocence, the Weary Pilgrim wrestling with Satan. Maybe Judge Starr also appeared as a surveillance camera or the angel Moroni, but I didn't see or read the entire twelve hours of his testimony, and I no doubt missed the enactments of his domestic attributes—the Good Shepherd, the Faithful Husband, the Patient Gardener.

The witness also announced theorems and introduced concepts, and of these I thought the new doctrine of "inchoate criminality" the most original. Not only original but also likely to win strong endorsements from the nation's beleaguered police sergeants and prison wardens. The Wise Magistrate was careful to avoid defining the term too narrowly, just as he was careful to avoid answering any questions that he ruled "unfair" or "inappropriate," but what he seemed to have in mind was some sort of deadly virus to which his fellow countrymen were, alas, overly susceptible. He didn't wish to say that every American was a criminal—certainly not, or, more accurately, at least not yet—but they were weak creatures, easily corrupted by wicked influences and vile instincts, and if left too long in their own recognizance, they undoubtedly would violate "the sanctity, yes, the sanctity, of the judicial process."

In the meantime and while waiting for the Day of Judgment, the concept of "inchoate criminality" had its uses, especially when events were "fast-moving" and evidence was scarce or nonexistent. The Just Prosecutor relied on it on Thursday, January 15, 1998, when he petitioned Attorney General Janet Reno for jurisdiction in the matter of Monica Lewinsky without mentioning his prior dealings with Linda Tripp and the lawyers representing Paula Jones; he did so again the next day when his subalterns seized Ms. Lewinsky in a hotel dining room in Arlington, Virginia—seized her in a sudden flash of badges; hustled her upstairs in tears; held her captive for five hours while they sought to foreclose her access to a lawyer; threatened her with twenty-seven years in jail; encouraged her to wear an FBI wire the next time she met President Clinton, Betty Currie, or Vernon Jordan; informed her that if she didn't tell them what they had come to hear, they would send the handcuffs for her mother. Time was fleeting, the entrapment of President Clinton scheduled for Saturday morning, and how else was a Just Prosecutor to proceed if not without the help of an all-purpose concept?

For four years his investigators had been looking for proof of President Clinton's complicity in something they could call a crime. Their efforts l come to naught, which was infuriat because they knew—knew for a fac that everywhere in Washington felo were in progress and evil was afo They could look out of any one of th office windows and see once and fut felons standing on street corners, ting on park benches, riding aroun chauffeured limousines and stolen pi up trucks. An appalling sight m more appalling by the investigatic failure to catch the President with hand in a cash register or his elbow a pornographic film. They knew t the President was up to no good—kr it as an article of faith—but by the t they arrived with their warrants heavy electronic equipment, the P ident was nowhere to be seen, proba off somewhere romancing a Wh House intern, taking money from a reputable Asian gentleman, laugh up his sleeve. Which was why Lewinsky didn't get to call her lawye eat her chocolate mousse.

Asked about the incident by sev of the Democratic congressmen the Judiciary Committee, the Hum Clerk answered in a voice wet w the oil of sanctimony. Yes, he s an awkward moment, but friendly "consensual," conducted under time-honored rules of prosecuto privilege. No, he said, he wasn't p sent, but from what he'd heard, Ritz-Carlton was a very nice ho and during the few hours in wh Ms. Lewinsky was denied her con tutional rights, she was, of course lowed to shop.

Listening to one or another of four heroes declaim upon the them their collective virtue, I underst that none of them knew very m about their enemies—a.k.a. the w

The day we found a monster in our mailroom



This happened in Tokyo. A Japanese mother returned a kid's rka to us. And some- dy in Shipping scovered a toy in e pocket – a goofy, nch monster. Well, figuring me little kid uld miss it, he nt it back. The next thing u know, we ceived a post- rd from a very ateful mother. Seems that goofy mon- er was her kid's *favorite* toy. Mind you, we get cards and letters the time at Lands' End® – thanking us for e little *unexpected* things we do. A lady in Germany wrote that she ordered necktie for her son – who usually doesn't ear ties – asking us to send him instructions how to tie it. Instead, one of our people tied one to show m how. And sent it in a gift box, for extra easure. And then, there's the English chap who sent ack one of our Original Attaches – well worn – asking us to repair a broken zipper.

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the flesh, and the devil. Judge Starr held himself aloof from the unsanctified ground of secular existence ("I am not a man of politics, of public relations, or of polls . . ."), and the method of his investigation—sending surrogates to carry out the vendettas against Susan McDougal and Webster Hubbell, refraining from the distasteful work of questioning live witnesses, brooding over his legal papers in the manner of a medieval pedant counting the number of angels on the head of a pin—sought to confine the waywardness of man's sorrow and desire within the parameters of a video game. Captain Starr, home alone with Doom or Quake, furiously working his joystick against the monsters attacking at light speed from the black depths of the human heart.

Much of Judge Starr's testimony I found repellent, in part because of its priggishness but mostly because of its zealot's translation of the language of the law into symbolic statements of eternal truth, and I noticed that when faced with questions to which neither the Just Prosecutor nor the Humble Clerk could give an honest answer, the Weary Pilgrim lifted up a bound copy of the prurient and foul-mouthed Starr report as if raising a holy relic from the altar of a church. But my own response to the witness was by no means general; the commentary in the next morning's papers tended to speak well of the judge's exemplary righteousness, and so did the letters to the editor that appeared over the following five or six days not only in the *New York Post* and the *Wall Street Journal* but also in the *New York Times*. Thoughtful readers, many of them obviously intelligent and well-informed, expressed their admiration for Judge Starr, describing him as a man of wisdom and high-minded principle, masterful, articulate, moral, philosophical, patriotic.

Apparently we live in an age that welcomes the concept of "inchoate criminality," and I remembered that on Sunday, November 15, four days before Judge Starr addressed the House Judiciary Committee, I had come across an op-ed essay in the *New York Times* in which Richard Danzig, the newly appointed secretary of the navy, offered his own set of supportive notes and corollary agreements. The secretary didn't deploy Judge Starr's phrase, but his paranoia was as shrill and all-encompassing. Everybody was under suspicion, nothing was safe. Now that the Cold War had come to an end (the good old Cold War in which the opposing teams wore different-colored jerseys and the nuclear throw weights were listed in the program), the world had entered an era of Non-Explosive Warfare—the secretary suggested the acronym NEW—in which mere civilians could kill, maim, disrupt, and incapacitate other mere civilians with weapons that didn't make loud and brilliant noises. The secretary referred to chemical poisons, infectious bacteria, computer viruses, cigarette smoke, toxins of all calibers and configurations, storms, drugs, small-bore terrorists, train wrecks, camouflaged data attacks, mud slides. "The power to wage war is no longer monopolized by nation-states," he said. "With nonexplosive weapons it may be difficult to tell if an incident is an act of war, the deed of a small terrorist group, a simple crime, or a natural occurrence. This makes retaliation difficult."

So difficult that it was prudent to consider oneself permanently engaged in a state of never-ending combat. Death was everywhere present and always near at hand, standing on street corners, sitting on park benches, riding around in chauffeured limousines and stolen pickup trucks. It presented a serious threat, and if the American people were going to deter it, they had damn well better learn to organize the legions of their fear into "a new union of our public health, police, and military resources."

Thus spake the secretary of the navy, and on first reading his clarion call to panic (all war, all the time, you give us twenty-two minutes and we give you the trumpets of doom), I thought of the Taliban in Kabul, sending out patrols from the Department of the Preservation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice to search the streets of the city for men in liquor and women in heat. I couldn't think of any other country in which the words "police" and "military" were synonyms for health. But that was before I heard Judge Starr's theory of "inchoate criminality," before I had seen November's hit actio movie, *Enemy of the State*, or read report submitted last September to th European parliament in Strasbourg o the topic of surveillance technolog

The movie offers itself as an ampl fied parable (explosions, car chase CIA and FBI agents, wiretaps, hel copters, abundant gunfire) expoundi the thesis of an American governme intent upon the "preemptive poli ing" of every citizen whom it deem worthy of notice or punishment. W Smith appears as the hero who fal afoul of a National Security Agen directed by Jon Voight, the villain the tale, who reads from a script th could have been handed to him Secretary Danzig. Early in the mov he justifies the unconstitutional rig of his methods on the ground th America is at war "twenty-four hou of every day." And why is this so? B cause America is rich, so rich "th everybody hates us." Which is wh Will Smith loses his identity an doesn't get to finish his caffè latte.

Once the chase has been set in m tion, the movie goes on to exhibit th electronic wizardry that makes it po sible to scroll through anybody's pho and bank records, cancel credit car alter financial statements and me ical reports, call down satellite ph tographs on the heads of prospecti felons, standing on street corners, s ting on park benches, riding around chauffeured limousines and stol pickup trucks.

The notion of official Washingt as the Land of Mordor and the Pen gon as a malevolent and omniscie spider has furnished Hollywood wi plot lines ever since the Vietnam W (*The Parallax View*, *Three Days of Condor*, *Clear and Present Danger*, *Absolute Power*, etc.), but the special fects, no matter how seemingly f fetched, never quite keep pace wi the inventiveness of the technicia under contract to one or another the world's military-intelligence age cies, who keep coming up with fas computers, more sensitive microphon effective at longer distances, strob scopic cameras that can photogra all the participants in a large str demonstration while simultaneou matching the images to the collecti stored in a database. The global s

lance system ECHELON, in place
e 1948 and jointly maintained by
United States, Britain, Canada,
v Zealand, and Australia, routine-
ionitors all of the world's telecom-
nications traffic—that is, every-
ly's phone calls, e-mail, fax
nsmissions, visits to a Web site—
viding telephone intercepts to its
ons under the code name "Mantis,"
ies of telex correspondence under
code name "Mayfly."

he report to the European parlia-
nt last September questioned ECH-
ON's uses as an aid to Anglo-Sax-
business corporations wishing to
l the trade secrets of their Asian
European competitors as well as
lack of scruple implicit in the as-
nbling of dossiers on individuals as-
iated with organizations (labor
ons, environmental groups, reli-
us sects) suspected of nurturing un-
come political opinions or unau-
rized sexual preferences. Observing
t "what the East German secret po-
could only dream of is rapidly be-
ning a reality in the free world,"
authors of the report asked a fair
stion: By what authority and under
at rule does a government acquire
right to rummage through the lives
ts citizens as if through the family
ums at a tag sale? To the Europeans
question apparently is still alive
l well and worth talking about; the
ort objected not only to the ab-
ce of international protocols gov-
ing the theft of information but al-
o the practice of telemarketing and
selling of personal data to corpo-
ions in search of customers for their
f balls, their cooking utensils, their
food, and their Christmas lingerie.

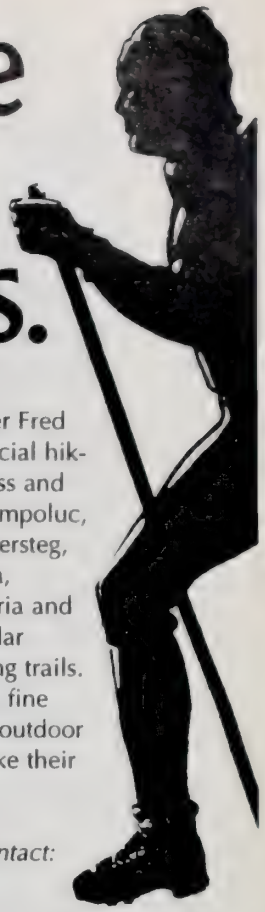
Once upon a time in the long ago
nd of yesteryear, the Americans
iced similar objections, and on read-
g about the capabilities of ECHE-
N, I found myself remembering the
ys when it was possible to board an
plane without emptying one's pock-
, to walk around the streets of New
rk without making a series of cameo
pearances on one or another of the
y's several thousand surveillance
meras. I also could remember auto-
biles that didn't come with seat
lts, job interviews that didn't require
e presentation of a urine sample, the
hite House unprotected by concrete
revetments, California restaurants in which it was permissible to smoke.

But over the last thirty-odd years the list of imminent perils has become as long as the list of endangered species, and we have learned the habits of defense. With surprisingly little argument we fill out the forms, hand over the voice print, take down our pants. All for our own good, of course, and without forgoing our constitutional right to shop.

Against the possibility of a citizens' complaint (unlikely but not to be ignored), the news and entertainment media supply a continuous loop of fairy tales grim enough to frighten Steven Seagal or Hieronymus Bosch—terrorists at large in the suburbs of Atlanta, the chance of suffocation in the peanut butter, tropical diseases coming ashore with the grapefruit in the port of Boston, the old Soviet nuclear arsenal (now sadly rusted and wrapped in Armenian rugs) moving south on camels to the markets of Samarkand. The twenty-four-hour panorama of monstrous threat accommodates the zeal of the authorities requisitioning more wiretaps, more CIA assets, more aircraft carriers and independent prosecutors, and the splendors of the enhanced technology promote the dream of a digital analogue of what medieval Christendom knew as the all-seeing eye of God—no sparrow falling unseen in the forest, the blooming of every flower in the field lovingly noticed and duly recorded, no sinner exempt from divine supervision.

Transposed into its psychotic or political variants, the same dream inspires conspiracy theorists and the managers of police states, as well as devout terrorists and militant puritans. The Just Prosecutors find easy labels to affix to their consignments of inchoate criminality (witch, heretic, aristocrat, Cherokee, adulterer, Jew), and on the great and happy day when the Lord makes manifest his bright vengeance (at an auto-da-fé in Madrid or Salamanca, under a guillotine in Paris, on the station platform at Auschwitz), the Humble Clerks (never men of politics, of public relations, or of polls) forward the freight into the purifying fire because of their reverence for "the sanctity, yes, the sanctity, of the judicial process." ■

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KOHINA TURNED OUT TO BE AN EVEN MORE CELEBRATED GEISHA THAN I WAS IN MY PRIME, but I don't think she ever recognized her own beauty. She never understood why men treated her the way they did. I remember when she was an apprentice, there was a certain actor—let's call him Mr. Ikeda—who used to come to the Gion district all the time. He was quite popular among the geisha because he was rarely moody, but he never once asked for me—until, that is, I took on Kohina as my younger sister and began to train her. I could tell from the start that Kohina found him enchanting: she'd seen all his films, and she was in awe, really. Yet somehow it never occurred to her he might feel attracted to her too.

Then one evening as we arrived at the Mitsuyo Teahouse, the mistress took us aside to say that Mr. Ikeda had been sitting alone a half-hour in the little room overlooking the moss garden, turning down all her offers of company, just waiting for us and no one else. We slid the door open a crack to peek in, and there he sat, drawing lines in the beaded moisture on an unopened bottle of Absolut Vodka. Beside it on the table stood two untouched glasses. "Only two glasses," I said to Kohina. "He's waiting for you, not both of us."

She was wearing a cinnamon-colored kimono with a design of autumn grasses, and she looked magnificent, but I could see she had no confidence in herself. I'm not sure what she would have done if I hadn't stepped aside and slid the door open so she had no choice but to go in. She gave me such a look! Nervous and excited all at once. The flush in her skin reminded me how she'd appeared that afternoon when she'd stepped from the bath into the chilly air, still steaming.



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HARPER'S INDEX

Estimated chances that a U.S. corporate merger will result in short- and long-term shareholder losses : 2 in 3

Chances that a dollar spent on lobbying by a major oil company in 1997 came from Exxon or Mobil : 1 in 4

Percentage by which the breakup of Standard Oil increased the size of John D. Rockefeller's personal wealth : 200

Percentage of his wealth that Bill Gates has pledged to donate this year for children's vaccines in poor countries : 0.0017

Amount that Nike CEO Philip Knight was paid last year after his annual compensation was cut by 40 percent : $1,680,000

Amount a fourth-grade Denver class has raised since last March to buy and free Sudanese slaves : $35,000

Number of Sudanese no longer enslaved as a result : 600

Estimated number of Chinese who die each day from smoking-related illnesses : 2,000

Percentage change since 1997 in the number of South Korean suicides : +36

Estimated number of people, per 10,000, who died of starvation in one Sudanese village over eleven days last July : 69

Average number of daily deaths per 10,000 that constitutes an internationally recognized "emergency" : 2

Number of tourists taken hostage by striking Club Med workers in Martinique for three days last November : 287

Average number of tourists who visit the South African township of Soweto each day : 1,000

Estimated number of U.S. Christians who moved to Jerusalem's Mount of Olives last year to await the millennium : 100

Estimated number of wind-surfing lessons per week provided for soldiers at Kuwait's U.S. Army base : 60

Number of sets of scuba gear available : 85

Average amount the U.S. military spent last year on recruiting, per soldier enlisted : $7,187

Average amount spent in 1989 : $5,562

Average profit U.S. businesses earn per worker for every $1 spent on salary and benefits : $2.15

Average profit in 1995 : $1.85

Number of S&Ls or shareholder groups seeking damages from the government over its handling of the 1980s bailout : 120

Estimated amount by which the awards sought will add to the bailout's original $165 billion cost : $50,000,000,000

Number of paragraphs of the 1999 federal budget devoted to passing these costs on to taxpayers : 2

Number of survivors of Spanish-American War soldiers who received Veterans Department benefits last year : 1,028

Amount the family of Osama bin Laden is being paid by Saudi Arabia to construct U.S. barracks there : $150,000,000

Percentage change since 1987 in incidents of international terrorism worldwide : –54

Number of the world's countries that are required by the 1984 Torture Convention to indict or extradite suspected torturers : 122

Number of times since 1994 that the ACLU has sued New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani : 17

Number of times it has won : 15

Percentage of local TV news directors who say their stations have been sued for libel since 1995 : 38

Percentage who say they have dropped "important information" from a story since then for fear of being sued : 28

Ratio of reporters who covered John Glenn's 1998 shuttle flight to those who covered his first space flight in 1962 : 7:1

Percentage by which box-office receipts at theaters running the new *Star Wars* trailer rose on the day of its appearance : 25

Portion of the audience at New York's Ziegfeld Theatre that day who left before the feature film began : 1/3

Number of *Jeopardy!* championships won by freshman Democratic Representative Rush Holt : 6

Number of "real ideological differences" within the Democratic Party, according to Senator Robert Torricelli : 0

Number of DON'T IMPEACH THE PRESIDENT IF IT INTERRUPTS MY SOAPS T-shirts printed by *Soap Opera Digest* last fall : 250

Weeks after DNA testing confirmed Bill Clinton's adultery last fall that such testing confirmed Thomas Jefferson's as well : 7

Patent number awarded Abraham Lincoln in 1849 on a device for "buoying vessels over shoals" : 6,469

Number of products licensed last year by the New York entrepreneur who trademarked the sequence 01-01-00 : 1,000

Figures cited have been adjusted for inflation and are the latest available as of December 1998. Sources are listed on page 77.

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LIPPER MID-CAP FUNDS AVERAGE	1.99%	-11.95%	9.10%	13.20%

* Class A results with the 4.75% max. load were **-1.51%, 8.61%** and **16.81%** for the 1-year, 3-year and since inception periods ending 9/30/98.

[1] No fees or sales charges apply to benchmarks. Performance provided by Lipper Analytical Services, Inc.

[2] Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Investment return and principal will fluctuate so that an investor's shares, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than their original cost.

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READINGS

[Speech]

OUR GOLDEN, SACRIFICIAL COUPLES

From "Scott and Zelda and Hillary and Bill: Sacrificial Couples and the Splendor of Our Failures," a speech given on September 24, 1998, by Allan Gurganus at The Grove Park Inn in Asheville, North Carolina, where the F. Scott Fitzgerald Society had convened to commemorate what would have been the writer's 102nd birthday. Gurganus is the author, most recently, of the novel Plays Well with Others. *His collected novellas, including "The Practical Heart," which appeared in the July 1993 issue of* Harper's Magazine, *will be published next year by Knopf.*

When I was young, the Fitzgeralds seemed even younger. Did any couple ever start wilder or—by forty—end sadder?

I still own my well-thumbed 1970s paperbacks. *Gatsby*'s glossy cover shows a fringed socialite and her Ivy League bootlegger. His two-tone shoe rests upon the running board of a Twenties roadster obviously Turtlewaxed by others. Hands on hips, they stare right at us, as sullen as desirable. My art-school friends and I tried to look like that. Didn't our talent also smolder, on tap for the discerning eye? We believed only the Fitzgeralds' earliest press: two glorious-looking party animals shimmied East and achieved everything.

And so, inspired, we chewed our peyote, we lit our sticky-sweet incense; we found—mirrored in the swooping curves of the Fitzgeralds' canary-yellow Daimler—improved distortions of our own caffeinated promise. Artistic if presentable, this pair confirmed that our work would last (while in no way impeding our hyperactive social-sexual lives).

Today our culture gauges the success of its presiding couples by reading their aftermath debris. We count the square miles of national landscape left smoldering with wreckage. By such standards, maybe Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald can teach us even more. They were handed the roles of child stars, then offered two of the messiest public exits ever known.

What helped sink them far too soon? Forces more virulent than their noisy nightclub squabbles, their self-destructive genes. Given our recent presidential convulsion, we'd do well to follow hysteria's genealogy clear back, back to this seminal couple: our Adam and Eve of Modern American Celebrity Culture.

Now, I'm somehow middle-aged. I find the Fitzgeralds' meaner whimsy hard to underwrite. Reconsidering their grown-up public stunts, I stand to one side, toe-tapping, checking my watch, suppressing a chaperon's yawn. (While they monopolize the Biltmore Hotel's revolving door for thirty full minutes, till reporters arrive.) I now feel toward them the rueful back-leaning patience of a person who has outlived his dearest childhood friends. No younger people were ever given more to squander before a larger crowd.

Still, it must've been fun—wearing evening clothes on an August night hot enough to

wade into the Plaza's fountain. Cooling, the water, the attention from a curious if standoffish crowd. But how awkward to then squish back across the lobby's chill white marble floors, to puddle the elevator's parquet. Impulse is easy; follow-through grows harder as you age.

The man who tried valiantly to mastermind his own third and fourth careers as confessional-journalist and late-blooming screenwriter admitted, "I just couldn't make the grade as a hack. That, like everything else, requires a certain practiced excellence." Fitzgerald had served himself up as the Twenties' characteristic spoilt young Princeton wag; his wife's outrageousness supplanted, then bested his own.

In 1925, with immense justified pride, Fitzgerald published *The Great Gatsby*. It is his single work of pure-protein genius, the most disciplined and prophetic novel of its decade. Apart from Edith Wharton and T. S. Eliot (who called it the first step forward American fiction had taken since Henry James), few people noticed. The frenzy of the early Twenties had begun to sober up and count its pocket change. Everything associated with those first impenitent postwar years grew very quickly dated. And yet, aged twenty-nine, Fitzgerald had only just begun.

By 1927, his collected book sales brought in just $153; 1929 saw that dip to $32. Only magazine fees and occasional sales to Hollywood paid the lush life's bills. The Fitzgeralds' cultural utility seemed spent. Like a more recent couple, their well-being had been almost unconsciously protected by Prosperity itself. When preferred stocks fell, theirs did too.

Every few years, our culture elects another golden couple. Often young, handsome, naively ambitious as only kids can admit to being, they intend to be geniuses at what they do. And we, identifying with them—body and style—find we like them very much. We enlist them to represent us for a while; we take them out on approval. Their tenure usually lasts somewhere between that of a U.S. president and a U.S. senator.

And, for those five years, if they are skillful and can keep us interested, they come to stand for whatever we all secretly most want just then to *be*. You cannot call them "The Couple of the Decade." They never last that long. What takes them out? Assassination, suicide, drink, smack, the family insanity kicking in, public-relations blunders, pederasty, a rise of hemlines, maybe just marrying some dwarfish leathern Greek billionaire.

Or boredom. Our boredom. With them.

Every period knits its own kind of team. Sometimes we need imperiled rose-cheeked Hansels and Gretels (the Fitzgeralds). But history can also concoct the father-daughter romance of Bogart and Bacall—a strange prefiguration of the grizzled, burned-out GIs returned home to their fertile, hopeful child brides. The

[Riposte]

LET THEM EAT CRACK

From a press release issued last December by the editors of The eXile, *an English-language biweekly published in Moscow. Under a preliminary agreement reached in November, the United States will give Russia over 1.5 million tons of wheat as humanitarian aid and a $600 million loan for food to offset an anticipated food shortage this winter.*

Recently, the United States announced that it was offering Russia a $600 million "food aid" package. This touched the heartstrings of scores of Muscovites, a few of whom have banded together to follow America's great example—namely, that of sending a country exactly what it doesn't need, making them pay for it, then calling it all "aid."

Several Russian celebrities and leading expatriates have formed "Bandit Aid." Last weekend they gathered to record a charity song for the suffering masses of Washington, D.C., one of the West's poorest, most crime-infested cities. The tune is based on the Band Aid song "Do They Know It's Christmas (Feed the World)." The Bandit Aid version, in contrast, is called "Do They Know It's Christmas (Send Them Crack)."

As everyone knows, crack is just about the last thing Washington needs, just as a $600 million loan is the last thing Russia needs—especially a loan offered on the condition that the money be used to pay American farmers three times more for grain than what it costs at home, meanwhile leaving the remainder of the profits to a small clique of well-connected Russian distribution companies and their tools in the Russian government, thereby destroying Russia's shaky distribution network.

The Bandit Aid song will premiere next Friday on DJ Alexander Gordon's radio show. All proceeds from the sale of the Bandit Aid recording will in theory go to the "Save America" fund, though in fact any money collected will mysteriously disappear in some brazenly corrupt manner.



vacuated house and smoke from three million gallons of gasoline burning in a Shell Oil fuel tank struck by lightning, oodbridge, New Jersey, 1996," by Virginia Beahan and Laura McPhee, from their collection of photographs No rdinary Land: Encounters in a Changing Environment, *published by Aperture. Their work will be on display until bruary 6 at the Burden Gallery in New York City.*

Jack Kennedys proved that, perfectly presented, idealism can become a joyful suavity; and that both are very fragile. Our moment of grunge and suburban self-disgust casts Kurt Cobain and Courtney Love as the Fitzgeralds' great-grandkids. Their stage act's main ingredient was their dance of death. Rehearsal for his suicide: overdose to both left and right arms before gunfire to the head.

First we love the favored ones' giftedness and nerve, the cute way they deal with being overly visible; how they use pop music as their anthem. But we're soon noting their early little failures: she changes her hairdo too often (which implies uncertainty about an identity we wanted patented, codified from the start). We shake our heads with an avuncular contained disappointment. And soon, after repeated warnings and setbacks, some major smeary mortality is displayed. Then we get to witness it, their fall, their complete disgrace. Turns out, what they considered their personal throne room was actually our gladiatorial stadium: the walls are one-way glass, the blood is real.

Given our carnivorous culture's appetite, considering its digestion's metabolic speed, our serial mangling of such couples really constitutes their truest service to us. We keep tearing up our own failed drafts at getting ourselves, our styles, our goals, right.

In American culture, the true "F word" is Failure. "F," Scott Fitzgerald's first initial.

A main requirement: the couple cannot quite know what must befall them. Starter innocence makes their disgrace sexier, gorier, and far more eucharistically useful. The pair must not guess when they are taken up by a culture that, in agreeing to be allegorical, in coming to define a single historical moment, they will, by necessity, be sacrificed when those times change. Cocteau says, "We must forgive fashion everything, it dies so young."

Since Scott Fitzgerald actually named "The Jazz Age," shouldn't that protect him from his own obsolescence? But, see, he got the noun wrong. There are no "Ages" in American life. That slow trudge belongs to geology, not the quicksilver of popular, artistic, and political culture. Even in the Twenties, we had only "Moments." And each such moment features a



"House #3," by Francesca Woodman, who died in 1981 at the age of twenty-two. Francesca Woodman, *a volume of her photographs, was recently published by Scalo. Her work is currently on display at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.*

characteristic little couple stuck—the miniature ceramic bridal pair—atop another of Miss Havisham's mouse-infested wedding cakes.

"They retreated back into their vast carelessness . . . and let other people clean up the mess they had made," Fitzgerald famously described *The Great Gatsby*'s rich and slippery Buchanans.

Upon recently re-rereading both Fitzgeralds, I felt first heartened, then saddened, and finally enraged. I resisted the pair with seemingly sinless Presbyterian rectitude. I became thin-lipped, taxpaying, churchgoing, a veritable Ken Starr. And yet, even as I accused them, the two again seduced me (their specialty, after all). The high jinks were capricious but their talent was profound, their standards absolute. They lured me back to finding them amusing, then engaging, finally half-endearing. I wound up loving them despite everything, because of everything, these reckless crazy beautiful damned people. The Fitzgeralds' own vast carelessness (they somehow convinced me) had at least *begun* life as enormous carefulness, and hope. They'd simply caught a viral dose of our century's chaos before anybody else.

Gatsby, more than any book I know, predicted our present impoverished tabloid culture: how the cult of self-improvement becomes the craze for self-invention, which upgrades into amoral self-promotion, which ends in self-delusion, self-destruction. The image of the youthful Gatsby floating face-down in his hard-won Olympic pool might prove a fitting image of our sinking-sunken century. Popular culture has utterly assimilated, frequently betrayed, but never bettered, Fitzgerald's impeccable prophecy of a novel. (See the body in the pool, *Sunset Boulevard*.)

We understand how Zelda's family tradition of schizophrenia opened in her like the spikiest of her black feather fans. (Her grandmother, aunt, brother, and Vietnam-era grandson all went down to that last-ditch self-medication: suicide.) We know how her madness outranked even the destructiveness of Scott's half-epileptic Irish relation to booze. And yet, with all these jeopardies inwardly stalking them, they still lived their outward lives on spec, on spiritual credit. Behavior I found admirable and suave at twenty simply bewilders me at fifty. Couldn't the Fitzgeralds have better curated their genius?

But no. Nothing could have saved them. And if they had lived to celebrate his 102nd birthday tonight, if they'd spent all afternoon upstairs in this hotel receiving Ph.D. students bearing—instead of Magi's gifts—countless thankless greedy tape recorders, that decorous pair would not have been our brittle, snobbish, briefly beautiful Scott and Zelda, the first in a series of invaluable sacrificial couples.

"If you are afraid of loneliness," Chekhov writes with dry-eyed melancholy, "don't marry." Which brings us to the Clintons.

"How are Bill and Hillary like Scott and Zelda?" But seriously—what sort of pair might we choose to best depict our health-conscious, career-minded present? Well, maybe two tall blond joggers with Yale law degrees, alas. And we always get what we want.

In what ways are these couples siblings? Both "Francis Scott Key" Fitzgerald and William "Jefferson" Clinton were named for patriots, were born immediately after a momentous death in the family—Fitzgerald's two sisters of fever, Clinton's father after drowning in a ditch beside his overturned car. Surviving mothers thought their sons essentially perfect. These stage moms would, however inconveniently, never leave the front row–center of their grown boys' lives.

Each couple could boast one member from the South, another from the Midwest. Each pair headed east to storm the citadels of the Establishment; each succeeded to an extent they'd expected but most locals doubted. Their intense initial attraction soon relented into a far more realistic, more complete, and necessarily forgiving view of each other. The bedrock sibling loyalty underwriting these unconventional unions often baffled others. When romance failed early, some joint ambition simply redoubled. This new ply and compound yoked them umbilically, as airy transient courtly love had not. Neither couple—living nomadically on public faith—ever owned a house.

Each pair had an only child, a daughter, who seemed to have escaped their worst excesses, to have been ethical and—given the awful visibility of their life—almost uncannily well-adjusted. This was surely a tribute to the best in each parent. The Fitzgeralds' daughter, Scottie, overinsisted that her first eleven years had been essentially happy ones, but her wounded tone is unmistakable: "In my next incarnation, I may not choose again to be the daughter of a famous author. People who live entirely by the fertility of their imaginations are fascinating, brilliant, often charming, but they should be sat next to at dinner parties, not lived with."

The deeply talented wives [illegible] at the outset of both couples' [illegible]. But each team soon found difficulty inventing any significant, sustained, original role for her—besides that of cookie baker, squireable appendage, and explainer of hubby's merits, charms, policies. Whenever the wife risked more, whenever she stepped forward on her own, the Hiring Public drove her back into standing just beside and behind him.

After Zelda's ever more manic attempt to become a prima ballerina in her late twenties, the asylum's admitting physician noted: "Mrs. Fitzgerald entered in a state of acute anxiety and restlessness, continually repeating: 'This is dreadful, this is horrible, what is to become of

[Internship Information]

THE SELF-INTEREST SECTOR

From a press release issued last September by the Ayn Rand Institute.

The Ayn Rand Institute (ARI) is continuing its campaign to abolish volunteerism by offering students a unique way to fulfill school service requirements. ARI's Anti-Servitude Internships are designed for students who object to the forced sacrifice of their time, interests, and values. These students can fulfill their volunteerism graduation requirements by fighting against volunteerism.

High school students can apply to ARI to work on projects that reject the self-sacrifice premise underlying service programs and instead promote reason, rational self-interest, and the freedom to pursue one's own happiness.

Students accepted into the ARI Anti-Servitude program will have a choice of several internships. These options include: supporting the general work of the institute through archival research, documenting the impact of volunteerism on the lives and schoolwork of students, or developing a long-range series of personal goals.

Since the President's summit on volunteerism in April 1997, the Ayn Rand Institute has been the only voice of moral opposition to volunteerism. Volunteerism is designed to turn Americans into guilt-ridden indentured servants—a program and morality more appropriate to a dictatorship than to a nation founded on independence and freedom.

me, I have to work, and I will no longer be able to, I must die, and yet I have to work. I will never be cured, let me leave. I must work, work.'"

Hannah Arendt isolates the central problem of the sacrificial marriage: "Love, in distinction from friendship, is killed . . . extinguished, the moment it is displayed in public."

The Fitzgeralds and the Clintons enjoyed five grand years of visibility, then entered a long period of trial, relentlessly arrived at, pitiable and enraging to watch. Each pair, in trying to put a good face on their own quantum connectedness, seemed to lose the patent on that union. Its presumed warfares and cross-referenced resentments seeped in and darkened the public's view of them. And this signaled the last phase of their allegorical service to our consumer culture.

They knew now: they'd been used up, by and for the others.

Gerald Ford coined our age's unexpected Pater-like aesthetic-public principle, "An impeachable offense is whatever a majority . . . considers it to be at a given moment in history."

We all stand guilty as accused. Literature, like love, constitutes our plea bargain.

If, as my drunken master tells me, it's just as hard to be a hack as to be a great artist, I might hold out for "great artist," thank you very much. If that means forgoing my one and a half Jack Daniel's per evening, well . . . If my fiction falls from favor, I can always go out and teach third grade to keep the new novel alive. If I see my major romantic connection becoming a suicide pact, I'll bail first. Been there, done that. And, living alone, I'll continue enjoying a masterpiece of an address book, many genius godchildren, the garden just a bit too large for one person, a small intelligent yellow pound dog.

And the clarifying redemption of work itself! No peyote in my fridge these days. But the miracle of surviving can constitute a steadying sort of high.

When young, we feel unique in human history. Age teaches you how permeable are the boundaries between us all, how essentially and consolingly alike we are. Literature is predicated on the radical notion that we are more similar than different. Literature tells us that imagining one another is not just a luxurious feat achieved by the rare artist, but a daily necessity for us all.

The Fitzgeralds never aged into their slipcover phase. I never thought I'd live past twenty, then thirty, finally forty. Through no merits of my own, I did. And now, along with the age of Ten, Fifty is my favorite year so far. They missed it. I hate that for them. They would have found a way to adore it. They'd have made a lark of their crow's feet. They missed the joys of a true domestic life, the woes of repainting, the secret pleasures of warm milk and a good bedside book. The comfort of childhood friends, not just some endless trading up the celebrity scale. There is such sweet philosophy in the luxurious monotony of surviving!

When we were young, so were the Fitzgeralds. And so, oddly, was the United States. Scott summarized his thirty-third year, "Stock Crash!

[Found Poetry]

ODE TO MONICA

This poem, by Daniel Radosh, is composed entirely of descriptions of Monica Lewinsky's voice that appeared last November in the Washington Post, *the* New York Times, *the* New York Daily News, *the* New York Post, *and* USA Today. *Radosh included the poem in the November 18, 1998, edition of his "Media Moments" e-mail list. He lives in New York City.*

Weeping, wheedling, gabbing girlishly
Lost, playful, rather nasal
Naive, bewildered, confused, ditsy
Plain angry, and a bit nutty
Matter-of-fact, not thin or childish
Girlish, teen-speak, insecure, childish
Rapid-fire ramblings, more Buffy than Bacall
Vulnerable, sympathetic, honest, small
Much younger than her 24 years
Heartbreakingly sad, pathetic, near tears
Smarter and more strident than expected
Not that of a Valley Girl bubble head
Dumb, Valley Girl, star-struck, adolescent,
  little girl, teeny-bopper
Desperation, stammers, self-absorbed
Determined, furious, very believable
Quite mature and analytical
Fluid and sincere, not delusional
Sharp, shrill, incomprehensible
Calculating, bitter, flirty, needy
Young and trapped, pouty, dreamy
Pleading, anxious, almost a whisper
Hyperventilating hysteria
Sentences that rise like questions
Classic teen-ager upspeak patterns
A little afraid, painful to listen to
Rants, storms, blurts, chokes, sobs, murmurs,
  rises to a screech
Using her voice as an instrument
An average American





rom Laundromat/Locomotion, *a series of photographs taken in Bayonne, New Jersey, by Steven Pippin. To create the images, Pippin fitted the ass door of a washing machine with a lens and a shutter. He affixed a flash unit to the top of the machine and laid the floor with trip wire, which, hen stepped on, triggered the flash and shutter. Pippin then developed the negatives inside the machine on the warm-wash cycle. The series is cur-ntly on display at P. S. 1 Contemporary Art Center in New York City. Pippin lives in London.*

Zelda + America." It was all the same to him, and he made us know that, and he joined us to his beautiful, blessed, unlucky family. And now that we are older even than they, they're still somewhat aloof, ancient early, preemptive with all they gave away too soon, still somehow in advance of us, waiting to greet us out there on the terrace. They're still smoking, amazed that even a good cigarette should be so frowned upon these days. They linger there yet, not all that enchanted with the view of nighttime mountains and the city lights, but still offering—even from their essential exhaustion—that legendary charm they each long since learned to turn on and off like the power utilities they are. Their power came in surges, till the end, but with a greater and greater surcharge, which, for us in fact, they paid and paid and paid.

"Everything in America," Zelda Fitzgerald wrote, "is like its storms."

I would gladly escort him to church-basement AA meetings. I'd keep quiet track of her Prozac dosage. When I was young, they seemed even wilder. Now I'm older, I defer to them as to grandparents, these exquisite physical wrecks, our Adam and Eve. She died in my native North Carolina six months after I was born. Can you say you miss two hellions you never met? Can you really claim to love them?

And can we ever give thanks personal enough to those couples we handpicked for sacrifice?

[Letter]

MY SO-CALLED LIFE AS A TERRORIST

From a dispatch written in August 1997 by an Osama bin Laden operative in East Africa. Federal authorities believe that the writer is Haroun Fazil, one of the main suspects in the bombing of the American Embassy in Nairobi last August. The letter, first reported on last December by the New York Times, *was among the computer files of Wadih el Hage, a bin Laden aide who is currently awaiting trial in New York on terrorism charges. Fazil, who remains at large, was the "media information" officer for bin Laden's Nairobi "cell"; he had been asked by a senior associate to report periodically on the "security situation" in East Africa.*

Brother Sharif:

We can now state that the security position of the cell is at 100 percent danger. In this report I will try to explain the reasons we feel we are in danger. I will also try to offer my recommendation to the honored and wise high command, which I know understands everything and which we hope is seeking the best.

We have heard, seen, and read that the Hajj [Osama bin Laden] has declared war on America. That was confirmed when we saw the inter



TV Time, *a painting by Jason Godeke. Godeke's work is on permanent display at the R. B. Stevenson Gallery in La Jolla, California. He lives in Sound Beach, New York.*

view on CNN in which the sheik [bin Laden] stated that he was declaring war on America because it had appointed itself the policeman of the world.

The interview showed the explosion in Riyadh [at an American-run military barracks in November 1995] and connected it with the sheik's opposition to the Saudi regime. They described him as a rich businessman and the world's major financier of mujahedin terrorists. They said he has a huge multinational army and has become America's primary target. After that, we saw a lot of news about the Hajj and his followers in magazines and on the radio. We were surprised to read in one of the English newspapers that America had sent a force of one thousand mercenaries to Pakistan to kidnap the sheik.

My recommendation to my brothers in East Africa was to not be complacent regarding security matters and that they should know that there is American-Kenyan-Egyptian intelligence activity in Nairobi aiming to identify the names and residences of the cell members. We are really in danger. We are 100 percent convinced that Kenyan intelligence is aware of us. Our security situation is extremely bad.

The last bit of news that we saw almost made me explode. I consider the following to be the primary threat to the East Africa network. We read in the British *Daily Telegraph* that there is an individual from the bin Laden finance department currently in the hands of the American Central Intelligence Agency in Saudi Arabia. The newspaper also mentioned that a man called Sidi Tayib had advised the Americans about the scope of distribution of money to various Arab communities who cooperate with the sheik in the United States, especially in Brooklyn and Jersey City.

Tawfiz and I have collected all the files that we do not need here and that might pose a threat against us, and moved them to another location. We did not burn them, since they belong to 'Abd Al-Sabbur, who may have a different opinion about the situation when he returns next week. We tried to leave the house, but we have a problem with cash flow. We also thought that if we were under surveillance, moving might look very suspicious.

On the same day that we heard the above news, the partisans from Mombasa called. I told them that I would get in touch with them and asked them never to call me at that number again because I am sure that the telephone is tapped. This was my conclusion after Wadi's wife told me that she had heard strange voices in the television when she was trying to adjust the volume. She told me that she heard "This is it. This is the line." Then a pause, and then, "Yes, yes, is he Arab or English?" Then she said the line went dead. Maybe that seems normal when you surf the television channels and you hear overlapping voices from different programs, but I took this seriously, since we are in a state of emergency.

Wadi's wife also told me that there was an American lady living in the same complex who had visited them. She had seen Abdallah going out to buy bread and asked him if he was American. He said yes, and then she came to the house and asked to use the phone. Later, Wadi's wife said, "I was suspicious of that call, since perhaps she did something to the phone, so we took care in using the phone at that house." I advised Umm Abdallah to put the television set in a box so that we can take it to another location.

These facts leave us no choice but to ask ourselves if we are ready for the big clandestine battle. Have we taken the necessary measures to avoid having one of us fall into a trap, knowing that with our limited resources we are counting on God's blessing?

We, the East Africa cell members, do not want to know about the operation plans, since we are just implementers. We trust our command and appreciate their work and know that they have a lot of problems. My advice here is practical. We are simply asking you, for the sake of organizing our work, to tell us if there is a possibly dangerous situation coming up, so we can prepare ourselves accordingly, or so that we can go underground for a while if necessary, since our presence might foil or complicate plans that we know nothing of.

As you know, the decision to declare war on America was made, yet we know about it only from the news media. We should have known about that decision so that we could take the necessary precautions. If one of us falls into a trap due to one of your decisions, God forbid, that will be a loss to the whole organization. We ask you to keep in touch with us through the Internet. We get a lot of information about the sheik from that network. We need to hear your good words, and we are afraid to be in the dark, since we do not have the necessary expertise regarding such difficult decisions, decisions that only you can make.

Brother, my family has been in touch with me and told me that my mother is very sick and that they would like me to go there. What do you think? Keep in mind that we only have $500.

Please send my greetings to everyone and say a lot of prayers for us so God may grant us success. May God give you his reward.

Your brother,
Salih Suhayb Al-Ansari

[Updates]

THE ATOMIC BUG BITES RICHLAND!

From a series of e-mails sent last October to employees of Fluor Daniel Hanford, Inc., by the company's Environment, Safety, Health, and Quality Department after radioactive contamination was discovered outside designated radiation-control areas at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in Richland, Washington.

SENT: Monday, October 5, 1998, 12:08 P.M.

Low levels of radioactive contamination were found outside of Hanford site radiation-control areas in eleven separate locations last week. Contamination was detected in a dumpster, two garbage trucks, two mobile office trailers, five other buildings, and a government van. Four contaminated socks were discovered at the home of one Hanford worker, but no other contamination has been detected off-site.

Before the contamination was found on the garbage trucks, one of them transported a load to the Richland city landfill. Weather permitting, excavation of potentially affected areas of the landfill will begin today.

SENT: Wednesday, October 7, 1998, 8:51 A.M.

We have now found contamination on fruit flies, gnats, and other pests on wet garbage in three areas. Contaminated fruit flies have been trapped on pest strips in the area that was roped off last week. Additionally, we found contaminated fruit flies on garbage in a trash can just outside of the Canister Storage Building.

The pests may be related to the contamination spreads outside of the radiation-control zones that we reported to you on Monday.

SENT: Wednesday, October 7, 1998, 2:20 P.M.

We have confirmed that pests are transporting and causing the spread of contamination. We encourage all persons on the Hanford site to carry their food in closed containers, to wrap all garbage in plastic, and to cover trash cans with lids. Do not leave fruit, cookies, or other





These images appear in Man Eating Bugs: The Art and Science of Eating Insects, *by Peter Menzel and Fai D'Aluisio, published by Material World Books. Menzel, a photographer, and D'Aluisio, his wife, have spent t past eight years documenting entomophagy around the world. At left, a boy in Indonesia eats roasted stink bugs; right, a girl in Cambodia eats deep-fried tarantulas.*

unwrapped food out in bowls or on tables. There have been no incidents of personnel contamination from fruit flies or other pests.

SENT: Thursday, October 8, 1998, 2:25 P.M.

In the past forty-eight hours, we have not found any further areas of contamination on the Hanford site. However, contamination has been found on two pieces of garbage in the Richland city landfill.

Additional measures being taken by the Radiological Control team include trapping insects, examining the exteriors of vehicles, and sealing and spraying garbage dumpsters and garbage trucks.

While the Hanford site periodically finds contaminated rodents, ants, and beetles, contaminated flying insects have not been detected for many years.

SENT: Monday, October 12, 1998, 4:02 P.M.

How can I be sure I am not transporting contamination home?

Other than the craftsperson with contamination found in his boot, no other personnel contamination has been detected. Most of the contamination has been found on damp kitchen waste, apparently deposited and spread by contaminated gnats and fruit flies. The source of the insect contamination is still being investigated.

How far can a fruit fly fly?

Independent fruit fly movement is limited to the immediate surroundings. Weather factors or relocation of food sources can expand the fly range. A short description of fruit flies and their habits is on our Web page at www.hanford.gov/safety/conspread/index.html.

SENT: Tuesday, October 13, 1998, 3:20 P.M.

Surveying of site dumpsters continues. Two additional contaminated dumpsters were found yesterday. Thus far, twenty-one contaminated spots, many on dumpsters, have been found.

SENT: Thursday, October 15, 1998, 2:10 P.M.

The excavated areas at the Richland city landfill have been capped off. The total amount of Hanford trash removed was about 210 tons. The good news is that no contaminated flies or gnats have been found outside the ten-acre area where they were first discovered.

We are glad we have been able to maintain the trust and confidence of the region throughout this episode, and that we have policies and procedures that continue to make the Hanford site a good neighbor to surrounding citizens.

[Television Transcript]

SAVE SOME WOMB FOR DESSERT

From the February 4, 1998, episode of TV Dinners, *a cooking show that airs on Channel 4 in England. This segment was filmed at the home of Fred and Mary Clears in Hull, Yorkshire. The show is hosted by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall.*

HUGH FEARNLEY-WHITTINGSTALL: There are few occasions more worthy of celebration than the start of a new life. And when the baby is a first, eagerly awaited grandchild, some families may want to do a bit more than just pop the cork on a few bottles. Nineteen-year-old Rosie and her partner, Lee, have brought their newborn son to visit his grandparents. To celebrate his birth, they've invited family and friends to a welcome-to-the-world party.

MARY: Indie Mo is my first grandchild, so the food has to be perfect. It has to be food that we most probably won't eat again until a very big celebration.

VOICE-OVER: *Mary's best friend, Sue, is a fellow social worker and a keen cook. Mary has asked her to take charge of all the cooking for Indie Mo's party. Sue's devotion to her friends will be expressed in the twenty-odd dishes she is planning for the party, but she is also rising to the challenge of a completely new ingredient.*

ROSIE: The placenta is going to be cooked and made into a placenta pâté—I'm not quite sure what the recipe is for that.

SUE: The real scary bit is the placenta, because I've never even actually seen one. I've seen photographs, but I've never actually seen one live, I've never had my hands on one. I don't know what they look like, what they feel like, what the smell is—I've got no conception of it at all, so that is going to be the real nail-biter.

VOICE-OVER: *Immediately after Indie Mo's birth two months ago, Mary brought the placenta back home to store in the freezer.*

MARY: [*Laying the umbilical cord in a large serving dish*] There's Indie Mo's cord . . . fresh. A very beautiful thing. [*Opens a plastic bowl with the placenta and placental blood*] Have a look in here. This is Rosie's placenta. Waste not, want not. Have a smell. Isn't it lovely? Lovely and fresh?

FEARNLEY-WHITTINGSTALL: It smells completely clean.

MARY: What do you think, Rosie?

ROSIE: Gory.

MARY: Yes, gory. It would have been good if we'd eaten it straightaway. That was our plan. Had things gone the way we wanted, Rosie was going to eat it straight after—we were going to have a little fry-up. Dad was looking forward to it.

FEARNLEY-WHITTINGSTALL: That's what the tradition is based on, isn't it? The health of the mother, putting some goodness back into her after birth?

MARY: Yes. Many, many women in many cultures do it.

ROSIE: It's a scary thought—I'm going to eat something that's from me. I don't know. It just seems surreal.

FEARNLEY-WHITTINGSTALL: How do you feel about it being shared, about other people eating it?

ROSIE: [*Poking absently at the placenta in the plastic bowl*] Well, it's a lovely idea if they want to.

VOICE-OVER: *The challenge in working with a new ingredient is guessing how it will behave when cooked. After the excess blood has been rinsed from the placenta, Sue suggests slicing it up to check out the texture.*

FEARNLEY-WHITTINGSTALL: [*Watching as Sue cuts the placenta into strips*] Look at that in the middle. It's quite meaty, isn't it?

SUE: Almost purple. Really rich looking.

FEARNLEY-WHITTINGSTALL: The outside is spongy, but the inside—

SUE: The inside is quite solid.

FEARNLEY-WHITTINGSTALL: Quite dense.

VOICE-OVER: *The onions and garlic come out of the pan, and the placenta is fried quickly in butter and oil.*

SUE: It seems to be staying fairly tender. It's not contracting a lot.

VOICE-OVER: *Sue's next inspiration is a baptism by fire: using a dash of cognac.*

[*Sue pours the cognac over the frying placenta, which then bursts into flames*]

FEARNLEY-WHITTINGSTALL: Whoa! That is elemental, isn't it?

SUE: It's earth and air and wind and fire.

FEARNLEY-WHITTINGSTALL: Do you think we should get Mary and Rosie in here for a little taste?

SUE: I think their opinion is absolutely vital at this stage.

FEARNLEY-WHITTINGSTALL: I'll go and get them.

SUE: [*Cutting the cooked placenta into bite-sized pieces*] Oh, it's so tender. The knife's just gliding through it.

MARY: [*Entering kitchen*] Look at that! Beautiful. Let's taste it. [*Takes a bite*] Go for it, Rosie.

ROSIE: [*Chews*] It's not bad.

FEARNLEY-WHITTINGSTALL: Mary, what do you think?

MARY: Lovely . . . You can taste the garlic.

[*Chewing*] Texture's nice. Not too strong. Not gamy.

FEARNLEY-WHITTINGSTALL: Quite mild, is it?

MARY: Mild, lovely smell.

ROSIE: Not as chewy as liver. It's nice.

MARY: Thumbs up!

ROSIE: Yes!

VOICE-OVER: *Next Sue blends half the placenta with a little butter, the onions and garlic, and chopped parsley and sage.*

FEARNLEY-WHITTINGSTALL: [*Watching Sue use a spatula to remove the placenta from the blender*] That could sit up on some toast really nicely.

SUE: Yes. Yes, it could.

VOICE-OVER: *After Sue adds a few twists of black pepper, a pinch of salt, and the juice of half a lime, the smooth base is combined with the rest of the placenta, which has been coarsely chopped for added texture. The pâté will be served on some of grandfather Fred's homemade focaccia bread. Olive oil is drizzled on the bread and left to soak in while Sue and Mary lay out the rest of the buffet, including a creamy apricot-and-mango mousse.*

MARY: [*Carrying the mousse, which has been shaped with a Bundt mold, to the buffet table*] It's got a bit of the old cervix look about it, doesn't it?

SUE: Absolutely, dear. I thought it was very appropriate.

VOICE-OVER: *Also on the menu are roasted meat loaf and a salad, but the first dish to be served to the assembled guests is the placenta pâté.*

GUESTS: Cheers to Indie Mo!

MARY: Here's some of our genetic gene pool! Dive in!

[*Laughter from the guests*]

MARY: There you go. Anybody else? Come on, Lee. Girlies? Julie?

FEARNLEY-WHITTINGSTALL: [*To guest*] Did you try the placenta pâté?

FIRST GUEST: No, I didn't.

FEARNLEY-WHITTINGSTALL: No? Why not?

FIRST GUEST: It's just the thought of it, to be honest. Just couldn't handle the thought of it.

SECOND GUEST: Initially, when Mary said that we were going to be eating placenta, I thought, Yech. But then when I thought about it I said, Okay, as long as it's cooked in onions and gravy like a casserole. Then she said it was going to be a pâté and I thought, Brilliant. Brilliant. Really.

THIRD GUEST: How many pieces did you have, Audrey?

AUDREY: I had two and a half.

THIRD GUEST: I had five.

FOURTH GUEST: Everybody's bragging about how many pieces they had. It's great!

THIRD GUEST: Did you ask how many Lee had?

FOURTH GUEST: How many?

THIRD GUEST: He had about fourteen!

VOICE-OVER: *Lee's even trying to convert a vegetarian.*

LEE: [*To the vegetarian*] It's not meat.

VEGETARIAN: It's human.

LEE: It's not come out of an animal at all.

VEGETARIAN: [*Hesitates, takes a bite, chews*] It's quite nice.

LEE: Nice, isn't it?

[Memo]

DISTRICT 11'S COKE PROBLEM

From a September 23, 1998, letter sent to the principals of School District 11 in Colorado Springs, Colorado, by John Bushey, the district's executive director of "school leadership." In September 1997, the district signed an $8 million exclusive vending contract with Coca-Cola.

Dear Principal:

Here we are in year two of the great Coke contract. I hope your first weeks were successful and that pretty much everything is in place (except staffing, technology, planning time, and telephones).

First, the good news: This year's installment from Coke is "in the house," and checks will be cut for you to pick up in my office this week. Your share will be the same as last year.

Elementary school	$3,000
Middle School	$15,000
High School	$25,000

Now the not-so-good news: we must sell 70,000 cases of product (including juices, sodas, waters, etc.) at least once during the first three years of the contract. If we reach this goal, your school allotments will be guaranteed for the next seven years.

The math on how to achieve this is really quite simple. Last year we had 32,439 students, 3,000 employees, and 176 days in the school year. If 35,439 staff and students buy one Coke product every other day for a school year, we will double the required quota.

Here is how we can do it:

1. Allow students to purchase and consume vended products throughout the day. If sodas are not allowed in classes, consider allowing juices, teas, and waters.

2. Locate machines where they are accessible to the students all day. Research shows that vender purchases are closely linked to availability. Location, location, location is the key.

You may have as many machines as you can handle. Pueblo Central High tripled its volume of sales by placing vending machines on all three levels of the school. The Coke people surveyed the middle and high schools this summer and have suggestions on where to place additional machines.

3. A list of Coke products is enclosed to allow you to select from the entire menu of beverages. Let me know which products you want, and we will get them in. Please let me know if you need electrical outlets.

4. A calendar of promotional events is enclosed to help you advertise Coke products.

I know this is "just one more thing from downtown," but the long-term benefits are worth it.

Thanks for all your help,

John Bushey
The Coke Dude

[Analysis]

DICKENS PLAYS THE SANDS

From "The Pop Culture Myth Reinvents Itself," a lecture delivered by Patricia Vinci at "Frank Sinatra: The Man, the Music, the Legend," an academic conference held last November at Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York. Vinci lives in Warminster, Pennsylvania.

Frank Sinatra was just like Charles Dickens. I've been saying this for twenty-eight years. It's not just that they were the same personality type. Their personal and professional lives follow a similar pattern that is woven with extraordinary coincidences year by year, a century apart. I've only recently come to realize that the reason for this is that Frank Sinatra and Charles Dickens lived the same myth.

I'm not speaking about the myth that Frank Sinatra's life and persona created—I call that "The My-Way Myth." What I am speaking about here is the subjective myth that Frank Sinatra was born to live, the same myth that Charles Dickens lived a century before him. The myth that Charles Dickens lived did not end; it flowed into Frank Sinatra. That is the nature of myth: it doesn't end but continually reinvents itself. We are all living a myth; each of us has a story, and in that story lies the myth we live by. Carl Jung told us that.

You see, Charles Dickens wasn't merely a great writer. Later in his life, he embarked on a sensational public reading career. He was the most popular entertainer of the nineteenth century, just as Frank Sinatra was the most popular entertainer of the twentieth century.

Charles Dickens was born in 1812, and Frank Sinatra was born 103 years later, in 1915. The single most formative experience of their childhood was exactly the same. Dickens's father would take him into pubs and sit him up on a table, where he would sing in a high-pitched voice. Sinatra's father would also take him into pubs and sit him up on a piano, where he, too, would sing in a high-pitched voice.

They each became famous at twenty-four. They were described in the same way: extremely youthful looking. The boy author and the boy singer both had more hair than they needed. They had expressive blue eyes and animated faces. They were the same height, slim, and always fashionably dressed. They were described by some as beautiful, by others as coarse. When they spoke they had a thickness of speech. They were high-strung and extremely emotional; both men were known to cry.

Like Frank Sinatra, Charles Dickens wanted to be an actor, but on the day of the long-awaited audition, he had to cancel, because he had a cold! He became a writer instead, and this has been called the most fortunate cold in the history of English literature. It's well

[Poem]

SLUM LORDS

By John Updike, in the Autumn 1998 issue of The American Scholar. *Updike's most recent volumes of verse are* Collected Poems 1953–1993 *and* A Helpful Alphabet of Friendly Objects.

The superrich make lousy neighbors—
they buy a house and tear it down
and build another, twice as big, and leave.
They're never there; they own so many
other houses, each demands a visit.
Entire neighborhoods called fashionable,
bustling with servants and masters, such as
Louisburg Square in Boston or Bel Air in L.A.,
are districts now like Wall Street after dark
or Tombstone once the silver boom went bust.
The essence of the superrich is absence.
They're always demonstrating they can afford
to be somewhere else. Don't let them in.
Their money is a kind of poverty.

[Art Appreciation]

LES EMINENCES GRISES

From an essay by art historian Mia Fineman in the brochure of the Asian Elephant Art & Conservation Project, a New York City organization that "promotes and distributes the work of elephant artists" to raise funds for elephant conservation. The organization opened three painting academies for elephants in Thailand last November. Fineman is a research fellow at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

As painters, elephants are masters of the rapidly executed, spontaneous gesture. Although no two elephant paintings are alike, there are a number of formal similarities that suggest the emergence of three major regional styles in Thailand. In the north, elephant painting is lyrical and expressive, characterized by broken brushwork, curvilinear forms, and bold, clear colors. Central Thai elephants prefer darker, cooler colors—forest green, black, deep violet—which they apply in broad, vigorous brushstrokes that sweep across the canvas from edge to edge, resulting in an emotional tenor of contained rage. In the balmy south, elephant painting more resembles the gentle post-painterly abstraction of Morris Louis and Helen Frankenthaler. Southern elephants tend toward saturated tertiary colors like mustardy orange, plum, magenta, and turquoise, creating canvases with a viscous, creamy, elegant feel.

In the 1950s, artists such as Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning embraced the expressive gestural freedom of Action Painting as a way of harnessing the beast within and channeling it onto the canvas. For elephants, most of whom remain art-world outsiders, this unbridled spontaneity comes naturally. Elephant painting is the ultimate Outsider Art, resolving the *fin-de-siècle* "crisis in painting" with a bold and uninhibited return to gestural abstraction.

But the "innocent eye" stage of elephant painting won't last long. With more extensive training and increased exposure, elephant artists are bound to venture into new aesthetic territory. Elephant Abstraction may be only the first phase in the stylistic evolution of pachyderm painting. Perhaps someday soon we might see the development of Elephant Impressionism, Elephant Surrealism, even Elephant Conceptual Art. The future belongs to them.

known that Frank Sinatra had a cold and had to cancel the taping of "A Man and His Music." This cold, too, has become a part of Sinatra's literature.

Dickens's career as an author began when he won a contest of sorts in 1834. One hundred years later, in 1934, Frank Sinatra's career as a singer began when he won a singing contest. Dickens took America by storm on his first visit in 1842. In 1942, Frank Sinatra did the very same thing. The audiences swooned when Charles Dickens read the scene in *Oliver Twist* in which Bill Sikes kills Nancy, just as audiences swooned when Frank Sinatra sang about Nancy!

Both men loved to read and to play practical jokes. They both entertained lavishly and constantly surrounded themselves with male companions, and they both led double lives. They frequently gave benefit performances for charities. Each set up relief funds: Dickens, for retired writers; Sinatra, for retired entertainers.

Dickens's third child, his second daughter, was the one most like him. Likewise, Sinatra's third child, his second daughter, is the one most like him. Each man wore a pinky ring that had special significance, and replicas of these rings are still worn today by their families.

In his late forties, Charles Dickens fell in love with a fair-haired eighteen-year-old actress. In *his* late forties, Frank Sinatra fell in love with a fair-haired nineteen-year-old actress. Mia Farrow, the actress, called Frank Sinatra "Charlie"!

The accounts of their last performances on stage are hauntingly similar. Aged, in failing health, determined to go on, Dickens stood on the stage and cried after his last reading in London. A century later, across the ocean, Frank Sinatra cried after his last performance in Atlantic City.

There is one more important correlation to consider when comparing these two men. Each came on the scene at exactly the right time in history, when the soil was fertile for their particular genius: Dickens, when books became affordable for the first time; Sinatra, when technology allowed us to bring his voice into our homes. Because of this, both men became famous almost immediately, all over the world.

Just as Frank Sinatra is known as "The Voice," Charles Dickens is known as "The Inimitable." You can reverse that, because there is no better word than inimitable to describe Frank Sinatra as a singer. And Charles Dickens, as a writer, is truly the voice of the nineteenth century. And don't forget—his initials are CD! Is it any wonder that the myth came back singing?





Man with Foxhat" and "The Knifethrower," by Andrea Robbins and Max Becher. Robbins and Becher took the photographs at an annual gathering of American Indian fan clubs in Radebeul, Germany; their series German Indians *is currently on display at the Carol Ehlers Gallery, Ltd., in Chicago.*

[Essay]

THE MYTH OF INFLUENCE

From "Comics in a Man's Life," by Geoff Dyer, in the Winter 1998–99 issue of the Hungry Mind Review, *a quarterly published in St. Paul. Dyer is the author, most recently, of* Out of Sheer Rage: Wrestling with D. H. Lawrence.

In 1928, D. H. Lawrence wrote a beautiful essay, "Hymns in a Man's Life," in which he reflected on the way that the hymns he heard as a boy "mean to me almost more than the finest poetry, and they have for me a more permanent value, somehow or other." It didn't matter that the words of these hymns were often banal or incomprehensible to him; what mattered was the "sheer delight" they inspired in "the golden haze of a child's half formed imagination." Even at this late stage of Lawrence's life—he had less than two years to live—the sense of "wonder" engendered by these hymns was "undimmed." I feel the same about the superhero comics in my life.

I remember with absolute clarity the first Marvel comic I bought. *Spider-Man* #46, "The Sinister Shocker." This was the issue of March 1967 and it cost 10d. I was eight, a working-class boy in a small town in the midwest—the *English* midwest, that is; specifically, Cheltenham, in Gloucestershire: the heart of the Cotswolds.

I was entranced, obviously, by the costumed acrobatics and spectacular fights, but I also liked the ongoing soap opera of the life of Spidey's alter ego, Peter Parker. This was the phase in Parker's life when, having been spurned as puny and stuck-up, he was at last becoming integrated into the fashionable, semi-alternative life of college. At the end of issue 46 he moves out of his Aunt May's place and into an apartment with Harry Osborne (whose father, unbeknownst to him, is Spidey's recurrent enemy, The Green Goblin). At one point in issue 46 Peter turns up at a coffee bar with Mary Jane, one of two gorgeously hip women he's become friendly with.

"What's shakin', Tiger?" says Mary Jane.

"Nothing much! We were just getting set to spin a few platters!" replies Harry (who, as if having The Green Goblin for a father were not trouble enough, will later, in issues 96–98—notoriously unapproved by the Comics Code Authority—develop serious drug problems). In Spi-





British Invasion *and* The King & I, *paintings by Chicago artist Janet Bloch. Her series* Album *is currently on display at the Lyons W Gallery in Chicago.*

der-Man guise, Peter has injured his arm mixing it up with The Shocker; when he asks MJ if she wants to go for an ice cream, she replies, "Not while the juke is jumpin', dad! Since you can't shake up a storm with your wing in a sling, I'll take a rain check till the coins run out."

Now lots of this, it goes without saying, went way over my English head. In future issues I would come across all sorts of references—to Woody Allen, to Dear Abby—that meant absolutely nothing to me, but from issue 46 on, I was caught in Spidey's web. By the age of twelve, I was fairly fluent (albeit with a Gloucestershire accent) in the kind of Marvelese quoted above, that sanitized version of hip American youthspeak.

Now, one of the reasons Marvel had an edge over its main rival, D.C., was the way that its brand of superheroics took place not in a fantasy vacuum but in the turbulent here and now of American life. In issue 68 (January 1969), Spidey becomes caught up in the "Crisis on Campus." In issue 78 (November 1969), Hobbie Brown, a young black window-cleaner burdened by domestic problems, is fired by his racist boss and decides to try his luck as a supervillain, The Prowler. Spidey beats him, but instead of turning him over to the cops tells him to go back home to his girlfriend ("That's where it's really at").

Back in the late Sixties, Marvel's knack for siphoning the zeitgeist into the action meant that a version—albeit a heavily distorted one—of contemporary American history was finding its way across the Atlantic to me in England.

Even more important, especially when Spidey battled The Vulture (in issues 48 and 49) in a vertiginous city of spectacular skyscrapers, I began to get a sense of—to feel imaginatively at home in—the architecture of Manhattan. The cityscape in these comics—fifty-story buildings, billboards, water towers, fire escapes, elevated trains—was, of course, unlike anything I had ever seen in real life. When, as children do, I tried to imagine myself in Spidey's place, web-swinging through Cheltenham, it was impossible: the buildings were too spread out, too low, too *homey*. (Spidey never made it to Gloucestershire but he did come to London, in April 1971—issue 95—after Peter Parker accidentally got caught up in a terrorist skyjacking!) In contrast, from my earliest exposure to it, the Marvel New York was a place where the quotidian was suffused with the mythic.

Ken Kesey said that the superhero sagas were the real myths of the United States; the United Kingdom did not have any contemporary version of the mythic (for that you had to go back to the Second World War, to "our finest hour," the Battle of Britain). This was the first glimmer of what in later years would become a critical position associated—often by virtue of parodic refutation—with a number of young English critics; namely, that American novelists (Don DeLillo's *Underworld* was simply the latest case in point) had the advantage over their British

counterparts by virtue of their automatic, unlimited access to the mythic, the vast. And this, in turn, was why it was American, rather than British, writers who shaped the literary sensibilities of the generation of British readers now cresting forty.

I have always tended to assume that my life began to stray from the template laid down by class and family when I fell under the influence of my English teacher at grammar school, when I was encouraged to read books like *Sons and Lovers*; that is when I took my first steps on the well-worn path of the scholarship boy. Now, I realize, it started much earlier, when I bought that copy of *Spider-Man* #46. Superhero comics not only had what Lawrence called "a profound influence on my childish consciousness"; they also formed my tastes as a reader and, to a degree, my style as a writer. The very pervasiveness of their influence in this regard makes it difficult to pin down precisely.

In a well-known essay on the composition of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, John Fowles recounts how he saw his first film when he was six and has, since then, seen at least one a week. "How can so frequently repeated an experience not have indelibly stamped itself on the mode of imagination?" Fowles concludes that this "mode of imagining is far too deep in me to eradicate." For me, that mode of narrative imagining was, initially, comic-derived. A question asked by an American interviewer gives a more concrete—literally—indication of what I have in mind. Was it difficult, as an English writer, to do the scenes involving American jazz musicians in New York in my book *But Beautiful*? No, I replied, because I was living in America when I wrote it. But it was also—I realize now—because of the superhero comics I read as a kid. Here are a few lines from a scene in which pianist Bud Powell is wandering through Manhattan, on the brink of one of his periodic intervals of insanity:

> Out in the street again burnt-out buildings reared up like a tidal wave of masonry. Shadows coiled around him. He caught a glimpse of himself in the red and silver lights of a store. Wondering if he were made of glass, he kicked at the window, saw his reflection shiver and frost until there was a slow drizzle of glass and his face lay in pieces on the floor.

Those lines are like a condensed memory of any one of the numerous scenes in which the buildings of New York are routinely trashed by fighting superheroes.

Marvel comics also provided me with the first sense of discrimination in the visual arts. It wasn't just that I liked some artists more than others; some artists were *better* than others. Accordingly, after a hiatus of six or seven years, from O Levels to university, instead of unswerving loyalty to Spider-Man or The Fantastic Four, I collected whichever issues of any comic happened to be drawn by particular artists: Neal Adams, Bernie Wrightson, Barry Windsor-Smith, and, especially, Jim Steranko. Artists like these had begun to carve out more and more freedom for their own highly personal visual styles. Typically their work would peak in a few masterly issues, and then, unable to keep to the grueling deadlines of monthly production, the artists would deteriorate markedly or they would move on to another title. Steranko's best work, for example, is scattered among a dozen panel-bursting, genre-advancing issues of *Nick Fury: Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.*, three sensational issues—110, 111, and 113—of *Captain America*, and an iconic cover of *The Incredible Hulk King-Size Special* #1.

The years passed. Through comics I became interested in other artists: first, Roger Dean, then the really big hitters like Dali. Even when I got a broader sense of art history, my preferences and special interests were profoundly influenced by that early exposure to Marvel comics. To put it simply, I liked Michelangelo because the obsessive and extreme torsion of his figures was so obviously derived from that of Jack Kirby (virtuoso creator of The FF and mentor of Jim Steranko).

Then, in the autumn of last year, I experienced what I can only think of as a moment of intensely *heightened* autobiography. The church of St. Ignatius in Rome is famous for the trompe l'oeil cupola by Andrea Pozzo. Before you get that far into the church, however, you look up at the vault of the central nave, at the epic fresco, also by Pozzo. Completed in 1694, *The Glorification of St. Ignatius* shows the dead saints of antiquity slugging it out in a zone of sheer spectacle. Amid dizzy perspectival foreshortening, the continents of the world are represented by four corbels. On one of these—on one panel, as it were, of the huge graphic myth of the ceiling—a woman with a spear sends two beefcake figures tumbling from her precarious perch (identified by the single word AMERICA) into the emptiness of illusionistic space.

According to Freud, there is no time in the unconscious; at certain intensely charged moments there is no time in unconsciousness itself. Looking up at the image-crammed ceiling, I experienced a sensation that mirrored what was depicted above, a kind of temporal vertigo. The thirty years that separated the man staring at this baroque fresco in Rome from the boy who had bought his first Marvel comic in Cheltenham *fell away*, became compressed into a single instant of undimmable wonder.

[Floor Plan]

A FIFTH-GRADER'S STATELY PLEASUREDOME



This plan of Bill Gates's house was drawn by Laney Rupp, a student in Seattle. Last spring, Barry Wright, a teacher at the Valley School in Seattle, asked his fifth-grade class for their visions of the $42 million compound Gates is building on Seattle's Mercer Island; their drawings appeared in the Fall 1998 issue of Nest: A Quarterly Magazine of Interiors.

THE PILOT'S TALE

At sea with 90,000 tons of diplomacy

By Matthew Klam

I. THE FLIGHT DECK

Standing on the newly resurfaced deck of the USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* sixty miles off the coast of Norfolk, Virginia, last spring, I watched a group of F/A-18 Hornets approach from the southeast, three black crosses against a pale sky. The enormous ocean lay flat and gray in the morning haze, and as the three crosses assumed their more familiar and menacing shapes, I tried to imagine the reverse perspective of the pilots intending to do well what almost no one can do at all—land a jet on a ship. I had come to see Lieutenant Commander Doug Hamilton, an old college friend, undergo two days of landing exercises, and although I'd been aboard the carrier for only a short time I'd begun to appreciate the odds in favor of a fatal accident.



FLIGHT DECK ON THE NIMITZ-CLASS CARRIER USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT

More than three football fields long, the deck spreads across four and a half acres, as do the decks of the Navy's seven other *Nimitz*-class carriers, the largest warships in the world. The ship's "island" rises from the starboard side to the height of a seven-story building, housing the flight tower and observation platform and capped by seven radar antennae, one of them the size of a minivan. Bigger and heavier than the *Titanic* and longer than the Chrysler Building is tall, the *Eisenhower* is powered by two nuclear reactors that will run for at least twenty years before the uranium needs to be changed. Six thousand sailors live onboard, nearly half of them providing support for the pilots, like roadies for the Rolling Stones; the hangar deck holds at least sixty aircraft. Commissioned in 1977, the *Eisenhower* cost $5 billion to build. Adding the cost of the planes (another $2 billion) as well as the guided-missile cruisers, frigates, and maybe a nuclear submarine, the carrier and its battle group come at a price well beyond the combined annual military expenditures of the "rogue nations" of Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Cuba, Syria, and Libya.

Beginning with Doug's first landing and continuing over the next forty-eight hours, the pilots of the *Eisenhower*[1] would have to prove their skill by performing both day and night

[1] *The ship carries 120 pilots divided into nine squadrons, three of which—the Sunliners, the Rams, and Doug's group, the Blue Blasters—fly F/A-18 Hornets. The other squadrons fly F-14 fighters, radar-jamming EA-6B Prowlers, anti-submarine S-3B Vikings, and radar communications E-2C Hawkeyes as well as SH-60 helicopters. A C-2 Greyhound ferries mail and personnel back and forth.*

Matthew Klam's short stories and nonfiction have appeared in The New Yorker, The New York Times Magazine, The Washington Post Magazine, *and other publications. This is his first article for* Harper's Magazine.

Photograph from Sygma

landings. The *Eisenhower* and its battle group then was scheduled to run through a quick, three-day simulated war, using Air Force and



F/A-18 HORNET TAKING OFF FROM THE USS GEORGE WASHINGTON IN THE PERSIAN GULF

other Navy fighter squadrons as adversaries, before starting a four-month patrol of the Mediterranean Sea—first to the Adriatic to threaten Yugoslavia's rusting yet intact Serbian Army and then, for the final two months of its deployment, the ship would steam to the Suez Canal and the Red Sea to take over the patrol of Iraq's southern no-fly zone from the carrier USS *Stennis*.

As the carrier turned slowly into the wind, the angle of the sun shifted, and my attention focused on Doug, who would have to land on a deck moving thirty miles an hour away from him, into what the pilots call the "trap," zeroing in on a target eighteen inches long. The "arrested landing" is a seemingly crazy idea: a twenty-ton plane moving 170 miles an hour snags its four-foot titanium "tail hook" onto a giant cable connected to hydraulic cylinders belowdecks,[2] and stops in a mere 300 feet.

Even a single bad landing exposes the pilot to the heckling of his squadronmates. More serious landing mishaps, when the pilot must eject from the airplane, often result in sud death and an unrecoverable body; or, if the lot survives, three separate Navy invest tions and the possible mination of the pil career.[3]

Doug broke off his fl pattern directly overhead *Eisenhower* and turned steeply banked oval at a titude of 600 feet. The increased its speed to "ca as he lined his plane up the enormous wake and ed toward the flight de center line. His wh touched down, and the h from his plane snagged number 3 arresting w Landing—perfect.

But the plane was moving, still rocketing ward us, fifteen feet fifty-six feet long, roa so loudly that even thro my foam earplugs and protectors, I felt the so rattling my chest, vibra my teeth, and, worse, cr ling my eardrums like cellophane. I stuml backward, and the safety officer grabbed arm.[4]

After the plane came to a stop, Doug ta it a hundred yards to the giant, steam-pow bow catapult and dropped the jet's launch

[2] *There are four two-inch-thick steel cables suspended five inches high across the back of the flight deck. Number 1 is closest to the stern. Number 3 is preferred because it's safely aft of the edge of the stern. Hitting the edge is called a "ramp strike." The plane folds in half at the belly and explodes.*

[3] *Fighter planes sometimes plunge into the ocean wit warning, and I'd read about jet engines capriciously c ing fire, about crash landings, infernos tumbling acros flight deck. In ejection, the canopy blows off the plane then the pilot shoots straight out in his rocket-powered tion seat. Seats today are "zero-zero" capable, meaning at zero altitude and zero ground speed, the seat will se pilot high enough for his parachute to deploy effectively. months before my visit, one of the F/A-18 pilots, "Big Comet" Halley, had to eject after a weak lau Halley survived, but his $35 million jet was lost. The doesn't retrieve planes that fall into the ocean unless so aids its investigation of the incident.*

[4] *If I had fallen, I could have clung to the safety offi pant leg and taken him with me. Perhaps we would survived the seven-story fall and a helicopter would hav to pluck us out. But people disappear on carriers; some there's an explanation, sometimes not. I'd been warne both written and verbal form, about the jet exhaust that knock you off your feet or fry you dead where you st The air intakes on the jets could suck you in whole. pellers, especially at night, are quiet and invisible. Th resting cables on the landing strip sometimes snap durin restment and whip across the deck, razoring sailors in the way a knife cuts through butter. An ensign told few days later that when someone goes off the deck un his disappearance might not be noted until the nex call, which could be as long as twelve hours later. By the ship could be 300 miles away.*

Photograph by Allan Tannenbaum / S

hite piece of alloy the size of a piano leg. A
or in a bright green jersey kicked it hard
the heel of his boot a few times to make
it sat firmly against the catapult's holdback;
he signaled to the flight-deck crew chief,
signaled up to Doug, who locked his left
w to push the engine to full power. White
of fire flamed out the back of the jet,
kening the twelve-ton blast deflector,
ch lifted up out of the deck like a barn
. The crewman in green did a dance of
l and body signals, his left hand swinging
s if he were throwing a lariat. He whacked
deck with the flat of his hand, signaling an-
r man to release the catapult, then BOOM,
g rocketed off the catapult so loud, so fast,
naximum, that it looked like speeded-up
, his two tailpipe engine exhausts dilating
closing, adjusting the flow of oxygen to
flames in the jet's engines.
nother plane landed, trapped a wire, and
nched, then another and another. The
n air became a numbing wind filled with
uel; it got in my eyes, I tasted it.[5] A forty-
t wind flattened the front of my windbreak-
Doug landed a second time, fulfilling his
ime requirement. He halted ten feet from
re I stood. Sunlight reflected on the plane's
opy in an odd reddish-green tint, like the
y rainbow on a soap bubble.[6] He sat up in-
the cockpit at roughly the height of a tall
guard chair, his head helmeted and visored
ind a tight rubber oxygen mask.

hadn't seen Doug in a long time. We met
in 1982, in college. After we graduated
and he'd begun his flight training in 1986 I
soled myself that he hadn't known what he
doing when he joined the Navy, that he
some nonpolitical flyboy and had backed
his profession for the pure joy of flying.
attempted to stay close through our early
ties by exchanging letters and e-mails, but
ime passed, what I read in the newspapers
ut our American military contradicted
t I thought I knew about Doug, and what
e he said in his letters revealed only mys-
and paradox. I knew, for example, that he
called Hambone by the other pilots, that

litary-grade jet fuel burns at a rate of between $1,000 $4,000 an hour in the F/A-18. Over Doug's twelve s, the gas for his 3,000 flight hours cost perhaps 00,000.

ug later explained that the tint was designed to filter out in parts of the light spectrum for pilots using night-vi- goggles. I tried the goggles on in a dark closet in the dron's equipment room; weighing about twenty ounces, at a cost of tens of thousands of dollars, they made ything appear to glow green, as if I were peering through of mint jelly.

he used such phrases as "implications our job has on the world's security" and "as we stabilize this hemisphere." But I was perplexed. If the birth of his new son made him so obsessed with safety, why was he constantly risking his life? If he only lived to serve our country, why had his ego grown to the size of a cathedral?

I HAD KNOWN DOUG FOR MORE THAN FIFTEEN YEARS. BUT AS HIS CAREER AS A NAVY PILOT PROGRESSED, I SEEMED TO UNDERSTAND HIM LESS AND LESS, IF AT ALL

When Doug explained that he could get permission for me to come onboard the *Eisenhower*, I sensed not just an opportunity to see Doug's world and answer my questions but also a chance to find out whether I still, really, knew him at all.

I knew that being a carrier pilot required extraordinary ability. Doug had always been an athlete, a great downhill and water-skier, and since joining the Navy he'd become a nationally ranked triathlete. After going through aviation officer candidate school and learning to fly, he began to practice for carrier landings at the Naval Air Station in Kingsville, Texas, dropping his plane onto a runway painted like a ship's deck. Then Doug had his first try at the real thing, a carrier off the coast of Florida, and failed. He caught the number 1 wire twice, which means that he was landing too short. He was given three more weeks of practice, 150 landings. In need of a friend, he wrote me a letter then, telling me that if he were to catch the number 1 wire again, his career would be over. No more practice, no third chance, no Navy commission, no job as a pilot of lesser status, no wings, nothing. He would have to leave the Navy and start from scratch.

Never again would Doug come so close to failure. He returned to the ship and passed with honors at the top of his class. At the conclusion of advanced training, he again earned top honors in his carrier qualification. In his first assignment in the fleet, flying the two-seater A-6 bomber, he again came out at the top of his "nugget" class, and was called up by an A-6 squadron going right to sea that was in need of a pilot.

He first wrote to me from the *Eisenhower* in 1992, while the ship was patrolling in the north Arabian Gulf just after the Persian Gulf War. He wrote again while trapped above Norway in a hurricane in the North Sea, when a storm called a polar low had overwhelmed his carrier battle group, sending the small ships (nuclear subs and frigates) into the fjords for

protection while Doug and his A-6 bomber squadron were required to fly their airplanes in the midst of snow, sleet, and sixty-knot hurricane winds, trying to land with four-story waves crashing over the ship's bow. He wrote to me in 1994 from the carrier *George Washington*, after the fiftieth anniversary commemoration of the Allied landing in Normandy, where he starred in the "missing man" formation broadcast on CNN—the one lone jet vectoring off slowly as the other five flew past President Clinton at the ceremony. Doug spent a total of forty-two days at home in 1994; the rest of the year he was on deployment or training. He and his wife, Sarah, tried to honeymoon in Europe while Doug's carrier was deployed in the Mediterranean, but the ship never showed up at scheduled ports of call. After crisscrossing Europe, Sarah went home alone. The ship moved to the Adriatic and Doug patrolled the skies over Bosnia. "I flew a mission last night and they shot at me," he wrote while participating in the U.N.'s Operation Deny Flight. "They pay us 150 bucks extra for getting shot at. Sounds pretty reasonable."



DOUGLAS HAMILTON IN A 1989 NAVY PHOTOGRAPH

Now I watched Doug walk slowly across the deck, and although I sensed his relief, I knew also that his perfect daytime landing only delivered him to the much more difficult task of a night landing. The Navy practices these landings in order to be able to complete night strikes, which are more likely to surprise an enemy and are less susceptible to aircraft loss. The night attack, theoretically, paralyzes a shocked and terrified population beneath the full fury of an American bombardment.

For months Doug had hoped that the two night landings required of him would take place at dusk, when visual clues outside his canopy would help in the final moments before touchdown. Night over the ocean bears no relation to the night of anywhere over the land. Unable to discern the horizon dividing the sky from his target bobbing on the water, the carrier pilot relies on such cutting-edge magic as "synthetic aperture" ground-mapping radar, but the instruments lag fractions of a second behind real time at a moment when inches divide the safe landing from the lethal one. When Doug first found out that his night landings would be under a new moon—which is the absence of moon—he told me, "I hate night landings. Flying around the carrier in the dark is act of insanity." For good measure, he adde "We're all scared of it. Not just me."[7]

II. READY ROOM 3, DECK 03

I found Doug filling up his coffee cup in t ready room, the Blasters' one place to c duct meetings, receive instructions, ma flight plans, debrief, read the paper. He gree me with the swagger he's learned since he came a fighter pilot, smiling, his blue eyes gl ing. Doug has a prominent jaw and brown h cut to make his head look square. I could gray flecks of stubble and heavy lines across forehead and around his eyes, blood-black c cles underneath. A strange crease ran across face from the rubber gasket of the oxygen m that had been tightly clamped over his n and mouth for the last couple of hours. We n mally exchange a quick and manly bear h like men do these days, but the Uniform C of Military Justice forbids any physical show affection while in uniform. We shook hands.

Ready room 3 is set up like a small mo theater, and every pilot has a nicely pad armchair that looks as if it were unbolted fr the inside of a 1940s airliner, with a B Blasters insignia and the pilot's name sewn to the headrest. A television monitor in front of the room airs the ship's channel, five cameras of which provide grainy bla and-white coverage of takeoffs and landings deck. When there are no flight operations, channel shows the ocean in front of the b and a piece of the railing for perspective. I spite its importance, the ready room offers sanctuary from the ship's endless noise, sound of an eighteen-wheeler constan revving its engines, or perhaps a thousand dustrial refrigerators humming at once. T roar is draining, because you can't help but attention to it, and that's just the backgro noise. The catapult above us that launches planes causes the entire ship to shudder, when planes land, it sounds like bulldozers ing dropped from a great height. Except their quarters, where the pilots can sleep watch movies, or the wardroom, where t can eat, or their jets, they have no other pl

[7] I found his fear notable, given the fighter pilot's gif intuiting the relationship of the three spatial dimensions, ing objects, and time. I am reminded that in college one my friend Jim was at the wheel of his tired red Subaru ving recklessly on a hard snowpacked road in New Ha shire. Doug sat in the passenger seat and I was in the b As a five-ton municipal sand dumptruck approached, car went into a skid. "Lift your foot off the brake, J Doug commanded. We stopped skidding, and Doug a ally helped Jim steer the car away from the oncoming t It was over in a flash, and he may have saved our li

File photograph courtesy of the U.S.

go, suffering, it seemed to me, a form of shipard incarceration.

Another pilot, C. C. "Heater" Heaton IV, induced himself.[8] Like the others, he moved l spoke with a stiff confidence, immediate l robotic; even though his squadronmates the gamut of personality and looks, and n though they could be charming or pensive joking, it was impossible to penetrate what individual man might have felt about someng deeply—such as being called sir all day or off-chance of disappearing in a fireball.

The fighter pilot derives his swagger in part n his privileged position in the Navy. Fightpilots, who comprise less than one percent of Navy's population, make more money than ir nonflying peers, and unlike anyone but a p's captain, have command over their ves- They're privy to all sorts of highly classified ormation and combat rooms. They enjoy eir reputation, and star in the very public w up on the flight deck. Everyone inside the p seems to keep track of each feat or ched landing.

In preparation for the coming three-day simted war, a map at the front of the room was l out with fake countries identical to those the northern Arabian Gulf but with such mes as "Kowonka" and "Ladam" superimsed over a map of the eastern U.S. seaboard. e squadron was already planning dogfighting l bombing scenarios. Beneath the television, eutenant Mike "Crusher" Barger quizzed utenant Phil "Stork" Poliquin, about dogting strategy.

"What's your mission?" he asked.

"Pre-strike sweep."

"What's that mean?"

"Kill anything that comes out."

Hearing this, Crusher sat back and cracked knuckles, all of the knuckles, even the umb knuckle, even the tip of his pinkie.

III. WARDROOM 3, DECK 03

Some of the other pilots joined Doug and me for lunch. Phil Poliquin led the way down the long, narrow corridor through e ship to wardroom 3; he was followed by ommander Chip Miller—known as "Bullet"—en Lieutenant Commander Barry "Butch" ilmore—Doug's roommate—Lieutenant ommander Peter "Pépé" Harris, and Lieuant "Heater." Every seven steps we stepped er a one-foot-high bulkhead. Some of the bulkheads have regular doors with doorknobs; others have watertight porthole doors that have to be unbolted and then bolted shut behind you.

Even though 6,000 sailors live and work on the *Eisenhower*'s seventeen decks, all the flight operations take place in one section of Deck 03, and for pilots this means living, eating, seeing about repairs, changing out of their G suits, and sleeping all in a fairly tight corner among the same faces day in and day out. I'd go back and forth through those corridors, six or seven strides, from my stateroom to the ready room to eat or watch the jets, step up through a bulkhead, let two-way traffic pass, do it again, day and night, and I began to dread the walks, adopting a strut and a mask of efficiency.

NIGHT OVER OCEAN BEARS NO RELATION TO NIGHT OVER LAND, AND LANDING A JET ON A SHIP IN DARKNESS IS UNDERSTOOD AS AN ACT OF INSANITY

The wardroom is one of three where the pilots can eat. There are also a number of enormous enlisted people's messes on the decks below us, a captain's mess (I met him once; he appeared to be in his late forties, haggard and overburdened), and an admiral's mess (the admiral heads the whole battle group—frigates, cruisers, submarines—and looked trouble-free and fit, as if fresh from a tennis court perhaps, and ready to run for the Senate).

In the food line Phil warned me away from the pukish trough of green vegetable liquid but gave a thumbs up to the meat loaf, which he'd tested earlier in the day, and the macaroni and cheese, which was predictably delicious. Wardroom 3 was the favorite mess of the 120 pilots of the air wing, and they were pouring out of the food line now, bumping into one another, looking for a place to sit. A steady stream of pilots—Tomcat, Hornet, Prowler, Hawkeye, and helicopter pilots—came by our table in their tight flight suits with their special patches to designate squadrons and plane type. Because their numbers were few and their training took so long and needed constant updating, they crossed paths throughout their careers, at bases in Florida, Texas, Mississippi, and Nevada. They called hello, passing on greetings from somebody named "Bronco," yelling "Hey homo," from across the room or sidling up and asking about the family with a glass of milk in one hand and a classified-weapons binder in the other. Here were the best-trained, best equipped pilots in the world, professional athletes standing at the farthest promontory of American power, ready at a moment's notice to

The pilots' nicknames seemed to me transparently super- cho, and I couldn't say "Hi, Heater," with a straight e, but the pilots' use of them suggests not just a willful nformity of identity but a de facto recognition of human erchangeability and perishability.

bring down the pain of death on as many of their designated enemies as happened to stand in the way of a political purpose or military objective, and yet who reminded me somehow—with their powerful builds, their mustaches, and their short haircuts—of Chippendale dancers.

Among Doug's Blue Blasters, ten of the eighteen had become new fathers within the last year. Despite the dull conversation, the slouching, the silences filled by chewing noises and stupid Lewinsky/Clinton jokes, a brotherly closeness marks their group, as with a professional sports team who are forced to travel the poky backwaters of the world in close quarters but who still like to play ball together, except that these guys are trained to fight in the air and drop bombs that blow things up and kill people. Every pilot Doug introduced me to was "a great guy" and "an old friend," but I could see the stress of competition. Pilots are ranked within the squadron on every imaginable statistic, from bombing accuracy to staying on the correct frequency to the grace of landings.



MISSILES ABOARD THE USS CARL VINSON *IN THE PERSIAN GULF*

Some of the younger pilots from the squadron walked into the wardroom with trays of meat loaf and joined the table. Still new to the Blasters, they tended to stick together. They appeared smaller and more innocent, a couple of them not yet filling out their flight suits, and bore diminutive nicknames given to them as part of their invitation into the squadron—Cubby, Odie, Fetus—in contrast to the tough call signs of the older pilots—Bullet, Bone, Crusher, Dirt, Fingers, Rocky, and Butch. The senior officers were discussing something called a FLIR pod, a forward-looking infrared sensor. Looking like a giant Q-tip under the plane's wing, the FLIR costs an u godly amount of money but, Cubby explain helps the pilot designate an enemy's rad which can then be blown up with HAR high-speed anti-radiation missiles. Cubby d cussed its use the way someone might explai leaf blower, rather than as a device that d nudes a country of air defenses in preparati for getting hit with gigantic explosives.

The younger pilots finished eating in fi minutes, wiping up their gravy with st rolls. Doug explained privately that th were still learning the most minute deta of flying and the risks they would have suffer every day, and had only the vagu understanding that they were being stu ied intently by the senior men at the oth end of the table.

Doug asked Phil if he thought there'd any residual light cast from Virginia t far out into the ocean, to define the ho zon. Phil said, "I don't think so."

From the beginning of his Navy care Doug filled his letters to me with detailed d scriptions of how it feels to perform the c rier landing at night. The pilot stares blin ly into a "black void," then comes aboard a high speed, crash-like, at a steep angle accuracy of hook position, almost out of gas the plane can carry only a small amount of because if it is overburdened with fuel, might break apart on landing. "Whoever i vented the night cat/trap is a lunatic," wrote. "As soon as I launch, I'm worrying abo the landing when I get back."

I wondered why he spent so much ener telling me his fears of landing at night. No oth aspect of the job bothered him; the drudgery military life, wondering whether the targe you're ordered to bomb are "military, you hop and not too close to civilians," the endless tri far away from home, the endless risk. Wh should landing at night bother him so muc Doug is a typical daredevil: this fear seemed li an anomaly, a hysterical concoction, but couldn't figure out to what end. He talked abo the anxiety, the adrenaline that rushed throu him during the final moments before touchdow the sleeplessness, the misery and humiliation counting days until the moon comes back o Night-carrier landings are by nature intima the pilot reaches back to an intuitive, athle marriage of instinct and faith in order to land. last spring, Doug had performed 360 carrier lan ings, 115 of them at night. Since the birth of son Craig, though, he'd begun to obsess ev more than usual about safety and proficien Things seemed to have gotten worse. "None us likes to fly at night," he told me. "I hate it a I wish I didn't have to go through it."

Photograph by Charles Crowell / Black S

IV. BOMB MAGAZINE, DECK 6

I was curious to see what a bomb looks like up close, and so Doug introduced me to a crewman called a gunner, who carries a ey shaped like a gun barrel with interlocking hinks cut out of it on a chain around his neck. Ve followed him through an enlisted people's ness. There, two strides from the salad bar, he nlocked an enormous steel hatch and lifted a inged, quadruple-bolted cover that appeared o weigh hundreds of pounds. We descended by ladder, then through an even tighter hatch, own another ladder. At the bottom we stood n a rectangular shaft that had no exit except a mall door mounted in front of us like a wall afe. The bomb magazines are locked, as pre-ention against terrorists, surely, but also for he simple reason that if any unhappy sailor ets into a magazine he might start igniting hings or accidentally knock a bomb over and et it off; one man could potentially hold the ntire ship hostage or blow it up. The gunner lipped in his key, the door swung open, and ve squeezed through the opening into a vast, ilent, unmanned warehouse full of bombs.

Before us stood eight-foot-high stacks of ombs on wooden pallets, missiles on dollies, oil rums with bomb parts, and fuses, tail fins, firing ins. This was a small magazine, one of the thir-y-five inside the ship. The *Eisenhower*'s well arries enough destructive capability to decapi-ate a medium-sized country. No other country an project such destructive capability. Britain nd France sport a handful of small carriers, and China may someday, but with the former Soviet leet sold for scrap or rusting at berth in Sev-stopol, no other country poses even a popgun's hreat to American global sovereignty. We run NATO, we control much of the world's air-pace, we run the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. We are, we know and assume, alone.[9]

Now the gunner grew more animated as he trolled between the high rows of bombs, talk-ng nonstop. He popped open an oil drum whose contents were packed in Styrofoam. Un-used warheads. He handled them the way a butcher handles meat. I envisioned the three of us vanishing in an accidental explosion, blown into peach-colored vapor. Each bomb was wired with a paper tag showing its date of manufacture. Some were Vietnam-era, built in the early Seventies, still usable. The gunner showed us how bombs were assembled on the bomb table. "Six men on a side, we build one in a minute and a half." He showed us where each sailor stood and what each man did, moving on the balls of his feet like a basketball coach sketching out a play. He pointed out one missile about ten feet long that weighed 900 pounds. "This bomb has a bunch of little bombs come out," he explained. "We call them bomblets. There's like 280-something in each bomb, and they'll spread themselves around. You wouldn't want to be under that." His hands opened to imitate the bomb's fuselage. "The pilots really love to drop these and watch them spread." He looked at Doug, who remained unresponsive, his hands hanging at his sides. The crewman touched the bomb's flanks. "I like bombs and missiles and torpedoes, I like all ordnance," he said, "so this is a good job for me." Rubbing the bomb and smiling, he said, "This bomb's got a sister bomb, called Hydra."

SOMEONE VERY CLEVER AND DARK IN THE NAVY UNDERSTANDS WHAT TYPE OF A PERSON THRIVES IN A LOCKED ROOM FULL OF BOMBS FOR YEARS AT SEA

He looked at another bomb. "This one here's called Gale." He noted items that were part of the "standard missile family." He knew the name, number, payload, and fusing options of every single weapon in the room. He was courteous and attentive to us, and he appeared to perform his responsibilities with vigor. It occurred to me that someone in the Navy, very clever and dark, had identified his special talents and put him there, had understood what type of a person not only survives locked in a roomful of bombs for years at sea but *thrives* there, believes he is in heaven.

The sight of Doug's discomfort was a relief to me. He was acting like the man I thought I knew, and so, for fifteen or twenty seconds, here in the belly of the ship full of bombs, it felt as if we stood on the same side of the fence, suffering the same alienations, looking at this freaky bomb guy.

But it wasn't that simple. Having spent a total of three years on carriers in his various deployments, Doug had never visited the bomb magazine before. I saw now that this wasn't an accident. He already knew everything there was to know about the size and shape and weight and capability and fusing option of

[9] *The cost of this supremacy is staggering, so large as almost to be invisible to the average citizen—except, of course, if you happen to be standing on a tiny fraction of it steaming across the Atlantic at a cost to taxpayers of $444 million a year, or $51,000 an hour. America's 1999 military budget—$271 billion—is more than triple that of Russia, which has the next highest, and greater than the total expenditures of the next six biggest military spenders. Despite the current lack of a real threat, the Pentagon continues to believe that the military must be capable of fighting two wars simultaneously; for example, in North Korea and in the Persian Gulf.*

every single weapon. What I mistook for Doug's alienation was, I now suspect, a much more personal and intimate moment about his choice in life, about associations of his job he probably didn't choose to dwell on.

Doug cleared his throat. "Thanks," he said to the crewman. On the way back up eight flights of stairs, Doug and I didn't speak.

But, naturally, I wondered about those bombs and what Doug could do with them. I remembered the phony targets on the eastern U.S. coast in the Blasters' ready room. What if they were real? The Hornet can be outfitted from a vast menu of weapons, twenty-five different types of bombs and missiles (it also carries a six-barrel cannon in its nose that shoots 570 rounds of eight-inch bullets in twenty seconds.) On a typical bombing mission, a Hornet will carry air-to-air missiles—Sparrows, Sidewinders—and, depending on how deeply defended the target is, will also carry high-tech "smart" bombs with TV cameras in the nose so that they may, at least theoretically, be targeted by the pilot (or another pilot nearby, via datalink) into something as small as an open window. But the bulk of bombing is accomplished with general-purpose "dumb" bombs, iron casings filled with explosives, with tail fins that allow the bomb to fall in a smooth, definite curve to the target, instead of tumbling through the air.

IF DOUG WERE TOLD HIS NEXT TARGET WAS A MILITARY FACILITY DISGUISED AS A PRESIDENTIAL PALACE OR A HOSPITAL, HE'D BOMB IT TOO

My Washington, D.C., neighborhood consists of two rows of eight red-brick houses facing one another. The street is lined with eighty-year-old ginkgo trees. If Doug were ordered to attack my neighborhood, he explained to me, it wouldn't take much of his arsenal to destroy it. He'd use 1,000-pound MK 83 or 2,000-pound MK 84 bombs. His dive-bombing skills had been honed on the bombing ranges of a 108,000-acre air station in Fallon, Nevada, so the bombs would fall within just twenty yards of their target. En route to the target Doug would program the type of bomb and fuse setting into the computer in his cockpit. Given the size of the target he's being sent to destroy—in this case, two rows of two-story houses a block long—he'd set up a program in the air-to-ground mode of the computer so that the bombs would strike the houses in a pattern, say, twenty-five feet apart. He'd follow the heading on his navigational instruments to a spot overhead and, in a steep descent, lay them down on the houses on one side of the street; then he'd turn and lay them down on the other side.

A structure like a house, not reinforced against attack, would be leveled by the smallest bomb he carries. The 2,000-pound bomb would blow up a standard airplane hangar and everything in it, or a blockwide apartment building or a barge or a row of houses. Doug might also consider using some horrifying weapon like the FAE, or fuel air explosive, a canister that disperses huge amounts of fuel into the air that are then ignited to create a vacuum that literally turns human beings inside out and knocks a non-reinforced structure flat. Doug carries enough ordnance on a single run—6,000 pounds—to blow up every man-made structure in sight of my house. The general-purpose bombs, though not designed for penetration, carry enough penetration ability to shred the street and sidewalk and fling pavement into chunks. The ginkgo trees would be defoliated and sheared to stumps. The fire hydrants would explode, sewers would be cut open, electrical wires would come down.

After flying back to the ship, having successfully placed his bombs on target, Doug could be given new orders to conduct another mission, in which case he'd refuel, have new bombs loaded on his wings, and take off again. Returning to this area, he'd view the damage as if for the first time—fire, smoke, dead dogs, blown-up propane tanks, impassable roads.

If some of my neighbors in the next target area were putting up a fight with an antiaircraft artillery gun, he would go after them first. Because of superior U.S. intelligence and detailed satellite photos he would have seen before launching, and with the help of a three-dimensional map of every part of the earth hooked up to the global positioning system inside his cockpit, Doug would know exactly where that artillery gun had been positioned, and he'd draw a line from the eyes of the artillery gunner to the sun and set his angle of attack on that line so that his jet would come out of the sun and this enemy would have to stare directly into it to spot him. He could pinpoint the artillery gun with a supersonic missile, steered by a different pilot headed outside the threat envelope, using a datalink hooked up to the second plane's frequency, steered by a tiny thumb-sized mouse on his rudder control stick. Doug would then drop another five tons of bombs. If on his return to the ship he was told that a military facility disguised as the presidential palace or a hospital or a cruise ship or a vegetable farm or a bingo club was his next strike target,

bomb it too; he'd execute his orders as y times as they told him to until my whole was smoldering rubble, mud, and corpses.

V. AN UNAUTHORIZED STROLL

Doug was scheduled to fly at 10:00 P.M. and wanted to take a nap, so I left him and roamed the ship. It was vital that I ed like I knew where I was going, because I absolutely not supposed to be wandering where alone.

passed the rest of the ready rooms, moving ugh "Officers' country"—the hallways with linoleum floors and wooden handrails on the s, where enlisted people were not allowed to —and into the regular hallways of basic less steel. I hoped that anyone who saw me ld think I was one of the private contractors ngineers from General Dynamics, Lockheed tin, or General Electric who ran complex puter programs and dressed in civilian cloth- nd joined the ship for the entire cruise, car- g black briefcases and wearing ID badges nd their necks that gave them clearance in- laces otherwise locked. I passed the ship's a small cell painted black, with one innocent h inside. I found a weight room, one of four, ted bright white with new red vinyl bench- nd machines, and unbolted a watertight door nter the cavernous main deck, where planes stored. Every inch of the ship is a zone be- ing to someone, a different fiefdom with its rules of conduct, and as I stepped between a mechanic eyed me. Enlisted people didn't think of asking me what I was doing; they e just trying to finish their jobs without get- yelled at ("Listen up, shithead," and "Get the off my deck!" were two ways I heard officers essing sailors). The mechanic had the guts n F-14 laid out on the floor and was running ething deafening that sounded like a vacu- I knew he'd get in trouble if I stepped on any- g, and I'd get in trouble if he asked why I was e, so I queasily tiptoed past him.

slipped around aileron fins and the folded gs of parked airplanes. In the middle of the n deck sat two huge wood-paneled pleasure s belonging to the admiral and the captain ise in foreign ports with dignitaries and also ransport officers back and forth for port vis- What a strange sight: two boats in a hangar lanes, inside a ship. The fighter planes had ewinders and other missiles loaded onto r wings, with demure little canvas covers he warhead of what was either a live or a my explosive. Sea air blew into this cavern ough the house-size bay door; the air felt d after the closeness inside the ship and I ld see the ocean beneath the setting sun.

Back inside the narrow corridors I passed along one freezing hallway whose bolted doors said NO ENTRANCE, RESTRICTED ACCESS. I cut across the interior of the ship and walked down another corridor toward the keel, where the air was suddenly 130 degrees, and passed some deafening machinery, which sounded like a roomful of printing presses.

Then I found a "gee dunk," one of the two 7-Eleven-type stores on the ship. A line had formed outside. As I watched, an officer in khakis who outranked everybody else simply cut the line and entered. The file of enlisted people stood by. The store sold aspirin, Timex watches, shampoo, baby powder, pens and paper, hats and pins and decals emblazoned with the *Eisenhower* CVN 69 insignia, Zippos with same, phone cards, Saltines, gym shorts, Norelco electric razors, Barney videos, flavored lollipops, Obsession cologne by Calvin Klein, batteries, Herpecin lip balm, cameras, film, cheese in a can, Tastykakes, ginger snaps, Paco Rabanne face lotion, khaki uniforms, Chicken-in-a-Biscuit crackers, Fig Newtons, cigarettes, tampons. No beer. Nor was any pornography for sale, but the pilots told me that every single man on the *Eisenhower* received the Victoria's Secret catalogue in the mail.



LOADING MISSILES ABOARD THE USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT IN THE ADRIATIC SEA

I heard something unintelligible over the loudspeaker, and tried to make it out. At lunch Chip had told me, "If you hear general quarters called and you can't find our ready room quickly, wherever you happen to be, just freeze, because you will soon find a Marine sticking the barrel of his M-16 in your face and asking you what you're doing on the ship."

The tone of the bustle around me seemed unchanged, however, so I moved on, found a staircase, and went down again. I still wanted to find the engine room, perhaps, or the chapel, the two barbershops, the dry cleaner. I found another staircase and went down. Doug said, "You don't want to go down to the lower [illegible] the enlisted people berth," ostensibly because as many as 250 live in one room, sleeping on cots in cubbyholes the size of book-

graph by Christopher Morris / Time / Black Star

shelves, and an officer, like Doug, would disrupt their privacy. But, more important, he explained, I shouldn't walk among enlisted folks because "you don't want to be in places where you're not supposed to be." When I asked for clarification, he said that I could "end up disappeared." One could get attacked. Anyone, even officers, could get beaten and thrown overboard. Maybe this was true, maybe not.

Some crewmen went by carrying a desk. I passed many closed porthole doors, then began to feel lost and doubled back through an enlisted people's rec room/weight room. Music was playing in a much more rough-and-ready atmosphere than the officers' weight room. Guys sat around in sweats watching CNN sports headlines. Nothing felt dangerous. I looked up at the numbers, called a bull's-eye, painted above the doorway, and above every doorway in the ship, which allow people to identify exactly where they are on the ship. I had no idea where I was.



BOATSWAIN'S MATE BRANDON KALO READS A LETTER ABOARD THE USS EISENHOWER

An officer in khakis and a black sweater turned a corner and stared up at the bull's-eye, then at me, and told me unsmilingly that I was not where I should be.

VI. THE PILOT'S STATEROOM

I knocked on Doug's door. He lay on his bunk in the dark, not sleeping. He asked me to flip on the light. Pale fluorescent bulbs came on. His "stateroom" was as ugly and barren as a high school locker room, the furniture and walls constructed of that same thin, dented metal they use to make lockers, with paint chipping on the ceiling; beside the door list of phone numbers and a heavy black ship telephone. The room was like the ins a steel crate, two strides across, and, lik rest of the ship, it shook with vibration.

The bathrooms were no better. Dou told me to be sure to bring shower sho the scupper trout," because the plumbi funky onboard sometimes and forced shi up the shower drains. And you couldn't worse shower—tepid water dribbling those water-saver showerheads, cold blowing through the stall. When the sh in port, he said, it couldn't sewage, and the whole ship st was onboard for two and a hal and after the second day, though we were out on the At and could dump waste all we ed, every toilet I visited ma eyes burn.

He started taping a photo baby on the metal bureau. "I w be home more. That's the effe little bastard has," he said. Awa soon he would have to perfor night landing, he waved to the the photo, stepped across the and grabbed his flight suit off a on the wall.

I watched Doug carefully in tempt to understand how h about being a father and, poter a killer. The answer began to e in a conversation with his mate, Barry, who, in his pitched Tennessee cadence "We don't train to kill peop train to stop aggression—to alter things th as a country see as immoral, like inv Kuwait." Barry had flown twenty-one mi during the Persian Gulf War off the carrie *Kennedy* in 1991. His voice quavered earnestness as he tried to resolve the thrill ing combat with the remorse he felt for k "We don't train to kill people. That's jus of a by-product, and that's kind of a bum stinks, it really does. People actually die an limbs, and it's horrible. Certainly at the m it's exhilarating—they're shooting at you, dodging this, dodging that, and you succe put your bombs on target. But the reality people die."

I imagined Barry in the months followi Persian Gulf War: a lowly lieutenant j grade who had, by the war's end, been at two whole years, trying to make sense of th finished feelings he'd encountered there. tured him standing before a crowd at the Lions Club or at his church. I imagined hi

Photograph by U.S. Navy / David E.

)ping some of the phrases he used to describe pombings, and I saw how over time he might e been able to turn his own actions into a l of victimization. I saw his struggle as a way reate order out of chaos, to explain rational- ne irrational act of killing people.

le described his very first night mission of war, when Iraqi weaponry had not yet been orized and the enemy was offering up an rmous defense. His strike group dodged bs and missiles the size of telephone poles, through dense clouds of antiaircraft ar- ry; he dropped his bombs on the target and ched them explode and then on the way k to the ship had four missiles fired at him span of ninety seconds, tracking the heat ature of his plane's exhaust; he dodged and ped upside-down, spitting out flares and ff (flares, if someone's shooting a heat-seek- missile; chaff, to defeat enemy radar). nes thirty miles in front of him from a dif- nt strike were also spitting out flares, which e indistinguishable from the missiles com- at him in the night sky; other pilots in wkeyes and Prowlers and Tomcats and Hor- s thousands of feet above him watched the ne unfold, calling out warnings. Barry got so tered he ended up heading back toward the iaircraft artillery he'd just passed through.

Doug said, "I think there is an enlighten- nt to dropping live bombs on people that I e not experienced."

They were a strange pair. Doug, whom I w well and who hardly spoke, wanted to me the secrets in his heart but could not. rry, whom I didn't want to interview, med suspicious of me yet would not stop fessing and explaining himself. I think of se two men, sitting in that stateroom, trying make sense of their lives, of the drudgery l possible loss of life, and I think of how ough them the United States maintains sta- ty over the world. The fact and image and a of the American pilot and his jet is one of ways America explains itself to its citizenry l to the rest of the world, friend and foe e. Barry and Doug figure, somehow, in the ble price of crude oil, the primacy of the w York Stock Exchange, the national an- m sung at the Super Bowl. They are the er-sharp knife in Secretary of Defense lliam Cohen's silk pocket, they are the rkest undertone of Secretary of State deleine Albright's stern posturing. At night en I listen to the C-Span State Department ss conference on the radio, and hear State partment spokesman James Rubin lecture t "the use of force" might be "the desired l best outcome" in "furtherance" of interna nal objectives, I think of Barry and Doug in their room, living inside this concept, the threat of "force." When President Clinton says, "All options remain on the table" in Kosovo or Iraq, he's referring to Doug and his colleagues. When he asserted, as he did in his December 16 announcement of the bombing of Iraq, "We are delivering a powerful message to Saddam," his words were made of the flesh of pilots.

DOUG FIGURES, SOMEHOW, IN THE PRICE OF OIL, THE PRIMACY OF THE NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE, AND PRESIDENT CLINTON'S STERN PRONOUNCEMENTS

Doug explained that the risks were known—one in four died during a twenty-year career—and he kept a will on file with the squadron, in case of a mishap. He had had talks with Sarah; she was always very strong about such things, though in the last conversation, "She got a little edgy," because now they had a son.

I mentioned that I'd read that Naval aviation was safer now.

"Safer than what?" Doug asked. "I personally know ten guys—these are guys I flew in the same airplane with, students and instructors—who died in crashes in my twelve years in the Navy." Barry sat calmly and listened, nodding along. "Not just people I'd met or knew—that number is much higher. But these are names written in my flight log." Later he told me, "My roommate on my first cruise, a guy named 'Wild Bill,' was killed because of a mechanical problem in an F-14. They fixed that problem after it killed him. My T-2 instructor, Victor, had a bird strike a few years after he taught me, and the bird came through the canopy and killed him. Randy didn't fuel his plane properly, and it rolled over on him on takeoff. His student ejected and walked away. Craig flew into the water two years ago. A kid I taught in Kingsville, I forget what happened to him. Eric flew into a mountain in Japan. Rob flew into a mountain in Virginia. His bombardier navigator was killed, too. XO and Chet had a midair and were killed."[10]

[10] *At the very moment we were speaking, a few doors away, Doug's old friend Ronald "Rhino" Wise was readying for his nighttime landing. Thirty-six, married, father of three, he'd be redeploying with Doug and Barry to the Mediterranean, and on July 30, ten weeks later, he'd be killed after ejecting from his plane following a midair collision with another F-14 during a training flight off Turkey's coast. By September the air wing had suffered three disastrous mishaps, losing two F/A-18s and one F-14, one involved Heater. At the end of the month, new Navy statistics revealed that pilots were crashing their planes at twice the previous year's rate. The rise was attributed to the fact that Navy pilots are increasingly overworked*

Doug went on, "The most disturbing one was a Harrier pilot, a Marine guy I trained with, who was lost at sea. He just never showed up back at the ship."

I asked Doug what his father thought of all this.

"Every time I go home my dad cries."

Barry interrupted. "Your dad, too?"

VII. THE CAT SEAT

After dinner Doug and I entered the Carrier Air Traffic Control Center, which Doug called the "cat seat"—a cool, dark room where dull green lights glowed in the ceiling and a bank of radar screens and floor-to-ceiling clear Plexiglas backlit status boards formed a wall in front of us. Doug joined Chip and Pépé Harris to help with any emergencies

HEARING ABOUT THE NAVY'S FANTASTIC WEAPONS GAVE ME THE SAME DULL SAFE CUSHIONY FEELING I'D HAD WHEN I TOOK SYNTHETIC MORPHINE

the other Blasters might have in the air that night. All the other airborne squadrons had their own representatives, so the two long benches were almost full. A large man in khakis sat in the center of the room, coffee mug on the arm of his chair, staring straight ahead at the screens. A woman in a headset stood before the Plexiglas status board filling in boxes so that for each type of plane, we could see exactly how much gas the plane had, what the plane weighed, where it was in the sky, and projected times when it would have to refuel at the airborne tanker if it ran out of gas. She wrote numbers quickly in white grease pencil and because she stood on the wrong side of the Plexiglas, she wrote backwards.

The control rooms were placed all together here in the center corridor of the ship. Behind the Carrier Air Traffic Control Center was a larger dark room with a six-foot-tall triptych of computer projections showing a map of the world displayed on a wall, the purpose of which was to track any important ship or aircraft positions around the globe.[11] Behind that room was one that relayed attack plans to everyone airborne and tracked air activity within 100 miles

[11] *A huge sailor with the face of Rodney Dangerfield showed me a book filled with codes for every vessel in the NATO alliance; it looked like a big-city telephone book, with thousands of names and numbers, Italian submarines, Swedish helicopter gunships, Turkish amphibious landing crafts. The codes were changed every few weeks, and the old book would be thrown away.*

of the ship; another room specialized in trac
ing submarine and torpedo threats, anoth
watched vessels on the water, another po
tioned the ship in a fight, another position
the whole battle group, telling the subs a
missile cruisers and frigates where to go to me
up with the Air Force and Marine and Ar
ground troops, coordinating those movemer
with the movements of our NATO allies.

Each room was manned by skinny you
sailors staring at screens in semi-darkness, s
ting beside other sailors speaking on tel
phones in monotone streams of acronyms.
front of them their supervising officers sat
swivel chairs. If and when it came time to fig
a war, control of the actual combat would c
scend in a pyramid shape of commands wi
surveillance and intelligence redundantly ov
lapping. The crew here on the *Eisenhou*
would be compiling and sharing information
multaneously with the ship's captain upsta
on the bridge, and with the admiral of the ba
tle group, who also had a dark room like th
around the corner. (He never went anywhe
without his "admiral's aide," who was you
and blond and handsome. Somebody at lun
called him "towel boy.") They in turn would
in contact with CINCLANT—the command
in chief of the Atlantic fleet, based in Norfo
Virginia, and with generals and strategists
the Pentagon, who with the help of mode
technology might be able to run the next w
in their pajamas.

As to whether aircraft carriers are still nec
sary, the answer, of course, depends on who
being asked. Because "forward deployment"
American military resources is supposed to "d
ter and prevent foreign aggression," Arm
strategists ask how a carrier, which does n
come into contact with a population, can pr
vide as much preventative "influence" as th
37,000 American troops that have been st
tioned in Seoul for the last forty years. The A
Force, in turn, argues that in the three regio
where U.S. military deployments are most lik
ly—the Middle East, Europe, and northea
Asia—military access is already assured a
that, moreover, there are only a handful
countries on the planet that wouldn't welcor
us to refuel bombers in their territory; if o
military decides to shoot a Tomahawk missi
across, say, Syria's airspace, we only need to a
Syria's permission. Yet the Navy insists that fo
ward deployment comes down to intimidatio
A soldier is just a man; an Air Force plane
here and then zoom, gone. Navy posters call
carrier "90,000 tons of diplomacy" and "fo
and a half acres of sovereign U.S. territor
when it's needed." Or, as Steve Fleischmann,
former State Department intelligence offic

mitted to me, "Nobody knows what the carri- is out there for. We just know it's big."

The longer I stayed on the carrier and the more learned about the ship's capabilities, the more reatening the world became—like a big, bug-in- ted peach—and the safer I felt aboard. More an once I imagined a full-scale invasion of the nited States by some unspeci- d aggressor and how safe I'd be re, and thought of my girlfriend ck home, poor soul, innocent d trusting enough to sleep at ght without a helmet. Unpro- cted, unarmed people of Amer- a seemed farcical to me, unbe- evably naive and misguided mmies. Every few minutes I arned about some other amaz- g weapon: the radar-guided Pha- nx Gatling gun on each corner the ship that can fire *fifty rounds econd* at the front end of a mis- e the diameter of a pie plate ap- oaching the ship at 500 miles hour and obliterate it in midair. thers were too fantastic to be- ve: a secret radar so powerful it unces off the moon and fries the ectronics of anything airborne, using it to drop out of the sky. earing about these weapons gave e the same dull cushiony feel- g I had when I took Dilaudid, nthetic morphine, after having y wisdom teeth ripped out. othing could happen to me out here, nothing uld touch me, nobody in the world. I come m a family of very paranoid people—if you ke one of us up in the middle of the night we mp to our feet in karate position—and this was e first time in my life that I was surrounded by ople far more paranoid than I am.



CARRIER AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL CENTER, OR THE CAT SEAT, ON THE USS EISENHOWER

The lighting in the cat seat reminded me of a dark, late-night bar lounge, except that the days of drinking and smoking here were gone and nothing about this room as relaxing. Each landing began with the pi- t's voice playing loudly over the speaker, "Two-oh-six-Hornet-ball-four-point-five," sig- aling his plane's approach and the beginning dread. Then we'd all look up on the black- d-white TV screen in the corner to see how e approach looked, and although every pilot atching beside me stayed cool, by the micro- umblings and grunts or bits of laughter you uld get a sense of whether the pilot on ap- oach would make his landing. I also noticed kind of bull's-eye on the TV screen that after few landings helped gauge whether the plane would hit home in the right spot on the deck, whether it was coming in high or low (the best pilots could also get a sense of glide slope, velocity, relative position of the jet to the center line off the television). The pilots were all business, and their reaction to a bad landing attempt was always the same: disgust. It was what separated them from their nightmares.

Then there was the noise, through the ceiling, of the planes crashing onto the deck. The arresting wires laced through the surrounding walls and were connected to the tractor-trailer-size hydraulics two rooms away. Every fifty seconds you heard, first, a whistling, which was the approaching jet; followed by a shudder as the jet hit the ship; a loud clacking, which was the arresting cable paying out, sounding like an enormous broken torque wrench pinging and banging against metal; a hollow steel sound like a washing machine flailing with broken gears; followed by anvil-size booming hammer blows pounding down on the ceiling just above us. Pépé sat on the far side of Chip with a clipboard on his lap reading the status boards, making notations. Doug and Chip watched the planes on the TV screen. Every one ignored the noise.

So far the Blasters were having a perfect night. Then Phil Poliquin came over the loud speaker as he approached. In the view of the fuzzy TV monitor he looked to be high at the ship's ramp, the nose of the plane up, and he

otograph by U.S. Navy / Brian R. Brunelle

"boltered" (landing beyond the area where the arresting cables lay before touching down, his dragging hook making an awful sound, missing the fourth wire); off he accelerated for another try (otherwise he would have dropped into the ocean). A pilot from another squadron sitting behind us muttered, "That was ugly," and laughed. A minute later Phil came around again, this time too close to the ramp with his nose pointed too steeply down, adding power

FROM 4,000 FEET, THREE MILES, AND FORTY-FIVE SECONDS AWAY, THE SHIP APPEARED AS A DOT OF LIGHT THE SIZE OF A PINHEAD HELD AT ARM'S LENGTH

in a burst at the end to keep from flying into the back of the ship, and caught a number 1 wire, hitting the deck with an enormous thump. Chip turned and said, "Ouch." Phil was done for the night. The essential ingredient in night carrier landings is an intangible—which Phil had lost tonight, going from too long on the first pass to too short on the second. Pépé wrote something down on his clipboard. Doug folded his hands around the coffee cup in his lap and watched the screen.

Fetus caught a number 2 and then a number 3 wire. It sounded each time like he was crashing through the ceiling. Latka called over the radio, right behind Fetus; he was mysteriously low on fuel. The Hornet burns 100 pounds (15 gallons) of fuel a minute on approach, and Latka was 1,000 pounds short. The problem was serious. Latka had only two more chances to try to land before he would need to go to the airborne refueling tanker or head to the mainland.

Latka came in high and shallow, and boltered. Two bolters for the Blasters. Chip got up and stretched his short legs, sat back down, and rubbed his bald head. Doug said, "It's no big deal. This shit happens all the time." A minute later over the loudspeaker Latka called in his altitude and fuel status; five minutes of flying time before he'd have to head to land or get more gas.

The pointy nose of his F/A-18 came into view on the TV. Another bad approach and he boltered again; the mood in the room shifted. Pépé exited the cat seat to see when Latka began his flight. Doug figured out exactly how many minutes of fuel Latka had left to keep him airborne. The officer in front of us called the boss in "primary flight," air-traffic control, in the tower, who called the airport in Oceana, Virginia, to see what time they closed in case Latka had to coast to a landing on fumes. (When a pilot has real trouble getting aboard he goes to the tanker as many times as is needed; compared to the $35 million plane and the $2 million cost of a pilot's training, fuel is the cheapest expendable out here. The reach for a seaside airport is a final option if the carrier is too far, but if the ship is in, say, the Kara Sea, 250 miles from shore, or if the weather is bad, there may not be a safe way to land.)

They announced over the deck loudspeaker that Latka was "Bingo on the ball"—his fuel status was dire. One pass away from bad trouble. Doug looked at me matter-of-factly and said, "He's trick or treat." He added, somewhat more compassionately, "Latka's tired and ashamed and is going to be beating himself up hard right now, inside his jet, and that'll just make everything worse." Doug said, "Latka's solid, no question. But if he shows any kind of a trend, develops any kind of a pattern, he'll be removed and retired."

Pépé returned and looked at his clipboard and said, "The whole schedule is backed up now." Then Latka came in very smoothly on the TV monitor and caught a number 2 wire. Chip turned to Doug and said, "It's a good thing I'm already bald."

VIII. ON THE FLIGHT DECK AT NIGHT

Doug looked at his watch. It was almost time to fly. He suddenly seemed fragile. He hadn't slept well the night before and complained how he wasn't yet in the groove of life on the ship, how it would only get worse, how this first week always felt like a month, the first month felt like a year. I wondered if the lack of sleep would bother him when he was flying. He hung his head and said, "Sometimes they fly us all night just to stress us." The fear in his face reminded me of who he used to be. Then it was 9:00 P.M., and he said he was going to head to his rack for a few minutes, to get into his "box"—not some coffin he kept handy, but the common term for the inviolable time before flying. From the time he left the cat seat until he reached his jet at 10:00 P.M., if anybody wanted to speak to him he'd say, "I'm in my box," and they would have to wait until later. He went to his crappy stateroom and closed the door, and in anticipation of landing his jet on the ship, did something to his mind.

A few minutes before ten, he dressed in his flight gear. It seems appropriate that when he's at work he wears an elaborate costume, a strange form-fitting G suit, like a giant external jockstrap, with its rubber air bladders that inflate when he flies to keep the blood pressure up in the top half of his body so that he won't faint while doing what he has to do; the white helmet, the tight rubber oxygen mask,

eproof gloves. He went up to the deck. Af- r his plane captain signed off as the final in- ector of number 205, Doug did his own pre- ght check, looking for any oddity, maybe a own hydraulic line leaking on the graphite d epoxy skin of the jet. At the end of the il-hook bar, tucked up between the Hornet's o jet engines, Doug examined an ordinary oking nut and bolt the size of a quarter, ade of titanium, that held the hook onto the r. Notched through the t and bolt was an inch- ng cotter pin, folded over n one side. Before every ght Doug grabbed the pin d pulled on it. If the pin ere to break or fall out, or by a deck strike or some her bad coincidence the ook came off, there ouldn't be any way for m to snag the wire to ar- st his landing.

Heater took me out to the ight deck to watch. We ore earplugs and flame- oof life vests and ski hats, d he pulled out a little ashlight with a red lens. hen we were on the out- de platform that rims the eck of the ship. I didn't now it until I saw water ooting by beneath my feet rough a steel grate. This as the darkness I'd been earing about. Heater pointed the light down here I stepped, making sure I didn't trip, and e moved carefully along the edge of the flight eck—you couldn't see the edge at all—toward small, exposed spot off to one side of the land- g strip, the LSO (landing signal officers') plat- rm. From there the LSOs—pilots them- lves—helped the airborne pilots to land, hile grading each attempt. Behind us hung a uge rubber safety net, stretching seven stories ove the water; if a plane came crashing to- ard us, we were supposed to jump into that.

We were in the middle of the ocean, with- ut the moon, whipping along as fast as a wa- r-ski boat. A jet came invisibly out of the arkness and landed, kicking up dislodged ieces of rubber from the newly tarred deck, d in the momentary light I saw that there ere five or six people up here besides Heater d myself: two female helicopter pilots, one ith a French-braided ponytail, the other earing a long wool ski hat with a pom-pom the end, and a couple of LSOs from other quadrons. When the plane passed it got dark again. I couldn't see my hand in front of my face.

Up at the catapult, Doug pushed the throttle up, watching the plane captain for signals, waiting for the engines to spool up, watching the RPMs, temperature, fuel flow, hydraulic pressure. He didn't have the same fears about night launches that he had about landings. "I guess I put faith in all that engineering. If it works, it's gonna work. If it doesn't work, you're gonna die, there's nothing you can do about it." He cleared his head and did a quick emergency procedure, touching the thick braided loop of the ejection handle between his legs, and a second later the whole ship shook and off he went.



TAKEOFF FROM THE USS KITTY HAWK IN THE PERSIAN GULF

After a while a few stars became visible. On nights like this, Heater told me, it was just as confusing for the LSOs as it was for the pilots. They have the same problem orienting themselves to the horizon line. Heater said, "It feels like you're wearing a baseball hat that goes on forever. Sometimes they'll throw a flare in the water just off the stern of the ship to give everyone a relative sense of things."

Depending on the cycle of the moon and the altitude of the cloud ceiling, the pilot's view in the final seconds of approach is the ship's minuscule landing-strip light, a dull sodium beacon. At 4,000 feet, three miles, and a mere forty-five seconds away, the huge ship is a dot of light the size of a pinhead held at arm's length. (The ship, painted matte, is *designed* to be invisible at night.) The sensation in pitch

otograph by Thomas Hartwell / Sygma

darkness, one pilot told me, is that one is sitting still while the tiny glowing pinhead of light becomes, in a disorienting and unnatural rush, the deck of the carrier. Doug's fear, I knew, caught him like a bowling ball rising in his throat. He got terrified enough to try to give a name to all that void in his mind. But the only thing for the pilot to see inside the void is the pilot. It is the fact of his total aloneness that draws out the conflicts in his identity. This is when he is most clear about the unpleasantness of himself. He's forced to contemplate himself. But any thought, if you repeat it enough times, even if it's the truth, begins to sound like nothing. The essence of one's paradoxical nature goes poof, and the fear stops scaring you.



SUNSET FROM THE DECK OF THE USS EISENHOWER

Doug's mind locked onto the target, the ship speeding ahead. Sloping downward, he got squarely behind the stern and backed off his airspeed. A good pilot, Doug told me, can sense acceleration in his chest. Now Doug intuited his closing speed, making fine corrections with the stick, and nudged the nose up, the gently rolling deck rising up out of the dark in front of him. His unconscious athleticism married all his senses, and in that last twenty seconds the actual features of the deck became visible to him. Beside me the woman with the wool pom-pom hat stared up into the black sky with binoculars, unable to see anything other than three colored lights, and spoke to Doug by radio, coughing up comments every half second: "Power." "Right." "Don't go low." He came over the land area, and it disappeared beneath him. landing gear took the intense shock, an stepped forward as he went by and watch him pull the number 3 wire right to the e of the deck.

Landing—perfect. Of course.

I found Doug afterward, that line from mask indenting his cheek again, a gri relief on his face. He'd made his sec landing without incident. He poured so coffee (it was almost midnight), and as headed down to the wardroom for one meal of meat loaf, mentioned that wh he'd climbed into his at ten, he noticed th two of the cockpit inst ments that help the pi with his approach, t "needles" and the "bul eye," were broken. A th navigational instrume the least desirable of t three, still worked. Do trained for less than p fect conditions, took anyway.

In the wardroom found Latka lost thought, eating in a c ner by himself. He look spooked, as if he were t ing to hold it togeth Doug and I sat with food trays, and they sp about fuel problems. L ka took his fork and kn and cleared a space the blue tablecloth to show Doug how, af taking on fuel, he got stuck sitting behin Tomcat waiting to launch and couldn't around him, and didn't get any help from t tower, both planes running their engines, t Tomcat blowing exhaust into Latka's air take as he sat there for thirty minutes, seco in line. This was why he'd come back abo so low on fuel—it was the Tomcat, it was t tower. Doug listened. He was patient but plained, "It's your fault. I know what you thinking but you're wrong."

"Two bolters are a lot worse than one. sucks," Latka said. "The worst part is th everybody's laughing at you." For the rest the meal Latka quietly bit his fingernails.

Doug grabbed some cake and strutted stif out, still somehow my longtime friend, yet a the man in the visored helmet and tight o gen mask, now and forever unknown to me.

Photograph by David Burnett / Contact P

INSOMNIA

Six Poems by Jorge Luis Borges

Internationally known for his essays and "fictions," the Argentine Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986) was primarily a poet. The following poems, dating from 1977 and 1981, and presented here for the first time in English, are rich in the dizzying themes familiar to readers of "Borgesian" prose.

HISTORY OF THE NIGHT

Down through the generations
men built the night.
In the beginning it was blindness and sleep
and thorns that tear the naked foot
and fear of wolves.
We shall never know who forged the word
for the interval of shadow
which divides the two twilights;
we shall never know in what century it stood as
a cipher
for the space between the stars.
Other men engendered the myth.
They made it mother of the tranquil Fates
who weave destiny,
and sacrificed black sheep to it
and the cock which presages its end.
The Chaldeans gave it twelve houses;
infinite worlds, the Gateway.
Latin hexameters gave it form
and the terror of Pascal.
Luis de León saw in it the fatherland
of his shuddering soul.
Now we feel it to be inexhaustible
like an ancient wine
and no one can contemplate it without vertigo
and time has charged it with eternity.

And to think it would not exist
but for those tenuous instruments, the eyes.

Translated by Charles Tomlinson

TWO FORMS OF INSOMNIA

What is insomnia?

The question is rhetorical. I know the answer only too well.

It is to count off and dread in the small hours the fateful harsh strokes of the chime. It is attempting with ineffectual magic to breathe smoothly. It is the burden of a body that abruptly shifts sides. It is shutting the eyelids down tight. It is a state like fever and is assuredly not watchfulness. It is saying over bits of paragraphs read years and years before. It is knowing how guilty you are to be lying awake when others are asleep. It is trying to sink into slumber and being unable to sink into slumber. It is the horror of being and going on being. It is the dubious daybreak.

What is longevity? It is the horror of existing in a human body whose faculties are in decline. It is insomnia measured by decades and not by metal hands. It is carrying the weight of seas and pyramids, of ancient libraries and dynasties, of the dawns that Adam saw. It is being well aware that I am bound to my flesh, to a voice I detest, to my name, to routinely remembering, to Castilian, over which I have no control, to feeling nostalgic for the Latin I do not know. It is trying to sink into death and being unable to sink into death. It is being and continuing to be.

Translated by Alan S. Trueblood

THE TWO CATHEDRALS

In that library in Almagro Sur
we shared the routine and the tedium
and the slow classification of the books
according to the Brussels decimal system
and you confided in me your curious hope
of writing a poem that would reproduce
line by line, stanza by stanza,
every section in exact proportion
  of the far-off cathedral at Chartres
(which your fleshly eyes had never seen)
and which would be its choir, and its naves,
and its apse and its altar and its spires.

Now, Schiavo, you are dead.
From Plato's heaven you have likely viewed
  with smiling piety
the bright cathedral of erected stone
and your secret typographical cathedral
and likely know that both,
the one that generations built in France
and the one planned by your shade,
are mortal, temporal copies
of an unimaginable archetype.

Translated by Stephen Kessler

NOTE FOR A FANTASTIC STORY

In Wisconsin or Texas or Alabama some boys are playing war and the two sides are the North and the South. I know (everyone knows) that defeat has dignity which noisy victory does not deserve, but I also know how to imagine that this game, which spans more than a century and a continent, will one day discover the divine art of undoing time or, as Pietro Damiano said, of altering the past.

If that should come to pass, if in the course of the lengthy game the South humbles the North, today will fall backward against yesterday and Lee's men will be victorious at Gettysburg in the first days of July of 1863 and the hand of Donne will be able to complete his poem on the transmigrations of a soul and the old nobleman Alonso Quijano will know the love of Dulcinea and the eight thousand Saxons at Hastings will defeat the Normans, as before they defeated the Norsemen, and Pythagoras will not recognize in a portico at Argos the shield he used when he was Euphorbus.

Translated by Stephen Kessler

ALEXANDRIA, 641 A.D.

Since the first Adam who beheld the night
And the day and the shape of his own hand,
Men have made up stories and have fixed
In stone, in metal, or on parchment
Whatever the world includes or dreams create.
Here is the fruit of their labor: the Library.
They say the wealth of volumes it contains
Outnumbers the stars or the grains
Of sand in the desert. The man
Who tried to read them all would lose
His mind and the use of his reckless eyes.
Here the great memory of the centuries
That were, the swords and the heroes,
The concise symbols of algebra,
The knowledge that fathoms the planets
Which govern destiny, the powers
Of herbs and talismanic carvings,
The verse in which love's caress endures,
The science that deciphers the solitary
Labyrinth of God, theology,
Alchemy which seeks to turn clay into gold
And all the symbols of idolatry.
The faithless say that if it were to burn,
History would burn with it. They are wrong.
Unceasing human work gave birth to this
Infinity of books. If of them all
Not even one remained, man would again
Beget each page and every line,
Each work and every love of Hercules,
And every teaching of every manuscript.
In the first century of the Muslim era,
I, that Omar who subdued the Persians
and who imposes Islam on the Earth,
Order my soldiers to destroy
By fire the abundant Library,
Which will not perish. All praise is due
To God who never sleeps and to Muhammad,
His Apostle.

Translated by Stephen Kessler



THE JUST

A man who cultivates his garden, as Voltaire wished.
He who is grateful for the existence of music.
He who takes pleasure in tracing an etymology.
Two workmen playing, in a cafe in the South, a silent game of chess.
The potter, contemplating a color and a form.
The typographer who sets this page well though it may not please him.
A woman and a man, who read the last tercets of a certain canto.
He who strokes a sleeping animal.
He who justifies, or wishes to, a wrong done him.
He who is grateful for the existence of Stevenson.
He who prefers others to be right.
These people, unaware, are saving the world.

Translated by Alastair Reid

Illustration by Leanne Shapton

GOING TO THE DOGS

Small bets at long odds on thin greyhounds

By David Samuels

The belief that we are lucky is a vital part of the American birthright, a celebration of the democratic virtue of chance over more aristocratic virtues such as manners and talent. That we love to bet is hardly surprising. Betting is an affirmation of our personal election by the all-knowing, all-seeing God of our fathers, who makes the last first and the first last and who rewards the faithful with Hail Mary passes caught in the end zone and annual 20 percent increases in the Dow. Before luck's generous banquet, the sport of greyhound racing appears like a shabby and uninvited guest who lacks the nerve to approach the table. Devoid even of what suspect glamour attaches itself to horse racing, dog racing is organized gambling in its most atavistic and least promising form. Those who dream of luxury cars and fifty-foot powerboats head for Las Vegas. The dog track is where America's belief in its own good luck goes to die.

Although greyhound racing is currently legal in eighteen states, including Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Oregon, and Rhode Island, close to one third of America's forty-eight dog tracks are located in Florida. Foremost among these, in terms of both renown and longevity, is the Derby Lane Greyhound Park, a quarter-mile of fine-grained sand backed by waving palm trees in St. Petersburg. The track's main grandstand resembles an oversize bowl-o-rama flanked on either side by orange-painted valet-parking stands of early Sixties space-age design, which are connected by a concrete overhang to two admissions gates, one for regular customers and the other for Derby Lane clubhouse members. In front of the grandstand is an oversize parking lot in which pickup trucks and aging Corollas are greatly outnumbered by pigeons waddling through the puddles left over from last night's rain.

In the glory days of Florida dog racing, which began in 1931, when betting on the dogs was legalized, and ended in 1988, when the Florida State Lottery was introduced, the dog-track owners held what amounted to a monopoly on legal gambling in much of the state, a monopoly they preserved through the ingenious device of a sin tax, revenues from which were divided equally among Florida's sixty-seven counties. If the arrangement was a generous one for track owners and legislators alike, it was also the product of a culture in which gambling was understood to be a vice. When that understanding vanished, as it did throughout much of the country by the late 1980s, with the arrival of scratch-off games, Powerball jackpots, Indian-reservation casinos, riverboats, and other ever-multiplying forms of legalized betting, s too, did the revenues and influence u on which the dog-racing industry h come to depend.

The sin tax, unfortunately, r mained, and the state continues collect at a rate of 7.6 percent, or mo than three times what it collects fro wagers on horses. This year Flori will receive an estimated $44 milli in revenue from its dog tracks, dow from more than $70.6 million or four years ago. In response, Flori dog-track owners have increased t percentage they skim off the top the betting pool—known in the tra as "the take-out"—to as much as percent. This extraordinary percen age, approximately twenty times th extracted from slot machines in L Vegas, makes winning money at t track impossible for all but the luc est bettors.

Dog racing at Derby Lane is an o ly formal affair that proceeds ev evening according to a ritual alte only slightly since the 1930s. On t stretch of sand between the start box and the finish line, eight rac dogs stand at attention. They are h on leashes by their lead-outs, lo high school students dressed up for occasion in a uniform of black pa white shirt, and a tie. An eleven-pi orchestra, the High Stakes Derby L Band, sits at the ready in a wash out lemon-meringue bandstand.

An hour before the races begin, dogs are brought from their kenn

David Samuels is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine. *His article "Bringing Down the House" appeared in the July 1997 issue.*



he paddock behind the finish line e weighed. Their weights, which ge from fifty pounds for the lightest ales to eighty pounds for the heav- males, are noted in black Magic ker on a board listing the dogs en- d in each race. The dogs are then down a sloping track into the ement, where they are locked in dark to howl and whine. Half an r before race time, the dogs are led airs to be weighed again on an an- nt industrial-size scale of the type d by butchers. Doc Murphy, an Al- ma-born vet with Popeye-like fore- s, examines the dogs for signs of ess or foul play. If dogs lose more n a few pounds between weigh-ins dence of "nervous slobbering" or use of diuretics), Doc Murphy can qualify them or, as is usually the , run them earlier in the day, be- they have the chance to grow ter still. Paddock judge Ray Garcia cks inside each ear for the blue tat- that identifies a dog by age, parent- and number in litter, in order to ure that a ringer hasn't been en- d in the race. He also checks their paws and torsos against markings recorded for each dog on index cards, according to a system of classification invented to identify murderers and thieves by the nineteenth-century French detective Bertillon.

From the grandstand, the numbered blankets on the dogs recall the Ping-Pong balls used in televised lottery drawings. By the rail, though, the differences among the dogs become more apparent. Dog No. 6 paws at the ground. Dog No. 2 and Dog No. 5 display a more curious temper, craning their necks through cage-like muzzles to sniff at the crowd, which numbers this evening slightly fewer than two thousand people. The High Stakes Derby Lane Band strikes up a propulsive tune, known in the trade as a "hurry" (short for "hurry to post"), the kind of music that once accompanied shaving-cream pies in silent movies. The music stops, the dogs are pushed and prodded into the starting box at the far end of the track, and the gate slams shut. The lights dim, the mechanical rabbit approaches the box, and the dogs begin to howl. A buzzer sounds, and the dogs burst out from the starting gate, leaping, stumbling, and clawing at the sand.

No one cheers for the dogs by name. They round the first turn in a frantic blur of speed to yells of "Six dog! Six dog! Two dog! Two!" as the five dog tries to cut in front of the favored six, the two bumps the eight, the seven swings wide on the second turn, and the one dog languishes on the rail fifteen lengths behind the rest of the field. The race takes thirty seconds to run.

Tonight's winner, Bomb Threat, is a great favorite of the Derby Lane fans. Every muscle visibly outlined beneath his dun-brown coat, he stands apart from the other dogs, with his feet planted in the sand and his ears pricked up in an obvious attitude of pleasure and triumph. The rest of the pack heads for the rail to bury muzzles in the grass, where a hidden squawk box emits dog-friendly noises. The crowd goes back to smoking cigarettes, staring off into space, and fidgeting with pens and racing forms in a sea of crumpled Autotote betting slips and emp-

rage and Accident, 1887, by Harry Hime / William Secord Gallery, New [illegible]

ty beer cups, consoled by the knowledge that the seventh race of the evening is only fifteen minutes away.

Even the most sentimental and determined mourner would be hard-pressed to locate the tragic dimension in the death of a place whose most obvious purpose is the extraction of ready cash from the dwindling local population of retirees, single mothers, deadbeats, scam artists, and liars. Especially liars. In my time at Derby Lane I will meet many liars, from the young man in black leather with pinwheel eyes who tells me that he has ridden to the track today from New Orleans, where he lives alone in a thirty-room mansion in the French Quarter, to the older gentleman in a navy-blue windbreaker who claims he once worked as an acrobat in the circus before moving to Phoenix, where he dated Stevie Nicks of Fleetwood Mac. But for the most part these people are not lying to me, or to one another, but to themselves. They lie about money, and about how much of it they have lost.

The presiding spirit of this place—an admixture of fear and what passes for hope among chronic gamblers—can be found in the basement beneath the grandstand, in a room populated by an old General Electric refrigerator, a tan couch, a wall of tan cabinets, a green rotary telephone, and a battered wood desk. Behind the desk, smoking Carltons and stubbing the butts out in an old ceramic ashtray from the now demolished Sands Hotel in Las Vegas, sits Jay Sizemore, a slight man with still, lean features and powerful glasses that magnify the darting, watchful eyes of a small woodland animal. Jay's official title—head of valet parking—gives little sense of his role at Derby Lane. He first came to the track in 1962, working his way up from parking-lot attendant to assistant manager to head of valet parking, all the while maintaining various business interests in the St. Petersburg area, including a junkyard, a mushroom farm, a drive-in movie theater, and Callahan Bail Bonds. He also owns a collection of over one thousand science-fiction novels, which he enjoys because they illustrate his more general philosophy of life. "I guess I like them because of the way they show human nature and the motivating force of money and greed," he says, "no matter whether it is now or out there in the future someways."

Every evening, just after the fourth race, Jay climbs the spiral staircase from his office to the grandstand, which his father, a carpenter, helped to build, and picks up an armful of programs to deliver to the dozen or so regular bettors who make their living playing the dogs. When times are good, the bettors employ runners to place their bets in exchange for $10 tips. There are also the ten-percenters, Jay explains, who cash winning tickets in exchange for 10 percent of whatever the ticket is worth so that the gamblers can avoid paying taxes on their winnings. "It takes a special breed to make a living off the dogs," Jay explains, laying out the cast of regular bettors. "There was Strawberry Joe, Mobile Mike, Jim-Boy Mooney, New Jersey Joe," he says. "Mobile Mike was an attorney, and a hell of a man. He won the pick-six once, and someone followed him to a hotel room and beat his head in. He ain't never been the same since. You got Bear Cat and you got Flim-Flam Jimmy. There was Billy Duarte, who had a photographic memory and was the most intelligent man I have ever met in my life. You have men like Howie Lincoln out of West Memphis and John Robinson in Orlando, who chase the bigger pools via satellite. Of the ones who come to the track nowadays I'd say that Boston Jamie is the best. He spends about five and a half hours on every program. He used to work with Howie Lincoln when Howie was living up in the penthouse of Caesar's Palace in Vegas and betting on everything—dogs, horses, sports, you name it. He'd ask Jamie how much it would take to win the Tri-Super, say, and Jamie would tell him $40,000 or whatever it was. Then he'd send the money the next morning via Federal Express."

As we emerge from the elevator on the fifth floor of Derby Plaza, Jay waves hello without breaking stride, scanning the crowd for the faces of the gamblers who merit the next day's program in advance. "It's the way they make their living," he says. "We give them tapes of the races too, so they can study at home and keep coming back." As he drops each program off in front of the gamblers, Jay nods a smiles, then says a few words and l his hand on their shoulder.

"Billy Cairns," Jay continues. real nice fella. He's up and down. son picks the dogs for him." We sto a table full of well-dressed older C nese and their handsome children, e with a Derby Lane program in fron him. "That's Chuck Wong, the noo king," Jay says. "He's a good man. provides noodles to all the Chin restaurants in Florida. He's crazy the dogs, and lately his dogs have b winning all the races here." Sitt alone at one of the tables downsta in the no-smoking area, is a man i four-button vest from a tailored s the bottom half of which has been placed by a pair of black spandex r ning shorts. His beard descends midv to his chest in a matching pair of sk ny braids. "That's Richard Hens," says. Richard lives in a shack that built himself in the floodlands beh the track and complains about the n of the High Stakes Band.

Downstairs in the fourth-floor d ing room, the gamblers cluster aro several tables in front of the satel feeds that show the races from De Lane, Jacksonville, and West P Beach, allowing the gamblers to ch the pools on exotic wagers like Tri-Super (the first three dogs in o of finish in the first race combi with the first four dogs in order in second) from track to track. Dogs, like horses, tend to run the same r every time out: some prefer to run the rail, others in the middle or outside of the track. A good dog p er can therefore reasonably expec predict the outcome of enough r to make a modest return on his over the course of a year. Today, h ever, the combination of capped ting pools (a maximum of $50,00 both Derby Lane and West P Beach) and the availability of off-t betting, allowing dog players to any race they want anywhere in country, has made it much harde the handicappers to make money. gamblers on the fourth floor surviv pooling their bets and splitting profits when they hit.

Everyone here seems to agree Derby Lane is a terrible place and the Weaver family, which owns

ck, is busy running it into the und with bad food, bad service, and h distracting promotions as the hound-adoption booth on the sec- floor of the grandstand and give- y nights featuring 50¢ hot dogs lottery drawings for 24-inch color vision sets that have no apparent nection to dog racing. Everyone ees that the races are crooked, ugh the precise nature of the sup- ed fix varies greatly from bettor to tor. "See the way they rip up the side of the track?" asks one man, o identifies himself as a retired tal inspector from the Boston area. hat's so the outside dogs never stand hance." Other gamblers hint of oid use, or of more homey methods h as feeding dogs chocolate and fee to make them go faster or but- milk to slow them down. More so- sticated bettors cite the influence of e syndicate," which they describe as adowy collective that buys up win- g tickets through remote tracks in w Hampshire and South Dakota t give 5 percent or 10 percent of ir wagers back whether or not the dicate bettors win.

Although the existence of a single, all-powerful dog-betting syndicate appears to be a figment of bettors' imaginations, it is true that big gamblers like Howie Lincoln and John Robinson do place their bets at remote off-track locations that lure them with sizable discounts. By doing so, both the bettors and the tracks are simply taking advantage of the irrational economics of off-track dog betting. On an average weekend night, the "handle" at Derby Lane ranges from $700,000 to $1,000,000. Of that total, more than two thirds comes from off-track sites, which receive, on average, a 6 percent commission on bets placed. Off-track sites can give the lion's share of their percentage back to a handful of big bettors and still come out ahead. Belief in the existence of a set number of "winning tickets" for each race, on the other hand, is a symptom of the same kind of thinking that leads people to bet the dogs in the first place.

Up at the top of the Plaza, sitting alone at a table, is a dark-skinned man in a sweatshirt with a two-day beard and a saturnine expression that grows even darker as Jay begins his approach.

"Boston Jamie, I'd like you to meet my friend," Jay says, by way of introduction.

Boston Jamie does not appear charmed. "Jay," he says, broadening his vowels even further than might seem necessary for the occasion, "will you please look at this, Jay, and explain to me why, for once, the goddamn programs can't be stapled correctly?" He unfolds yesterday's program, with its handicapper's hieroglyphics, and lays it down with an appropriate flourish on top of the program for this evening, tries to fit the two together, shrugs, and then tosses them back on the table. "Is it possible for the morons who run this track to do even the simplest little thing without screwing up?"

Jay lays a soft hand on his shoulder.

"It's free, Jamie," he says.

Jamie plays the moment perfectly. He cocks his head, waits a beat, then slowly, reluctantly, rises to his feet. He puts his hands in his pockets, pulls out a clutch of Autotote tickets, and lays them on the table with an expressionless stare.

"It's not free," he says.

As we head back down to the base-

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ment, a stout black man in his early thirties beckons Jay into a corner, then counts off ten $100 bills from a roll in his pocket.

"That's five hundred more," Jay replies, folding the money and sticking it in his pocket in a smooth gesture that draws my attention to the bracelet on his wrist, a double-braided length of gold chain supporting a solid gold plate with the letters J-A-Y spelled out two inches high in diamonds. When I stare at the diamonds too long, Jay shrugs and says, "They use me as a kind of a bank, to borrow money and to pay their debts to each other." As we proceed to his office, it is clear that asking for any further explanation at this juncture would be unwise.

The only bettor I find at Derby Lane who does not complain endlessly about the track is Richard Hens, who has sat in the no-smoking area in Derby Plaza since 1986 with only a few complaints. The most immediately noticeable thing about Hens is not his complacency or the braids in his beard or his enormous shoulders but his style of dress, with the formal vest, the bush shirt and tie, the black spandex shorts, and the paper rings that decorate his fingers. "The last time I shaved I was thirty-two years old," he says. "I am now fifty-three. The way the braids came about," he says, when I ask, "was that I was with some lady company one time, and the female asked if she could braid my beard. For the last thirteen or fourteen years, I would say that it hasn't grown at all."

On the subject of betting, Hens is all business. "I keep handwritten records in a large file that I have, and I see myself as a professor of the subject you mention." He fixes me with a trained hippie stare. "The way I see it, your money is the tool that you have." He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a small wad of cash and counts through the bills one by one. "This here is the nail," he says, pulling out a five. "This is the level," he says of a ten. Then he holds up a twenty. "And this is the hammer. The fifty, I call that the chalk-line." He holds up his hands, stares, and slips the paper rings from his fingers and unwraps them without ever breaking his gaze. "The hundred-dollar bill you see here, that is known to me as the toolbox."

Hens is known to the staff of Derby Lane as the track's most dedicated patron, having lived for the past four and a half years in the small lean-to he built behind the track. As we sit and talk, a young man with a truck-stop haircut, sometimes called a "mullet" or a "neck-warmer," comes up to our table dragging a shy-looking blonde behind him. He slaps Hens on the shoulder.

"Hey Braids," he says. "What's the best dog in the race?"

Hens rubs his thumbs together and waits until a spark of inspiration finally comes. "I'd try the five," he suggests.

The odds on the five dog, I notice, are 13 to 1. Although there are many people who dismiss Hens as a harmless madman, he has also built up a considerable following among occasional bettors at the track. At one point, I am told, he had over twenty people who would regularly come to Derby Lane to play his tips. I ask him to explain his reasoning on the five, which he does at length and with enough lucidity that I go up to the teller window and bet $10 on the five dog to win. When I return with $282.50 in hand, Hens is not at all surprised.

"I believe that I already told you that I have spent many hours observing the races," he says. "Over the course of my betting career I have made well over one million dollars."

What Hens and I have in common, it turns out, besides our interest in the dogs, is that we both like words. On the desk in front of him is a folded copy of the evening's racing form and a well-thumbed copy of the *Webster's New World Large Print Dictionary*, which is held together with electrical tape. The page to which the book is open reveals a number of carefully underlined words and definitions, including *faux-naif* ("artificially naive"), *feather* ("any of the soft, light growths covering the body"; the last three words of the definition, "of a bird," are not underlined), and *form* (among the underlined definitions are 6, "a way of doing something requiring skill"; 7, "customary or conventional way of acting"; and 9, "condition of mind or body"). As I flip through the dictionary, I am struck by the thought that Hens possesses a fractured version o my own familiar consciousness. Whe I ask him why he likes the dictionar he looks off into space for a full minu and a half before he responds.

"I read the dictionary because it pure and without distracting opi ions," he says. "I have been readi this particular volume for nine mont and have studied it completely. Th print is large, and it features short e ymologies, a general term whic means 'pertaining to the origins words.' I bought it back in '93. Befo that I used to read a Random Hou dictionary, which I purchased aft the divorce. I was thirty years old. read that edition for approximate three years, but it was not as good the Webster's."

As we flip through his dictionary also discover that the word *dog* is n underlined or marked in any wa When I ask Hens about this omissio he grows pensive, and it takes him moment to gather his thoughts. "A imals to me," he finally says, "such the dog or the cat, mean very littl This is particularly true of dogs. Do bite people for no reason. Once I h to knock one out with a club. The d is simply another low-life anim They're like livestock. I like fish much as I like dogs. I like birds t most, because of the word *ornitholog* the definition of which is 'the scienti study of birds.' I would be very grat ful to you if you could u that word in your article

It is easy to see Derby Lane as a r ic of a bygone era in which state-spo sored theft from the poorer and mo delusional elements of the populati was sugar-coated with the sporting e citement of watching numbered d chase a mechanical rabbit around quarter-mile track. Yet it is also tr that, in the eight decades since it w founded, the track has taken on a ha life of its own as a central Florida wo ing-class version of the magical kin doms that populate the novels Gabriel García Márquez. With th similarity in mind, I approach t Weavers, Derby Lane's royal fami who have owned and operated t track since 1925. I join Art Weav the family patriarch, his son, Vey, a his cousin Richard Winning for din

he Derby Club, where the Weavers nearly every night at precisely sev- o'clock.

The Derby Club is a five-story pyra- d of luxurious dining with a TV nitor on most tables showing the es and reruns of *Seinfeld*. The buffet sts Gulf Coast shrimp and rare roast f carved by a white-hatted chef o apparently is meant to distract ers from the glum parade of losers d terminal cases winding its way to mutuel teller windows below. The t that Derby Lane, like the majori- f Florida's dog tracks, is owned and rated by a family like the Weavers art of what more sentimental ob- vers might refer to as the industry's rm. Names like "Richard Winning" e runs the physical plant and hob- s with the legislators and regulators Tallahassee) also go some distance ard explaining why the Florida dog- k owners can so easily be mistak- for fictional characters: in addition Richard Winning, there is Joe Love West Palm Beach, Mike Hater in mpa, and a man named Loser, who m told ran a dog track upstate.

Art Weaver is a bulky man in his mid-seventies, with a firm grip, an easy laugh, and eyes that linger behind non-descript glasses just a few degrees off from the imaginary dotted line that might connect his gaze to that of a curious reporter. He seems pleased that his track is attracting the attention it deserves, and offers little response to my suggestion that the track is doomed, or that the decline of dog racing in Florida might serve as a window into the process of destruction and renewal by which American culture is made. "I guess I'm not sure exactly what you're after," he says. "Maybe the story of how we came to own the dog track will interest you."

The story of how the Weavers came to own and operate Derby Lane is a mix of chicanery and chance entirely appropriate to the peculiar empire to which it gave rise. It begins in 1891, when Art's grandfather T. L. Weaver (whose crinkly visage now graces T.L.'s Card Room on the fourth floor of the Derby Club), together with his brothers, Samuel and John, began operation of a portable sawmill in Whitfield and Murray Counties in Georgia. The success of the sawmill begat the Weaver Brothers Lumber Company, which begat in turn various logging and lumber operations in Clark County, Alabama, and throughout Louisiana by the turn of the century. The Weaver brothers' methods of operation were simple.

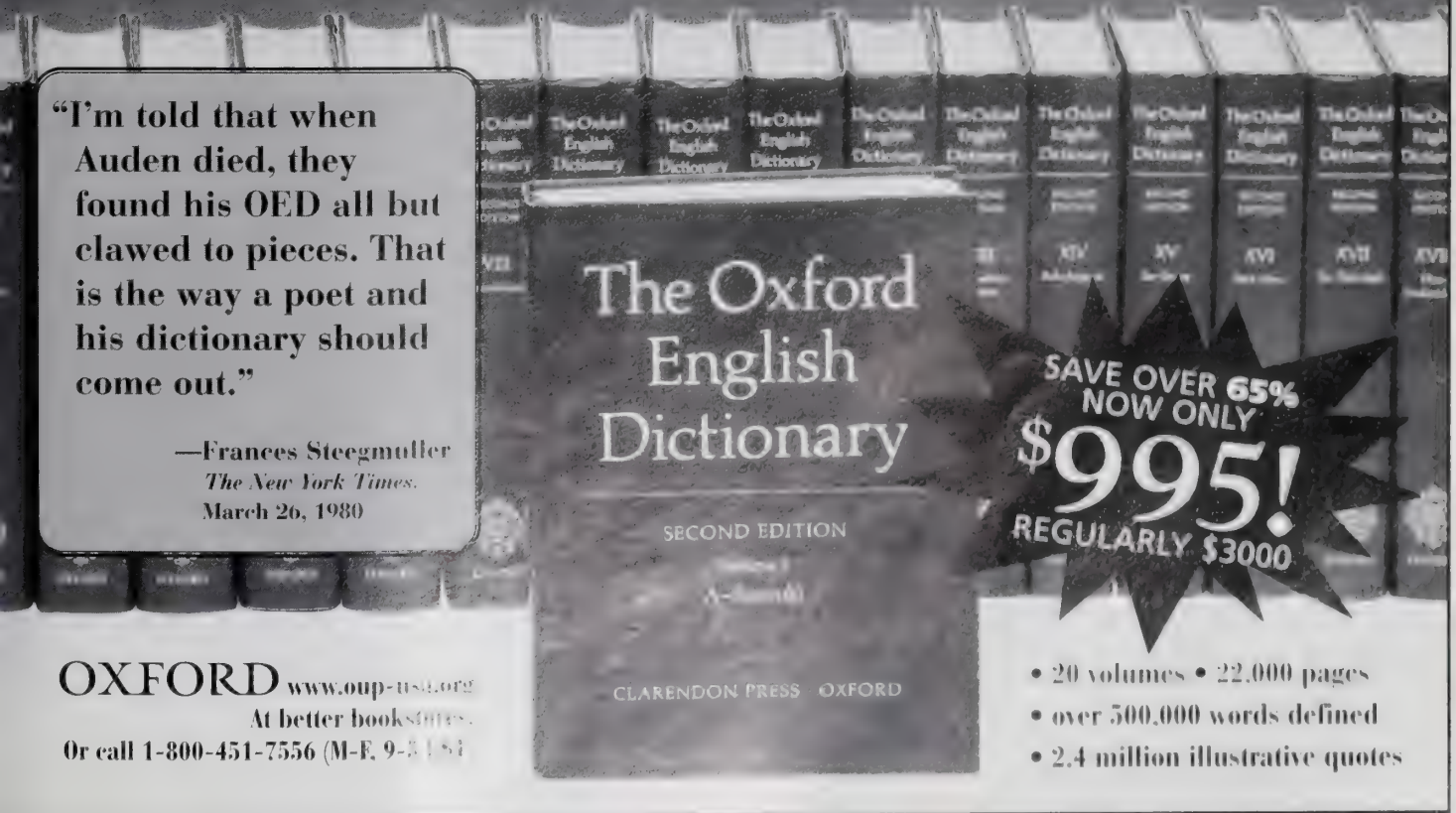
"What they would do," Art Weaver says, looking kindly over his glasses at the next generation of Weavers, "is they would come into town, mortgage the land from the bank, cut down the trees, mill the lumber, default on the loan, and move on. What happened in Louisiana is that someone discovered natural gas on some land they had already cut, which led the brothers to conclude that they were better off buying the land instead of defaulting on their loans and made them the outright owners of several hundred thousand acres."

The Weavers made their way to northern Florida and opened a retail lumberyard, the Pinellas Lumber Company, in St. Petersburg, a decision that allowed for a more sophisticated version of their former strategy, as families and businesses moved in to Pinellas County during the great Florida

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land boom of the Twenties. The Weavers would buy land, cut down trees, mill the wood, sell the land, sell the wood, and then, if the builder couldn't meet his payments, take the land back with improvements and either keep it for themselves or sell it all over again.

It was at this point in time that the acquisitive instincts of T. L. Weaver (inevitably known by this point in his Snopes-like rise as "the Captain") collided with the less easily explicable trajectory of a man variously known to posterity as "Oliver P. Smith" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*) or "Oliver B. Smith" (*The World Book Encyclopedia*) or, to the Weavers, as "Opie Smith" (a corruption of Owen Patrick Smith, his actual name), the son of a Memphis funeral-home director, who is variously reported to have come from Oklahoma, Arkansas, California, or Tennessee. He worked odd jobs throughout the Midwest until he arrived at Hot Springs, South Dakota, a town described, in the 1971 *Sports Illustrated* article that appears to be the only reliable account of his life— furnished to me by Louise Weaver, Art Weaver's cousin and Derby Lane's official historian—as "a small railroad stop in a region of ghost towns and worked-out mines near the Wyoming and Nebraska borders." In 1905, as secretary of the Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce, O. P. Smith was called on to set up a coursing meet, a popular turn-of-the-century entertainment in which dog owners would match their animals against a live rabbit in an open field.

It was then that Owen Smith discovered the elusive idea he would chase for the rest of his life: *a cruelty-free version of coursing with regularly scheduled meets nationwide*. By 1907, Smith was in Salt Lake City, experimenting with a decoy rabbit that could be dragged behind a motorcycle. By 1910, he had secured the first of his forty greyhound-racing-related patents, for a device known as the "Inanimate Hare Conveyor." It was not until 1919, however, that Smith ran the first full-scale test of his contraption, at a cost of over $40,000 to investors. When the Conveyor was finally in place, at a newly built track in Oakland, California, the Hare promptly jumped the rails, causing dog owners to protest that their animals would be ruined by the discovery that the rabbit was fake. Smith disagreed. He believed that greyhounds would chase anything that moved with little if any psychological damage. When the Oakland track closed down, Smith brought the Conveyor to Tulsa and then to East St. Louis, where the track went bankrupt after running up losses of over $100,000. By the early Twenties, Smith was in Florida, where he acquired the backing of a former Al Capone associate named Eddie O'Hare to install a mechanical lure at a track in the town of Humbuggus, later known by the more tourist-friendly name of Hialeah.

In 1924, a dog track was built in St. Petersburg by a local promoter who bought his lumber from the Pinellas Lumber Company, with more or less predictable results. Over its nearly three quarters of a century of operation under four generations of Weavers, Derby Lane has played host to Babe Ruth and Joe DiMaggio and Marilyn Monroe, as well as to hundreds of thousands of bettors, touts, and hangers-on, not to mention the generations of dogmen who passed their livelihoods on to their children. There is E. J. Alderson, son of the Kansas dogman Perry Alderson and brother of Sonny Alderson, perhaps the most famous dog owner and handicapper in the history of the sport; E.J.'s daughter Jan Lesperance, who runs the Alderson kennel; and Sonny's son Jerry Alderson, who used to run dogs, became a gambler, went broke, found Jesus, and now works behind the mutuel window on the fifth floor of the Derby Plaza.

By the time we are ready for dessert I have only one question remaining: "What became of O. P. Smith?" Richard Winning smiles, his cherubic features wreathed in the smoke of a large cigar. His cousin Vey shrugs. None of the Weavers is able to answer.

The next evening I follow a well-worn path around the back of the tote board to a door that opens onto a space that looks like the wings of an abandoned theater, with wooden scaffolding above and discarded transformer boxes on the floor. I climb up the stairs and open the hatch to a small room divided by a plywood wall into two pa
In the first is a single cot covered b
ratty-looking blanket, with a coll
tion of baseball caps on the far w
next to a framed picture of Jo
Wayne and a television set belong
to Carl Edward Dodson, a friend
looking, red-faced man in his late fif
with a walrus mustache. Most every
calls him "Chubby." When I ask ab
John Wayne, his eyes light up. "H
my favorite," he says with a shyn
that manifests itself in conversati
as great enthusiasm for whatever qu
tion is asked. "He was a great ac
and a hell of a man. He's an actor th
not too much of a love actor, no T
Hanks, if you follow what I mean."

The far section of the room, wh
is called "the glass house," has floor-
ceiling picture windows that look
onto the track. Beyond the track,
grandstand seems deserted. Red-wh
and-blue bunting flutters on the ra
"I came here when I was twenty ye
old," Chubby says. "This is all I've e
done. I worked in valet parking,
the gate, I took care of the track, I s
mutuel tickets. I used to start the d
from the box. I helped to build t
little building that we're sitting in n
me and Roy Keene."

In front of the window is a me
device, standing approximately th
feet high and bolted solidly to the fl
that differs very little from the Ina
mate Hare Conveyor invented
O. P. Smith. The inside of the devi
which looks like an ancient gene
tor, is a stack of thin steel pla
stamped in a delicate snowflake p
tern. On top of the snowflakes i
thick metal plate with a crank on t
The farther you push the crank al
the plate, Chubby explains, the fa
the mechanical rabbit goes. "Wl
they offered me this job," he says
didn't know if I'd be able to do i
thought about that a lot. Because yo
have times when a dog will fall do
or start back toward the rabbit. O
I saw a dog jump the rail and dive
to the fountain there in the middl
the infield. One time I had a lead
catch it. But that only happened on
In an average year Chubby will
through three rabbits. He estima
the top speed of the lure at appr
mately 50 miles an hour, though
rarely if ever runs it that fast.

The first race of the evening is now
to begin. Chubby flicks a switch
t dims the grandstand lights, push-
he crank forward, and sparks fly out.
the rabbit begins its journey to the
, bouncing on the end of a long,
n pole, he pushes the crank forward
peed it up, then slows it down as it
roaches the box so that the dogs
get a clearer look at the bait as
y take off. He pushes the lever for-
rd, and more sparks fly out as the
s race down the stretch. In the si-
ce of the glass house, broken only by
steady click of the tote-board odds,
sk Chubby if he has ever heard of
P. Smith, the father of greyhound
ing, who invented the machine he
erates. He says no. Then I ask if the
ought has ever occurred to him that
occupies, as far as the dogs and the
tors are concerned, a position not
ike that of God. He shakes his head
again.

f the metaphorical resonance of
ubby's occupation is hard to ignore,
s also a fact that every lure operator
ngs his own particular habits to the
. Chubby's predecessor in the glass
use, he tells me, was a man named
bby Harmon. "He was probably the
atest lure operator that there ever
s," Chubby says. Harmon was a dis-
t figure who liked the job because
could be alone. He rarely if ever
oke. "He never talked to Bobby
agner," Chubby says, with a won-
ring expression, pointing to the
awk box that connects him to the
ges' booth and to the trap where
lure ends up. As the years went
, Bobby Harmon grew more addict-
to silence, muffling the paddock
e with electrical tape so that the
ch could fall into place without a
nd. "He didn't want you to call
n, talk to him, nothing," Chubby
alls. For over thirty years, no one
s allowed inside the glass house ex-
pt for Bobby Harmon. One day he
t his job and walked out of Derby
ne forever, offering no explanation
at anyone at the track can recall.

I leave Chubby alone in the glass
use and spend the rest of the evening
the Derby Lane bandstand, where
tween races I sit in the bandleader's
ice, a small room with a distinctive
tting-wood smell that reminds me of
mmer camp, and talk with Jules Lev-
an, the piano player. A spry eighty-three-year-old whose career encompasses nearly the entire history of twentieth-century American entertainment, Jules accompanied the silent movies in the 1920s, played piano for the Miss America pageant in the 1940s, worked as the bandleader for Paul Anka ("a real bastard") in the early 1960s.

"We had the pleasure of playing *The Ed Sullivan Show* the first time the Beatles were here," he remembers, when I ask him about the highlights of his career. "We were on the same night. I remember they were rehearsing, and I leaned over to Paul Anka and said, 'They'll never make it.'"

I ask Jules whether he is happy to end his career playing the piano at Derby Lane, and he pauses for a moment to let the question sink in. Then he answers with an embarrassingly delicate balance of tact and pride that he doesn't really see himself as playing for the *dogs* per se, or for the empty grandstand, but rather for his fellow musicians, who are true professionals. "When I play, nothing bothers me except the arthritis," he says. "But my experience makes up for that. I'll play this gig until I die."*

As far as the sport of greyhound racing is concerned, the questions of greatest public interest in Florida have less to do with T. L. Weaver and O. P. Smith and their various lineal and spiritual descendants than with a number of well-publicized incidents of animal cruelty that damaged the industry's reputation during the 1980s. Raising such questions at Derby Lane is a delicate business. Dog owners tend to respond with a mix of indignation, references to the track's greyhound-adoption program, and puzzlement as to what the fuss is all about. The dedication of dog-racing opponents to the cause of banning greyhound racing for good, on the other hand, is manifested in St. Petersburg in letters to the editor, leaflets, and numerous boycotts. The intensity of this opposition is hard to overstate. Pickets outside the track are led by an organization that calls itself the Greyhound Protection League, whose habit of parading starved-looking greyhounds outside the Derby Lane grandstand suggests the passion of the demonstrators who wave jars containing pickled human fetuses outside local abortion clinics.

The more superficially gruesome causes, as well as the deeper psychic resonances, of this opposition are captured in an article entitled "Incinerator Taxed by Dog Deaths," which appeared in the September 10, 1987, *St Petersburg Times*:

> So many dogs are put to death at a Northwest Florida animal shelter during greyhound racing season that a new incinerator is being run nearly day and night. . . . "It's enough that it's tearing up a $40,000 crematory," said Jimmy Dykes, manager of the Escambia County animal shelter. He said the shelter averages 25 dogs a week during the April–September racing season, but gassed 23 Tuesday alone.

The article ends with a comment from a shelter worker named Karen Hansen: "'That's what happens when you don't win.'"

My own investigation of the conditions under which racing dogs live at Derby Lane begins at seven on Monday morning inside a sandy run at the Marriott kennel. The kennel enclosure, which is surrounded by a tall chicken-wire fence, resembles a well-kept retirement community of whitewashed ranch houses with pickup trucks parked out front and fenced-off dog runs in back. There are twenty-three kennels at Derby Lane, each of which contains approximately sixty dogs, for a total of 1,400 or so dogs in all. When several kennels outlived their usefulness as dog shelters a few years back, they were donated by the track to a local private school for use as classrooms.

In the prime of their racing careers, the dogs in the Marriott kennel bear the same relation to normal house pets that Michael Jordan does to the average suburban dad. They have long, thin, intelligent-looking faces and anatomy-book-perfect bodies without a single visible ounce of fat. Most begin their lives on breeding farms in the Southwest—usually in Kansas, Texas, and Oklahoma—where they learn to run by the age of six months. Kennel owners travel to the farms and buy the dogs at auction: a good dog from a

* *As of this writing, Derby Lane has replaced the High Stakes Band with a program of piped-in music.*

champion line costs between $5,000 and $10,000. The dogs stay on the farms until they are fourteen months old, when they join their appointed kennel and begin their racing lives, starting out on less competitive tracks and then working their way up to tracks like Derby Lane, where the competition is better and the purses are bigger. Racing twice a week, over a three-year career, a successful dog might earn upward of $50,000. A true champion, like Bomb Threat, can earn $300,000 or more.

At this moment, however, the Marriott kennel dogs are displaying their championship qualities by pinning me against the fence of their enclosure. As the dogs surge forward, they take turns leaping with their paws extended and hitting me full in the chest in what I interpret as a playful but concerted attempt to knock me down. I breathe slowly in and out while the pressure builds behind my eyes. As the dogs in back push toward the front, and the dogs in front worm their way in between my legs and up to my face, drooling, nuzzling, and sticking their warm wet tongues through their muzzles, I start to relax and enjoy the experience, which is oddly therapeutic in a way that I associate with swimming naked with dolphins or being buried up to one's neck in mud.

Watching from the neighboring dog run is the kennel's owner, Chuck Marriott, a sunburned Army vet with an indecipherable tattoo on his forearm and the hardened, taciturn look I associate with circus people. The life of the kennel owners at Derby Lane is bounded by the daily routine of caring for their animals, waking up at 6:00 A.M., feeding sixty dogs, tending the injured, training the young. The economics of owning a kennel at Derby Lane are not encouraging. Over the course of a six-month-long racing season a top kennel can expect to gross approximately $300,000 in purse money. Of that total, almost half goes to expenses, including food and veterinary bills, two or three handlers, and commissions on dogs leased from other owners. Almost halfway through the season, the Marriott kennel has earned only $86,000.

When their fifteen minutes in the sun are up, the dogs are led back into their cages inside the kennel, which is permeated by the healthy-athlete smell of the dogs mixed with the smell of rotting carpet and the tangy, medicinal smell of Ben-Gay. For their first meal of the day, the dogs are given tin bowls filled with generous helpings of meat mixed with vitamins from a galvanized iron tub. The packaging of the meat, I notice, is marked "unfit for human consumption." As all sixty dogs throw themselves howling and barking against the sides of their cages, Marriott walks down the aisle with a bag of doughnuts from the 7-Eleven, which he distributes to his favorites. After a moment of consideration, he reaches into the bag and hands me a chocolate doughnut: the caffeine in the chocolate, he explains, might cause one of his dogs to be disqualified from a race.

With no maltreatment of dogs evident at the kennels, I spend the rest of my afternoon trying to locate the grandson of the track's former veterinarian, Doc Llewellyn, who I have been told is a leading greyhound activist in the St. Petersburg area. In a file I am directed to in the Derby Lane executive offices, under the heading "Animal Welfare," amid articles like "Hidden Shame of an American Sport" and "Death of Greyhounds Investigated," I find a letter from a "James E. Lewallen" of Largo denouncing "the ghastly greyhound death toll" and "an industry that directly results in the wholesale slaughter of tens of thousands of 'man's best friends.'" Unfortunately, the only vaguely similar name that I can find in the St. Petersburg phone book is a "Norma Llewellyn." When I call her she promptly disclaims any connection to "Doc Llewellyn" or "James Lewallen" before launching into a lengthy account of her marriage to a man named Frank Pause, who died of a heart attack in 1985.

"We had to move out of our home because he was still living there," she explains. "He would walk around at night, flush the toilet, run the bath, and turn the TV on."

"And how did you meet Mr. Llewellyn?" I ask.

"He has a brain dysfunction the same as me," she explains. "So we really hit it off. He can't remember anything that happened in the past. In August 1985, I was pronounced dead. I've got the power of God in me," she adds. "I w combing my husband's hair the oth day and it was growing out in my han The dishes were being rinsed and jum ing into the sink by themselves. M husband wouldn't come close to me

When I ask what she did then, N ma Llewellyn is quick to respond. "V went to the priest," she says, "and told my husband, 'You don have to be afraid. Your w is one of the gifted ones

Greyhound racing is hardly a c elty-free sport. Yet what is cruel abo dog racing has less to do with how t dogs are treated than with the bel that all you need to do is to try hard a believe in yourself and the laws chance will be suspended. There nothing very mysterious about the w these laws work. The dogs will nev catch the rabbit. The odds will alwa favor the house. But if the dog track a theater in which such lessons are d played in their most obvious form, the is very little evidence that these lesso are actually learned by the people w come here night after night, like t woman sitting by the rail in a glow- the-dark T-shirt that reads IT'S NO THE HEAT, IT'S THE STUPIDITY and w bets five dollars on the same three nu bers in every race, a 6-2-4 trifecta, c spite the fact that the mathemati odds of winning the trifecta are 512 1 and the six dog is—all other facto being equal—the least likely dog ev to win a race. Even the Weavers wou seem well advised to park their mon elsewhere. According to the trac treasurer, Steve Hlass, the family wou make a great deal more money, with risk at all, by selling the land on whi Derby Lane stands and investing t proceeds in a passbook savings accou The Weavers' current return on vestment, he says, is approximatel percent per annum.

What little profit Derby Lane do generate always winds up in the sa place at the end of the night, in a w dowless room located behind t mutuel windows on the grandsta level and presided over by Larry Gre a thin, bearded man in his fifties. is more than happy to show me arou and tells me that he has worked h for nine years. The money, which takes me to right away, is held i

-like room with yellow walls that much the same as it did in Cap-Weaver's day. The walls are lined wooden shelves on which sit y bound packets of ones, fives, ies, fifties, and hundreds. On the is a squat, ancient-looking safe ifactured by the Mosler Safe Co. milton, Ohio. On the shelf above afe is a rip-proof vinyl bag con-ng more than half a million dol-n cash.

ook at the bag and ask Larry n whether working around so money has changed his view of orld in any particular way. His an-s careful and deliberate, befitting n who handles hundreds of thou-of dollars a night.

laybe it has changed the way that p my own money," he says. "Be-I came to work here, I kept my ey scrunched up in my pocket. I like to keep it in a neat and or-fashion, back-faced, with all the acing in the same direction and d the same way." He pauses to der the question again.

loney is awfully dirty, and it s," he says. "I wash my hands five times a night. I wash them before o the bathroom. When I go home, smell it on my clothes."

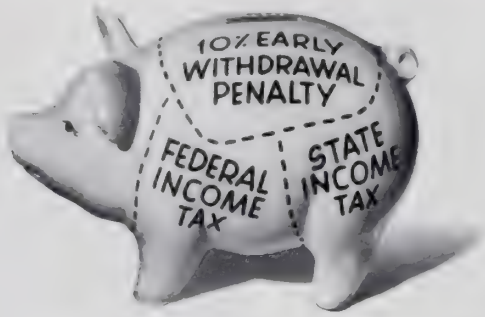
sk him to describe the smell. musty smell," he says. "During ummer it gets particularly strong. rwise, it's kind of hard to describe. ry musty smell."

musty, inky smell," adds David o, Green's boss, who has joined us e money room.

rry Green looks at him curiously moment. "That's true, I guess, of money," he says. "New money, d-new money, has an awful smell use of the ink."

s I put my nose to the money and he in, the musty old-money smell s to deepen into something sour tale, like the karmic equivalent of sweat, made up of bettors' failed ms and lasting compulsions that been absorbed into the worn-out atom by atom and are passed on rn to whoever holds the bills next. rough an interior window, a Hal-computer sits in a white-walled n, alone in a world of silent calcu-ns. Off-track wagering totals on race clatter from a nearby print-

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er, a Morse-like coda from the world of instant gigabyte data transfers that is fast making the sport of greyhound racing obsolete. With more than two thirds of Derby Lane's nightly take coming from off-track wagers, why bother coming out to the track? And given the superior odds at other gambling venues, from Vegas to sports to the horse tracks, why bother to bet on the dogs at all? The result of the process of rationalization powered by computers is that Derby Lane is no longer really a physical place but rather an abstract device for the production of odds that are, by any reckoning, unfavorable.

In the basement below the grandstand, Jay Sizemore has settled in behind his desk for the rest of the night. He offers me a Carlton and tells me stories about his service during the Korean War, about attending thirteen schools in fifteen years, and about his mother, who made him memorize his multiplication tables (one through fifty) and inculcated in him a respect for the laws of mathematics that has served him well ever since. Our conversation is soon interrupted by a tall, black-haired man in a red polo shirt with a Motorola pager hooked onto the belt of his jeans. He is sweating profusely.

"Could you do like you did for my daddy?" he asks. "Twenty percent by the end of the month?"

Jay considers this for a moment, looks him up and down, takes in the glazed expression in the man's eyes, considers again, and frowns.

"You got bills to pay, you can't go broke," he says in a sharp voice. "Think about what it is that you're doing." The man hangs his head but stays standing exactly where he is until Jay reaches into his pocket.

"Let me think about it until Monday," he says, as the man reaches forward. "Here's a hundred to get you started."

Throughout the evening they continue to come, with the same bright embarrassed gleam in their eyes, the same loser's slouch: amateurs, professionals, men with good jobs, single moms working in truck stops, a hospital nurse with a favorite grandchild, asking for money to buy food for their kids or to make payments on the car and the house.

Later, as we step out into the dark of the half-empty parking lot, ostensibly to make Jay's nightly tour of the valet-parking stands, the Florida air is cool but humid. Beneath the neon Derby Lane sign is Jay's car, a 1984 Chevy Blazer. There is something disconcerting about the inside of the car, the flat brushed-steel ring around the odometer, the empty spaces on the dashboard beneath which old cigarette butts overflow from the ashtray. It looks like a spaceship interior from *Star Wars*.

"I put about thirty-five hundred into this car," Jay says. He turns on the headlights and drives slowly up the ramp, talking all the while about people he has known who appeared to be honest but took his money and ran off. He talks about his older sister, who is dying of cancer. He tells me hard-luck stories about the valets, most of whom are young and work two or three jobs to support their families.

"Life is hard," he finally says, hunched over the steering wheel of his Blazer. "Life is unfair a good part of the time. And people love to feel sorry for themselves. They say, 'Someone did this to me.' But they love to hurt themselves too."

The reason people come to Derby Lane, Jay suggests, is to be with people like themselves. "It's like a family," he says. The softness of his eyes, the gravelly sound of his voice convey the impression of some knowledge of a particularly desolate world whose one saving grace is that its inhabitants are too weak and impatient to do much damage. His eyelashes flutter behind his thick, black frames. "You're supposed to learn from experience in life, but life's too short to learn from your own experiences," he adds. "So when I think about it, I guess I understand why you're here."

My last night at Derby Lane is a warm and balmy evening with no rain and perhaps a thousand people in the stands. I have come to say my goodbyes. In the top row of the Derby Plaza, Boston Jamie is spending the evening with his daughter, who is in her mid-twenties and teaches kids in Tampa. Although she has been around the dogs all her life, she isn't much interested in the races. She is here tonight to spe time with her father, and she hopes win enough money to buy herse new computer. So far this evening is up fifty bucks. Richard Hens fi me with his hippie stare from the smoking section. He wiggles the bills his fingers and does not smile. In money room behind the grandst Larry Green has already begun stack tonight's haul. Jay Sizemore is in a s mood. He takes my hand, puts his er hand on my shoulder, and confi that he has just received word that parking area behind the paddock be closed and that he will have to off four more valets.

As the evening wears on I wan down by the rail to be nearer the d Pack after pack runs by, and six dog ter six dog fails to win. Some time d ing the ninth race I make the quaintance of Bertha Lavoie, a "sm owner," which in her case means t she owns exactly one dog, a class greyhound named Teedee's Dream t will be running for the Castellani k nel in the eleventh race tonig Bertha is somewhere in her sixties wears gold hoop earrings. The first t she ever visited a dog track, she s she was seventeen years old. "I thou it was disreputable because people w betting," she remembers. "Never million years did I think that I wo end up owning a dog of my own."

The story of how Bertha Lav came to own Teedee's Dream conta what I am now beginning to und stand as the inevitable complement tragedy and disappointment assoc ed with the sport. "I have a friend w has a breeding farm," she says. " introduced us to these greyhounds, sister and I." Bertha's sister's name Terry Daleb. On March 25, 1997, T ry died of a massive cerebral hem rhage, and Bertha's friend, the breeder, offered her a greyhound gift in the hope that going out to track would help cushion Bertha's "I called him Teedee's Dream beca my sister's initials were T.D., an was always her dream to one day h a stakes winner," she says while ke ing an eye on the tote board. "His was a top racer."

The odds on Teedee's Dream now rising precipitously, from 10 to 18 to 1, then 20 to 1. "Oh, L

e we go," Bertha says as the dogs are
out onto the track. She is obvi-
ly nervous, sipping from her beer
l chain-smoking Merit 100's. She
s that she feels closer to her sister
en the dog runs.

The dogs are led into the starting
, and as Chubby's rabbit begins its
ncing run around the far turn Bertha
ts to shout, "Come on, baby! Make
proud!" As the dogs leap from the
, and the crowd yells, the look on
face suggests that she should have
own better than to expect something
d to come of a bad situation.

"He's dead last," she moans. "Last
in." As the race progresses, Teedee's
am falls farther and farther behind,
ing ten, fifteen, then twenty-five
gths behind the leader.

t is at this moment, standing by the
, that I have my one true vision of
rby Lane. The dream that united
P. Smith and T. L. Weaver, the
am that animated the ten thousand
more people who came out to the
ck with greed in their hearts, all
ssed up in their sporting best on a Fri-
night, that dream died many
ades ago. It was buried for good in
38, the year the state lottery came
It is inevitable that the Weavers
l sell the land, and the tote board,
d the grandstand, and the bandshell.
of these things will disappear, along
h the bettors, and the touts, and the
enty-three kennels of dogs, and the
0 or so people who make their living
re, lifted up by an invisible hand, or
iant crane, and transported to Or-
do, where Derby Lane will live on
ever in a Disney World theme park
licated to our ancient ways of life. Fa-
rs and mothers will buy tickets to
in the grandstand and watch the
tors and the touts before heading off
see the Hall of Presidents, visit the
ll, or drop by the Normandy-beach-
ad-landing attraction.

"Would you believe that the dog
on the twenty-fifth, the anniversary
my sister's death?" Bertha Lavoie
s. "He lost that race too." As she
ntemplates this fact she takes an-
her drag on her cigarette and her
s take on a look that is equal parts
der and forgiving. "He just loves
be loved," she says. "That's his prob-
n. That's what makes it so hard for
n to win." ■



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AN ACTION FIGURE FOR ALL SEASONS

Minnesota elects a toy governor

By Dennis Cass

As I step off the escalator and
o the upper-deck lounge of the
nterbury Park racetrack in
kopee, Minnesota, a middle-aged
e Ventura supporter in a cheap
suit materializes in front of me,
kes my reluctant hand,
says, "History." I look
im dumbly, but before
n reply he disappears
o the crowd.

The setting seems like an
ikely place for an elec-
n-night party, much less a
tical watershed. Border-
the west side of a mile-
g track, Canterbury's
n building is crude and
ctional, with concrete
rs and pillars, wood ve-
r, and forest-green paint,
long dulled by cigarette
oke and spilled beer.
ople lose money here,
npulsively and often, and
ghost of failure haunts the walls
corridors. The nicest features are
television sets, which hang invit-
ly from the ceiling like ripe fruit.
e worst features are pretty much
rything else. Like a football stadi-
or a hockey arena, it's a sprawling,
itarian venue, the kind of place
wash down with a hose.

The betting windows are closed
the Ascot Lounge to the right of



the escalators is open, and Ventura's supporters wait three deep for a chance to take full advantage. I try to move past them for a closer look but get cut off by a train of manly men who are using their 16-ounce Leinenkugel's as wedges against the crowd. All four of them are wearing army jackets, camouflage pants, and hunting boots. The only thing missing, so I hope, are the guns.

I drop into their slipstream and ride it into the party, a fat, sweaty weisswurst of baseball hats, Twins sweatshirts, and high-school letter jackets in a makeshift staging area surrounded by television crews, whose lights force in the dense crowd like a cattle pen. Thick of neck and stout of heart, Ventura's supporters are bleaching under the hot lights, but none of them seem to care. Next to me on the fringe, a ratty Vikings parka encases a man in his thirties. A thin layer of foam coats his mustache, and his brow is knit in drunken concentration as he tries to decide between the whiskey in his left hand and the beer in his right.

All white and all worked up, the crowd near the stage builds up a stadium chant of "Packers suck! Packers suck!" which inexplicably segues into "Bikers suck! Bikers suck!" I look around and see one such biker walking out of the Ascot Lounge carrying a big beer and a paper plate with a pyramid of cocktail franks. Flipping his long black hair, he angrily surveys the pit. For a moment I think he's going to throw down his snack and put up his fists, but he only smiles and struts into the room, holding his beer high above his head like a torch.

I feel like I've stumbled into a junior-high metal-shop reunion and that at any minute I'm going to have to surrender my lunch money. Until now I have appreciated how Ventura has enlivened the Minnesota governor's race, how he has spurred the common man to participate in the election—I just had no idea the common man would be so drunk. Alcohol and decision-making are a bad marriage, yet tonight we are de-

nis Cass's last piece for Harper's
*gazine, "Sacrebleu! The Jazz Era Is Up for
," appeared in the December 1997 issue.
lives in Minneapolis.*

o still from the commercial *Action Figure* / N rth 9 s Advertising

ciding who will make business deals for the twentieth largest state in the country, who will play host to foreign dignitaries, who will help set educational standards, who will fret over how to apportion our $23 billion budget. No one here seems to be celebrating the political promise of the next four years; they're celebrating tonight, a Saturday night that miraculously got moved to Tuesday.

The television monitors suspended around the stage display a graphic that by all accounts should be a misprint. With 49 percent of precincts reporting, Ventura, the professional wrestler turned Reform Party candidate, leads with 37 percent of the vote. Republican candidate and St. Paul Mayor Norm Coleman is close behind at 34 percent, while Democrat and Attorney General Skip Humphrey's family legacy of civic-minded Minnesota leadership has garnered him only 29 percent. The crowd starts singing, "We will, we will rock you"; I shake my head in disbelief. Saturday, while on his last-minute seventy-two-hour tour of Minnesota in a motor home, Ventura said, "Maybe it will be a popularity contest, and if it is you're looking at the next governor." His populist campaign of celebrity, inexperience, and issue-avoidance is starting to look like a winner.

I drove down to Canterbury on a lark because I thought it would be fun, but now, hemmed in by muscle and fat and flannel and leather, I feel uneasy. I love a boozy crowd, but I sense that beneath the cheers and the rock anthems is the potential for violence. I flee left, to the glassed-in grandstand area overlooking the racetrack. The track glows purple under the arc lights, while inside there are seventy or eighty small tables laid out in rows on a stepped terrace. Each table has its own monitor, like mission control at Cape Canaveral, and most are occupied by small, intimate groups who are quietly partying. At the top of the stairs, two old men wearing seed hats drink whiskey and smoke heroically while one of their grandsons plays at their feet. Like the other people in this part of the lounge, they have driven all the way to Ventura's election par-

ty to watch it on television.

On the television screen, the local news readers appear as lost as I do. The old-timers look pleased that KARE-11 anchor Paul Magers, whose head has been genetically enhanced to maximize his Q rating, has to squirm for a change. During the campaign, Ventura's spicy personality made the press's job fun again, but now Magers looks like a host whose dinner-party guests won't leave while his co-anchor, Diana Pierce, looks pleadingly into the TelePrompTer for something, anything, other than political copy tainted by professional wrestling. The screen cuts away from the studio to a live shot of Canterbury, but there isn't a camera lens wide enough to capture the humanity. In one ear I can hear the crowd on television; in the other, much louder, I hear them live as they yell and scream and shake their fists. A few wiggle green-and-black placards bearing Ventura's campaign slogan: RETALIATE IN '98. Back in the studio, Magers and Pierce pause in wonder.

I wonder, too: Retaliate against what? Politics as usual? Tax-and-spend liberals? Unchecked aggression along the Wisconsin border? The newscasters are ruffled because their campaign script has been hijacked. The world isn't supposed to see Ventura's supporters; they don't fit into Minnesota's press kit. We would rather be known for Garrison Keillor's folksy cant, or the Walker Art Center and the Guthrie Theater, or the good work we do with drunks and druggies over at Hazelden. If you must disparage us, then make fun of the Mall of America or rib us for our Lutheran values and Midwestern reserve, which we package and promote as Minnesota Nice.

But you can also read Minnesota Nice as Minnesota I Don't Want to Talk About It. In the twelve years I've lived here, I've learned that it's rude to be critical. Among the things we don't talk about: our cities are racially polarized; downtown St. Paul is dying; there is no coherent plan for downtown Minneapolis other than to open more strip clubs; we suffer from urban sprawl that emulates Los Angeles's; our mass-transit system sucks; family farms are going bankrupt; and the Iron Range economy has collapsed. This is the stained side of the sofa cushion that Minnesota turns over when company comes, and Ventura's people are ruining the illusion. His supporters, God bless them, are fun. They are the kind of people who take six cases of Grain Belt and a video camera ice fishing on Lake Mille Lacs and film one another getting sloppy in a portable house the size of a toolshed. They are the kind of people who drive pickups and ride snowmobiles, who aren't above filling a stop sign full of buckshot on a warm summer evening.

I find the stairs to the press box, but as I'm about to walk through the door, a uniformed guard stops me. "You can't go up there," he says. He rises off his stool and rolls out his chest. I have no credentials other than my memo pad, which I wave at him while saying something lame about being a reporter. "Oh," he says cheerfully, as if I had just jiggled his belly. "Then go right up then." Security, Minnesota-style.

The press box is almost empty. The local reporters, all third-stringers stuck working the off-brand candidate, are dolefully monitoring a dozen televisions stacked like building blocks on a conference table. As in the Ascot Lounge there is a buffet, but here it's free, and the steam trays are still filled with meatballs and weenies, the press having opted for the fresh fruits and vegetables. Presiding over the room is Gerry Drewry, a tiny old lady who looks structurally unsound and who is puttering around the press box like it's her living room. I ask if Ventura will grant me an interview in the next hour. One of the monitors shows some Ventura supporters stage-diving as the cops rush in to kick them out. Drewry considers the scene on television. "Of course," she says.

The stage-diving prompts me to go back downstairs and enter the fray. I push my way toward the podium and end up next to a group of frat boys who are punching one another's stomachs and pinching one

ıother's nipples. One of them has astered a Jesse Ventura bumper cker over his team-logo baseball p. I ask them if they'd like to coment on Ventura's campaign, and e alpha male jostles past his budes to get closer to my tape corder. His voice is hoarse as he lls about how this country needs a eal man" and how Ventura is a eal man," and he says "real man" many times I almost beg him to op. I ask another question, but y voice is overtaken by a chant "Coleman sucks! Coleman cks!" and I lose my subject. As drifts away, I realize the crowd shouting down Coleman not ecause of his politics but because e's the visiting team.

Or because he's a lawyer. No ch indignity blemishes Ventu-'s résumé: he graduated high hool, trained as a Navy SEAL, rved in Vietnam, rode with the longols motorcycle club in Cali-rnia, bounced drunks at the usty Nail, worked security for ne Rolling Stones, won the Vorld Wrestling Federation Tag eam Championship, rapped on is local hit single "I Got the ody," provided television comentary for Wrestlemania II rough VIII, co-starred in action ovies with Arnold Schwarzeneger, acted as a pitchman for Pig's ye beer, served as mayor of the linneapolis suburb Brooklyn Park, osted a call-in show on KFAN allorts radio station, cameoed on *The -Files*, ran for governor.

During the campaign, Ventura layed with all of his identities, vitching back and forth between ietnam vet and all-purpose enteriner and always looking for the ugh. Two weeks before the elecon, I went to his large Tudor house Maple Grove, Minnesota, to see ow a minor celebrity with political spirations lives. In the entryway indow hung a sign featuring a rawing of a bicep, around which as printed, FORGET THE DOG: BEARE OF OWNER. Ventura came to ne door barefoot and in jeans and uided me to his leafy back yard. Vhile the show horses that he and is wife own gamboled nearby, he reeled off one-liners. He claimed that facing death as a Navy SEAL had prepared him for anything, adding that Coleman and Humphrey would "wet their pants" in SEAL training. "They would be crying for their mommies after the first day," he said, as if inexperience on the ropes course would be a liability when it came to governing.



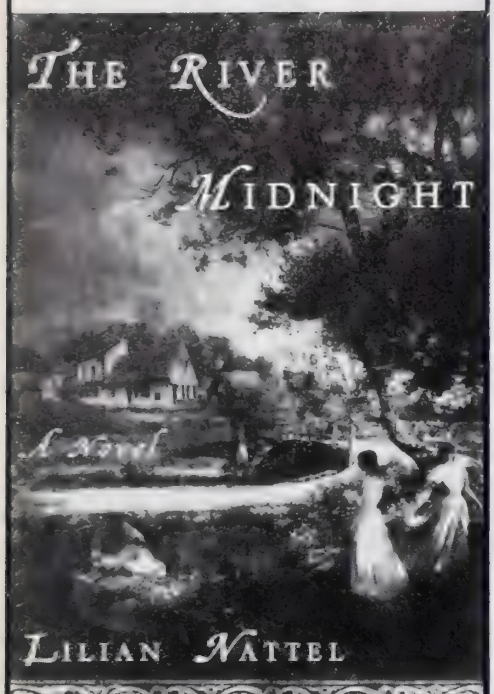
Ventura's "mess with the best, die like the rest" sex appeal is not lost on the women here at Canterbury. I approach an attractive younger woman wearing the state uniform: gray sweatshirt, pale blue jeans, white Keds. She is walleyed with excitement. When she talks, she traces her collarbone with her fingertips. She says she voted for Jesse because she saw him in his underwear. Then she gets serious and says she likes Jesse because he would legalize prostitution. Something in my expression must say, "But you don't look like a hooker," because she suddenly reconsiders and announces she likes Jesse because "he has a lot of ideas."

This is the first time I have heard anyone accuse Ventura of that particular crime. Unlike his opponents, he campaigned without a written tax plan and said he would figure out how to govern after he'd won. He boasted that he was the only candidate with a union card (Screen Actors Guild; he once tried and failed to form a wrestlers' union) but denounced the living wage. He promised to return the state's budget surplus to "the people" yet claimed to favor spending more on education. He mused about lowering taxes, legalizing marijuana, and catching JFK's real killers. His only non-entertainment credential was his four-year stint as mayor of Brooklyn Park, where he was one vote of seven on the city council and had no veto power. The few times the press questioned his lack of experience, he would get defensive. "What's the difference between a city and the state—it's just the amount of money," he said. "Instead of millions, you're dealing with billions." He possessed a Reagan-like ability to make his critics sound like nitpicking elitists. He knew, too, that we are conditioned to embrace celebrities who take up causes (models against fur, Susan Sarandon and Tim Robbins against everything else); they don't have to do this, the thinking goes, so they must have integrity. Proving himself to be as capable of spin as the career politicians he denounced, Ventura promoted his lack of policy as openness. He said he would consider *anything* that would better the great state of Minnesota, though nobody asked him if anything could mean white slavery, or animal sacrifice, or building landing strips for friendly UFOs.

As the crowd settles, I turn my attention to three women who are riding out the uproar with the patience of hockey moms. They shy from the recorder when I ask them to comment on Ventura's success, preferring to leave the punditry to the boys. With a little coaxing, one of them offers up the fact that Ventura is honest. She is about to elaborate when one of the frat boys noses past her and yells that he has a comment. He squares up his body to give his de-

otograph by Tim Peters / Titan Sports / Sygma

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livery. "Okay," he says. With a twitch of his head he cracks his neck. He's breathing hard, as if fresh from football practice. "It doesn't matter if you hit a home run by a mile." Pause. Breathe. "Or by four inches." Pause. Breathe. "It's still a home run."

It's not as good a line as "I ain't got time to bleed," Ventura's famous quip from *Predator*, which was eagerly reprinted by the press. No one picked up on "Bunch of slack-jawed faggots. . . . This stuff will make you a goddamned sexual tyrannosaurus, just like me!" another line from the same movie. Miraculously, Ventura has only benefited from his dubious celebrity. During the campaign, neither Humphrey nor Coleman bothered to address Ventura's vague platform or the fact that he cut a vanity album in the Eighties. They were too arrogant to consider him a threat, and too polite to point out that when Ventura wrestled, he was the villain—a paid heel.

How easy it would have been to create an attack ad featuring a clip of Ventura prancing around in shiny panties and a feather boa, freeze the tape on one of his frisky ringside tirades, and superimpose the graphic: IS THIS THE MAN YOU WANT AS GOVERNOR? Ventura's opponents didn't even counter his own campy ads, which featured the Jesse Ventura Action Figure, a reworking of Ventura's WWF doll from the Eighties. In the ad, the miniaturized, plastic Ventura battles Evil Special Interest Man and Lobbyist Man and bellows, "This bill wastes taxpayers' money. Redraft it!" Ventura spoke to the people through a children's toy, but Humphrey and Coleman had no rebuttal for a man whose campaign refrain was "I don't know" and who's proud to have modeled for Hasbro.

Despite Ventura's obvious charisma and pre-fab fan base, Humphrey insisted that Ventura take part in every televised debate, believing he would steal votes from Coleman. On TV Ventura was restrained. He never, ever called his opponents pussies, but then he didn't have to. His body eclipsed Humphrey's toughness against the tobacco companies and Coleman's successful bid to bring hockey back to St. Paul. If Richard Nixon lost the 1960 television debates to John F. Kennedy because he didn't shave, Humphrey and Coleman lost because they didn't pump iron.

Outside the staging area, things are starting to fall apart. Traffic between the stage and the Ascot Lounge is dense and unstable. A biker pushes his gut out, parting the two halves of his shiny leather vest. He tries to belly his way through, but staggers and moves sideways instead. A few yards away, a tipsy-looking mom who's trying to stay out of the way keeps getting knocked forward. She's simultaneously trying to smoke a cigarette and shelter her eight-year-old son, who is in full Boy Scout dress khakis. A curl of smoke hooks his little nose and he squirms to get away, but Mom holds him fast. As she ruffles his hair to console him, she accidentally ashes on his head.

As Ventura's supporters are made to wait and wait under the hot lights, their round, happy faces are starting to take on jagged edges. They don't seem to understand they're not going to see Jesse until he wins or loses. More Canterbury security guards appear at the lip of the stage accompanied by several Shakopee cops. Pam Ellison, Ventura's "stage manager and chief cook and bottle washer," struggles toward the podium to give a preventive talk. She is a tall, big-boned woman with a round, kind face. She's not Jesse, but standing there in front of the mike, she is apparently reason enough for the crowd to cheer. "Jesse will be out soon," she says. "He needs some downtime. So kick back and enjoy each other. Jesse loves all of you." When the fans respond with a mix of chants that doesn't quite coalesce, Ellison threatens to bring out Mae Schunk, Ventura's running mate, who has been a schoolteacher for thirty-seven years, as if Schunk could sentence the crowd to detention. The frat boy in the logo hat hunches his shoulders and pretends to cower with fear, but, finding no support for continued high jinks, he falls silent.

Sprinkled around the edges of the rush, a few punkers give the room a uspicious sense of harmony, as if heater people and jocks had made a trange truce and started hanging ut with one another in the lunch- oom. Two of them, a couple, lean gainst a pillar at the edge of the ac- ion. His hair is dyed purple, hers is ightclub black, and they're both in urplus gear similar to that of the unters and fishers in the room, but hey wear it with more insouciance. can't tell if they're here in earnest r for the camp value, but judging by he smirks on their faces they are go- ng to have a good laugh back at the quat either way. Only now, with 58 ercent of precincts reporting and Ventura clinging to his 37 percent ead, it's starting to look like the oke is going to be on all of us.

Minnesotans are wary of celebri- ies, and we take our politics (and urselves) seriously, yet we are about o further lower our nation's stan- lards for entertainers turned politi- ians. At the top of the food chain eside former President Ronald Rea- an and former Carmel Mayor Clint Eastwood. Both hail from Holly- ood, which in the brief history of American entertainment is equiva- ent to having family that came over n *The Mayflower*. Next in line is he late Sonny Bono, recording star, ormer mayor of Palm Springs and usband of Cher. Pop music isn't the novies, but it has a similar cultural ignificance. Former Iowa Represen- ative Fred Grandy was strictly tele- ision, but at least *The Love Boat* was rime-time and enjoys a respectable fterlife in syndication. Their names even sound appropriately political. Reagan and Eastwood have the ring f patrician strength, then Bono, a ittle louche but with a nice conti- nental touch, on down to the loamy, npretentious Grandy.

Ventura is not only television, he's Saturday-morning television. He's cable, he's pay-per-view, he's direct-to-video. Born James Janos, he chose a pseudonym that is space- age and futuristic, like a Fifties car with fins, or a motivational speaker. In 1992, he had his stage name, Jesse "The Body" Ventura, trademarked, making him the only candidate in

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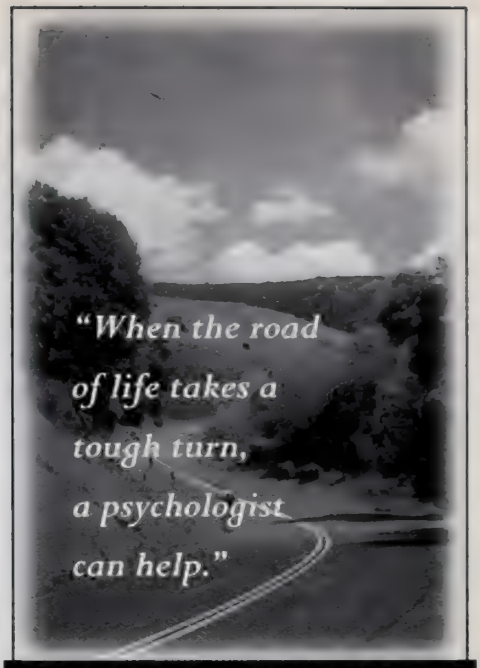
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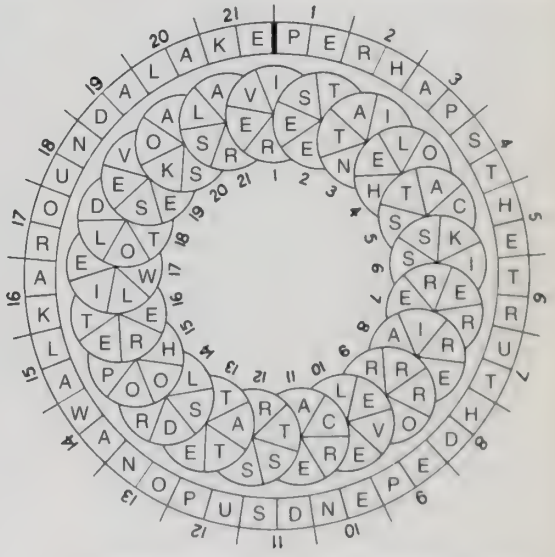


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SOLUTION TO JANUARY DOUBLE ACROSTIC (NO. 192). CAMILLE PAGLIA: SEXUAL PERSONAE. Paradoxically, assent to savage chthonian realities leads not to gloom but to humor. . . . For life is not a tragedy but a comedy. Comedy is born of the clash between Apollo and Dionysus. Nature is always pulling the rug out from under our pompous ideals.

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American history who can defend himself against unlicensed merchandise. As I watch the ticker inch up, I realize that Minnesota is about to become like Italy, where porn stars win parliamentary seats, and I wonder what is next, whether somewhere in America there is a birthday-party magician destined to be president.

Behind me stands a young woman who has the tight black clothes, busy blonde hair, and handcrafted breasts that spell exotic dancer. Her hands are clasped in front of her chin as she looks up to the monitor above the stage and mouths a silent prayer for Jesse. Her eyes are wet. There are other women in the crowd who smack of adult entertainment, and I wonder if future political strategists will try to figure out how to get out the stripper and biker blocs. Everyone thought Ventura would draw voters away from Coleman, but no one predicted he would generate so many new voters, as if he were growing them in a lab.

Then it happens—a stripper's prayers are answered. With 59 percent of precincts reporting, one of the local stations predicts Ventura's victory. It's not official, but the election is over. There is a pause as the crowd takes a breath to read and reread the message on the monitors above the stage, before the screen cuts to a live shot of Canterbury. The image of themselves watching themselves (the winners!) is what triggers the explosion. The hockey moms reflexively duck their heads as the frat boys, trained from years of trying to get on the JumboTron at the Metrodome, climb up one another's backs in an effort to get into the frame. I brace myself against getting toppled over, but the energy is all directed upward as people try to make themselves taller for the cameras. As the chants for Jesse grow louder, a pinched television reporter drops his microphone to his side and waits. Meanwhile, the man he was trying to interview pounds the heel of his hand [illegible] forehead and yells, "You [illegible], Jesse!"

Until now I [illegible] observer, but I start [illegible] and on

the excitement. Watching the coverage at home, I saw stories about the mass of new voters who registered today at the polls, a fever reminiscent of when the Powerball jackpot climbs into the high millions and even non-gamblers crave a piece of the action. Being here now, boiling in this cauldron of populism, I can't help but feel that this phenomenon is a hopeful one: democracy has an immediacy I've never before experienced, and, like any American, I like to be where the winning is. The next fifteen minutes are a sine wave of anticipation and disappointment as Ventura, his family, and his campaign staff struggle through the crowd to take the stage. At each peak it feels as if they are about to break through; at each valley it feels as if they'll never make it. The local stations broadcast Coleman's and Humphrey's concessions, but no one is looking at the televisions anymore. Everyone is focused on Ventura's trip through the Ascot Lounge.

Through this choppy sea of the recently registered I get a glimpse of him. Ventura has been driving around the state in an RV for three days, fueled only by McDonald's and Twin Lab Engineered Food, but he appears vital and strong. He looks like a Dick Tracy villain in his size 50 dark, pinstriped suit and red tie, the same suit his doll wore in his campaign commercial. This is why he won: an entertainer's attention to detail.

Part of me hopes the suit is a prop, a tear-away outfit that he'll rip off his body as an appetizer for the main course: a ten-minute, vein-popping harangue about the sniveling weakness of his opponents. No such luck. When Ventura finally gets in front of the microphone, he is preternaturally calm. He says his first order of business is to do a national interview on NBC and that everyone needs to make a hole. "Make a hole, make a hole," says our new governor. The hockey moms look as if someone just cut in front of them in line at Cub Foods. The [illegible]rustrated television reporter throws [illegible]p her hands, but Ventura's com[illegible]nd reaches deep into the minds [illegible]is fans. Communicating to one another with short head nods, the frat boys successfully box out the rest of the crowd. The path they create for Jesse is wide. As Ventura ascends to national media heaven, a man behind me tries to raise a chant of "You Are Us! You Are Us!" He punches it out a few times, his voice rising tentatively with each repetition, but there are no takers. Ventura has been governor-elect for only one minute, and he has already left us for a bigger audience.

When Ventura finally decides to grace us with his presence, he keeps his speech short. Since the Reform Party has no real political legacy—unless you count the ravings of a crazy Texas billionaire—Ventura draws on a history that he and his audience know best: great moments in American sports. In a voice that's measured, yet powerful and deep, he begins with Muhammad Ali's victory over Sonny Liston. After he's done riffing on the personal significance of Ali's triumph, his mouth turns into a little line. I desperately want him to say, "I will rock you," but instead he moves on to the next highlight on the reel: the U.S. Olympic hockey team's 1980 defeat of the Russians, who were "like professionals or something." Someone from the back yells, "Yeah!"

Somewhere along the way, Ventura notes that "now I have to become Jesse the Mind," but I get the feeling that if he starts laying out a real ten-point plan for his first year in office, the crowd will get fidgety. They came to see Jesse win; the final gun has sounded. As Ventura quickly moves into the obligatory thank-you's, a lot of people start heading for the parking lot to beat the traffic home. The Shakopee police eye potential drunk drivers queuing up for the escalators. As I start walking out, two uniforms escort a wobbly old lady in a pink sweater toward the elevators. Jesse Ventura has shocked the world. Jesse Ventura has rocked the world. Now it's time to get out of the way and let the cleaning crews do their job.

The next morning, Minnesota wakes up with a hangover. In the shopping malls and SuperAmericas people eye one another suspiciously,

ondering who was responsible for pening that last bottle. (We all ere. Except for those over sixty or rning more than $100,000, Jesse arried every demographic.) The ood is reminiscent of the country ric "I Got in at 2 with a 10 and Voke up at 10 with a 2," but it's one ning to make the walk of shame rough your neighborhood and an- her to do it on national television. his is not the kind of night you can ake off with a shower and a big reakfast. I feel apprehensive about aving Ventura as governor, but I'm ore embarrassed with myself for be- g swept away by the show. What ere we all excited about, other han the excitement itself? My eighbor voted for Ventura for the ell of it, and when a friend called im in the middle of the night to ay, "We won," my neighbor said, Won what?"

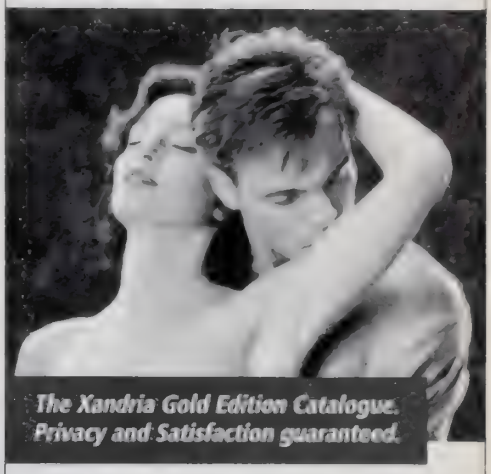
If I'm peevish, I imagine the Day- ns, Pillsburys, and Cargills, Min- esota families who are so promi- ent they're invisible, have a worse ase of the shakes. I doubt they care bout Ventura's comments regard- g legalizing prostitution and drugs, r his macho posturing against awyers and career politicians and the special interests." That's all just quawk. The real problem is that here's no established party network onnecting them with Ventura, and iven Jesse's personality, he'll make hem come to him. When they how up on Summit Avenue with heir welcome pie, it's going to be a ong, humiliating walk up the path o the front door of the governor's ansion.

At least they'll suffer with the est of us. The day after the elec- ion, the world starts playing catch- p with the Ventura story. Every- ne has a wrestling joke to tell. Hulk Hogan and Ventura get into a erbal sparring match over who's weeter, and rumors fly about Aero- mith playing the inauguration par- y. Exactly two weeks later, the ayoral race in Gilbert, Minnesota, s decided by a coin toss, thereby eeping our state on every late- ight comedy writer's shortlist for olitical material.

The more serious-minded commentators pick up our state with a pair of tweezers and sniff it for decay. National analysts talk about the angry voter and how Ventura's victory sends a message to Washington, but their winsome smiles imply that Ventura is strictly local programming, a country-mouse production that wouldn't meet the high standards of more sophisticated markets. Few suggest that his election could signal a deeper, more widespread cynicism than previously imagined, an America where people will vote for a second-tier action hero or not at all.

Jesse will undoubtedly transform the governorship to fit his personality. (Already he has appeared at the National Governors' Association looking like an anabolically enhanced Gerry Spence in his cowboy boots and fringy leather jacket, and he plans to decree Rolling Stones Day, which will allow him to circumvent Minnesota's schoolmarmish gift restrictions and accept expensive skybox tickets to see his favorite band.) There will come a crisis, however, that Ventura will not be able to bluff his way through with zippy one-liners, a time when bravado is not only inappropriate but useless. When this time comes, Jesse Ventura will have to break character to address the issue at hand, and at that moment we may finally learn who our new governor is. For now, however, it seems impossible to contemplate four years of Jesse Ventura, though the ever-cheerful local press is putting a good face on it. Like the long Minnesota winter, they seem to be saying, it's better not to think about it, better to enjoy the good moments while you can. And so we ignore the meaning of Ventura and concentrate instead on the festivities of Inauguration Day, which promises to be a bad-assed, stadium-sized, rock-and-roll blowout that will make election night look like a charity ball. The football players will try to get dressy in their rayon slacks and loud sweaters and the rich will try to look casual in their seventy-dollar T-shirts and dry-cleaned blue jeans as Jesse Ventura taps the first keg of his administration. ■

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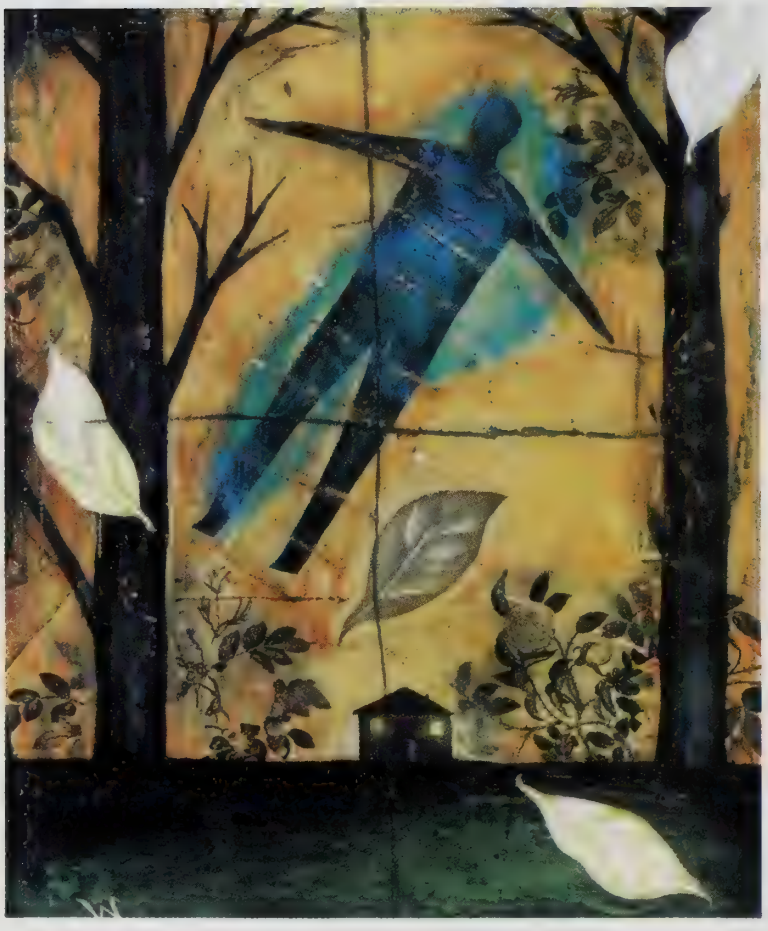
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AU SABLE

By Joyce Carol Oates



Early evening, August. In the stillness of the suburban house, the telephone rang. Mitchell hesitated only a moment before lifting the receiver. *And here was the first wrong note.* The caller was Mitchell's father-in-law, Otto Behn.

Not for years had Otto called before the phone rates went down at 11:00 P.M. Not even when Otto's wife, Teresa, had been hospitalized.

The second wrong note. The voice. "Mitch? Hello! It's me—Otto." Otto's voice was oddly lifted, eager, as if Otto were a farther distance away than usual and worried that Mitchell couldn't hear him. And he sounded affable, even buoyant—as Otto rarely was these days on the phone. Lizbeth, Otto's daughter, had come to dread his calls in the late evening: as soon as you picked up the phone, Otto would launch into one of his rifts, complaint-tirades; deadpan, funny, but with a cold fury beneath, in the long-ago style of Lenny Bruce, whom Otto had much admired in the late 1950s. Now, in his eighties, Otto had himself become an angry man: angry about his wife's cancer, angry about his own "chronic condition," angry about their Forest Hills neighbors (noisy kids, barking dogs, lawn mowers, leaf blowers), angry about being made to wait two hours "in a refrigerated room" for his most recent MRI, angry about politicians including even those he'd helped canvass votes for in the first heady flush of his retirement from high school teaching fifteen years ago. It was old age that Otto was angry about, but who could tell the poor man that? Not his daughter, and certainly not his son-in-law.

Tonight, though, Otto wasn't angry.

In a warmly genial, if slightly forced voice querying Mitchell about Mitchell's work, which was corporate architectural design, and about Lizbeth, who was the Behns' only daughter, and their grown, beautiful, departed children, the grandchildren Otto had adored when they were kids, and this went on for a while until at last Mitchell said uneasily, "Uh, Otto—Lizbeth is out at the mall. She'll be back around seven. Should I have her call you?"

Otto laughed loudly. You could all but see the saliva glistening on his full, fleshy lips. "Don't want to talk to the old man, eh?"

Mitchell tried to laugh, too. "Otto, we've *been* talking."

Otto said, more seriously, "Mitch my friend, I'm glad you picked up. Not Bethie. I can't talk long and I'd prefer, I guess, to talk to you."

"Yes?" Mitchell felt a touch of dread. Never in their thirty years of acquaintance had Otto Behn called him "friend." Teresa must be out of

Joyce Carol Oates's twenty-ninth novel, Broke Heart Blues, will be published by E. P. Dutton in May. Her first children's book was published in The first issue of October

Illustration by Nicholas Wilton

mission again. Dying? Otto himself ad been diagnosed with Parkinson's ree years before. Not a severe case, t. Or was it?

Guiltily, Mitchell realized that he d Lizbeth hadn't visited the older uple in almost a year, though they ved less than two hundred miles way. Lizbeth was dutiful about tele-noning, usually Sunday evenings, ping (usually futilely) to speak first ith her mother, whose telephone anner was weakly cheerful and op-mistic; but the last time they'd vis-ed, they'd been shocked by Teresa's eterioration. The poor woman had ad months of chemotherapy and as bone-thin, her skin like wax. ot long ago, in her sixties, she'd een exuberant, fleshy, sturdy as an rthenware pot. And there was Ot-, hovering about, tremors in both ands he seemed to be exacerbating it of comic spite, complaining bril-antly about medical workers, MOs and UFOs "in conspiracy"—hat a strained, exhausting visit. On e drive home, Lizbeth recited lines om an Emily Dickinson poem—Oh Life, begun in fluent Blood and nsummated dull!"

"Jesus," Mitchell said, dry-mouthed, ivering. "That's it, isn't it?"

Now, ten months later there was tto on the phone speaking matter-f-factly, as you'd discuss selling some roperty, of a "certain decision" he nd Teresa had come to. Teresa's white-cell blood count," his own hitty news"—which he wasn't go-g to discuss. The books were closed ermanently on that subject, he said. Mitchell, trying to make sense of is, leaned against a wall, suddenly eak. *This is happening too fast. What e hell is this?* Otto was saying, in a owered voice, "We decided not to ll you and Lizbeth, her mother was ack in Mt. Sinai in July. They sent er home. We've made our decision. his isn't to discuss, Mitch, y'under-and? It's to inform. And to ask you honor our wishes."

"Wishes—?"

"We've been looking through al-ums, old photos and things, and aving a ball of a time. Things I aven't seen in forty years. Teresa eeps saying, 'Wow! *We* did all this? *We* lived all that?' It's a weird, hum-bling thing, sort of, to realize we'd been goddamned happy, even when we didn't know it. *I* didn't have a clue, I've got to confess. So many years, looking back, sixty-two years Teresa and I've been together, you'd think it would be depressing as hell but actually, in the right mood, it isn't. Teresa says, 'We've already had about three lives, haven't we?'"

"Excuse me," Mitchell said, through a roaring of blood in his ears, "—what is this 'decision' you've made?"

Otto said, "Right. I'm asking you to honor our wishes in this respect, Mitch. I think you understand."

"I—what?"

"I wasn't sure whether I should speak with Lizbeth. How she'd react. You know, when your kids first left home for college." Otto paused. Tactful. Ever the gentleman. Never would he speak critically about Lizbeth to Mitchell, though with Lizbeth he could be blunt and wounding, or had been in the past. He said now, hesitantly, "She can be, well—emotional."

On a hunch Mitchell asked where Otto was.

"Where?"

"Are you in Forest Hills?"

Otto paused. "No, we're not."

"Where are you, then?"

Otto said, an edge of defiance in his voice, "At the cabin."

"The cabin? Au Sable?"

"Right. Au Sable."

Otto let that point sink in.

They pronounced the name differently: Mitchell, *O Sable*, three syllables; Otto, *Oz'ble*, one elided syllable, as locals pronounced it.

Au Sable meant the Behns' property in the Adirondacks, hundreds of miles away. A seven-hour drive, and the final arduous hour along narrow, twisting, mostly unpaved mountain roads north of Au Sable Forks. So far as Mitchell knew, the Behns hadn't spent time there in years. If he'd given thought to it, and he had not, for subjects pertaining to Lizbeth's parents were left to Lizbeth to ponder, Mitchell would have advised the Behns to sell the property, hardly a cabin but a six-bedroom lodge of hand-hewn logs, not winterized, on twelve acres of beautiful, desolate countryside south of Mt. Moriah. Mitchell would not have wished Lizbeth to inherit this property, for they wouldn't feel comfortable selling it, something that had meant so much at one time to Teresa and Otto; yet Au Sable was too remote for them, impractical. They were people who quickly became restless away from what they called civilization: pavement, newspapers, wine shops, decent tennis courts, friends, and at least the possibility of good restaurants. In Au Sable, you drove an hour to get to—what? Au Sable Forks. Years ago, of course, when the kids were young, they'd gone each summer to visit Lizbeth's parents, and, yes, it was a fact: the Adirondacks were beautiful, and waking early in the morning you saw Mt. Moriah startlingly close like a mammoth dream and the air achingly fresh and pure piercing your lungs and even the cries of birds sharper and more defined than you were accustomed to, and there was the conviction, unless it was the wish, that such physical revelations signaled a spiritual condition—but, still, Lizbeth and Mitchell were equally restless to leave, after a few days of this. They'd take to afternoon naps in their second-story, screened-in room surrounded by pines like a vessel afloat on a green-tinctured sea. Tender lovemaking and dreamy, drifting conversations of a kind they never had anywhere else. Still, after a few days they were restless to leave.

Mitchell swallowed hard. He wasn't used to questioning his father-in-law and felt like one of Otto Behn's high school students, intimidated by the man he admired. "Otto, wait—why are you and Teresa in Au Sable?"

Otto said carefully, "We are planning to remedy our situation. We have made our decision, and this is to—" Otto paused, tactfully. "This is to inform you."

Mitchell felt, for all that Otto was speaking so reasonably, as if the man had kicked him in the stomach. What was this? What was he hearing? *This call isn't for me. This is a mistake.* Otto was saying that they'd been planning this for three years, minimum. Since his own diagnosis. They'd been "stockpiling" what was required. Good, potent, reliable barbiturates. Nothing in haste, and

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nothing left to chance, and nothing to regret. "You know," Otto said expansively, "I'm a man who plans ahead."

This was true. You had to concede the point.

Mitchell wondered: how much had Otto accumulated? Investments in the 1980s, some rental properties on Long Island. Mitchell felt a sinking, sickening sensation. *They will leave most of it to us. Who else?* He could see Teresa smiling as she'd smiled planning her lavish Christmas dinners, monumental Thanksgivings, the presentation of gifts to grandchildren, gorgeously wrapped. Otto was saying, "You promise me, Mitchell. I need to trust you," and Mitchell said, "Look, Otto," stalling, dazed, "do we have your number there?" and Otto said, "Answer me, please," and Mitchell heard himself saying, not knowing what he was saying, "Of course you can trust me, Otto! But is your phone connected?" and Otto said, annoyed, "No. We've never needed a phone in the cabin," and Mitchell said, for this had been an old vexation between them, from years ago, "Certainly you need a phone in that cabin, that's exactly the place you do need a phone," and Otto muttered something not audible, the verbal equivalent of a shrug, and Mitchell thought, *He's calling from a pay phone in Au Sable Forks, he's about to hang up*. Quickly Mitchell said, "Hey, look: we'll drive up and see you two. Is Teresa—all right?" Otto said, reflexively, "Teresa's fine. She's good. And we don't want company." Then, "She's resting: she's out on the sleeping porch and she's all right. Au Sable was her idea, she always loved it." Mitchell said, groping, "But—you're so remote." Otto said, "That is the idea, Mitchell." *He's going to hang up. He can't hang up*. Mitchell was trying to stall, asking how long they'd been there, and Otto said, "Since Sunday. We took two days, we did fine. I can still drive." Otto laughed; it was his old anger stirring, his rage. A few years ago he'd nearly lost his driver's license, and somehow through a doctor-friend's intervention he'd managed to hang onto it, and that had not been a good thing, that could have been a fatal error, but you can't tell Otto Behn that, you can't tell an elderly man he will have to surrender his car, his freedom, you just can't. Mitchell was saying they'd drive up to visit, they'd leave at dawn next morning, and Otto was curt in rejecting the idea, saying, "We've made our decision, it's not to discuss. I'm glad I talked with you. I can see how this would be going with Lizbeth. You prepare her however you think's best okay?" and Mitchell said, "Okay, bu Otto, don't do anything"—he wa breathing fast, confused and not know ing what he said, in a sweat, a sensa tion like something cold and molten pouring over him—"too quickly. Wil you call back? Or leave a number? Liz beth will be home in half an hour, and Otto said, "Teresa feels she would rather write to Lizbeth, and you. That' her way. She doesn't like the phone anymore," and Mitchell said, "But a least talk to Lizbeth, Otto, I mean you can say anything, y'know, any sub ject," and Otto said, "I've asked you to honor our wishes, Mitchell. You gave your word," and Mitchell thought, *did? When? What word did I give? Wha is this?* Otto was saying, "We left every thing in order, at the house. On m desk. Will, insurance policies, invest ment files, bankbooks, keys. Teres had to nag me to update our wills. Bu I did, and I'm damned glad. Until you make out a final will, you just aren' facing facts. You're in a dream world After eighty, you *are* in a dream world and you have to take control of the way the dream's going." Mitchell wa listening, but he'd missed the beat. Hi thoughts crowded and flashed in hi head like playing cards wildly dealt "Otto, right! Yes—but maybe w should talk more about this? You ca offer valuable advice! Why don't yo wait a while and—we'll drive up t see you, we'll leave at dawn tomo row, or actually we could leav tonight—" and Otto interrupted, you' have said rudely if you didn't know the man, "Hey, good night! This cal is costing me a fortune. You kids, *w love you*." Otto hung up the phone.

When Lizbeth came home ther was a wrong, slightly jarring note Mitchell on the back terrace, in th dusk; alone, just sitting there, with

Continued on page 7

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STORY

Continued from page 74

glass of something. "Honey? What's wrong?"

"Just waiting for you."

Never did Mitchell sit like this, wait like this, always his mind was engaged, this was something wrong, but Lizbeth came to him and kissed his cheek, lightly. A smell of wine. Heated skin, damp hair. What you'd call a clammy sweat. His T-shirt soaked through. Teasing, Lizbeth said, indicating the glass in Mitchell's hand, "You've started without me. Isn't this early?" Strange, too, that Mitchell would have opened this particular bottle of wine: a gift from friends, in fact it might have been from Lizbeth's parents, years ago, when Mitchell had been more serious about wine and hadn't had to cut back on his drinking. Lizbeth asked, hesitantly, "Any calls?"

"No."

"Nothing?"

"Not a thing."

Mitchell felt Lizbeth's relief, knowing how she anticipated calls from Forest Hills. Though of course her dad wouldn't usually call until 11:00 P.M., when the rates went down.

Mitchell said, "It's been quiet all day, in fact. Everyone seems to be away except us."

Their split-level stucco-and-glass house, which Mitchell had designed, was surrounded by leafy birch trees, evergreens, and oaks. It was a created and not a discovered house; they'd shaped it to their will. They'd lived here for twenty-seven years. In the course of their long marriage, Mitchell had once or twice been unfaithful to Lizbeth, and Lizbeth may have been unfaithful to him, in her intense emotions if not sexually, but time had passed, and time continued to pass, like random items in a drawer their days, weeks, months, and years casually tumbled together in the entrancement of adult life; and this was a peaceful confusion, like a succession of vivid and startling dreams that, after you've awakened, you will be unable to recall except as emotions. The dreams were good, but it's good to be awake.

Lizbeth sat on the white wrought-iron bench beside Mitchell. They'd had this heavy thing, now weather-worn and chipped after its most recent repainting, forever. "Everyone is away, I think. It's like Au Sable here."

"Au Sable?" Mitchell looked at her, quickly.

"You know. Mom's and Dad's old place."

"Do they still own it?"

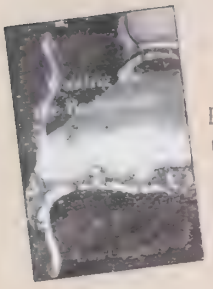
"I guess so. I don't know." Lizbeth laughed and leaned against him. "I'd be fearful of asking."

She took Mitchell's glass from his fingers and sipped from it. "Alone here. Us alone. I'll drink to that." To Mitchell's surprise, she kissed him on the lips. The first she'd kissed him, like that, girlish and bold, full on the lips, in a long time. ■

February Index Sources

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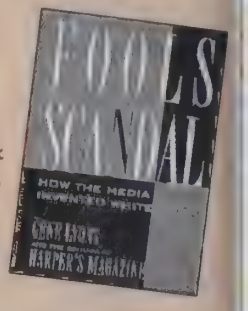


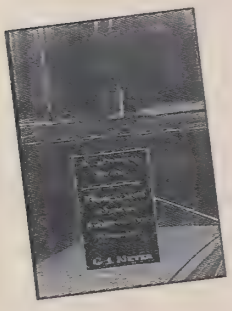
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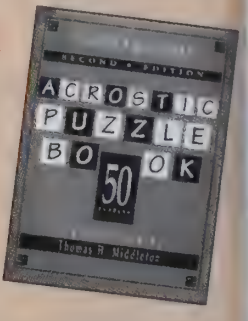


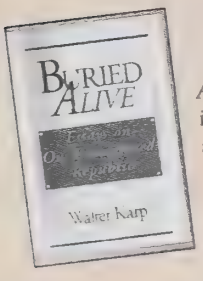
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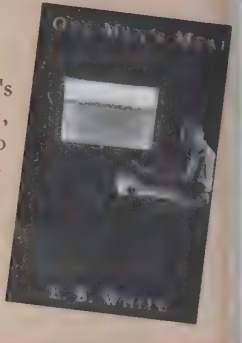


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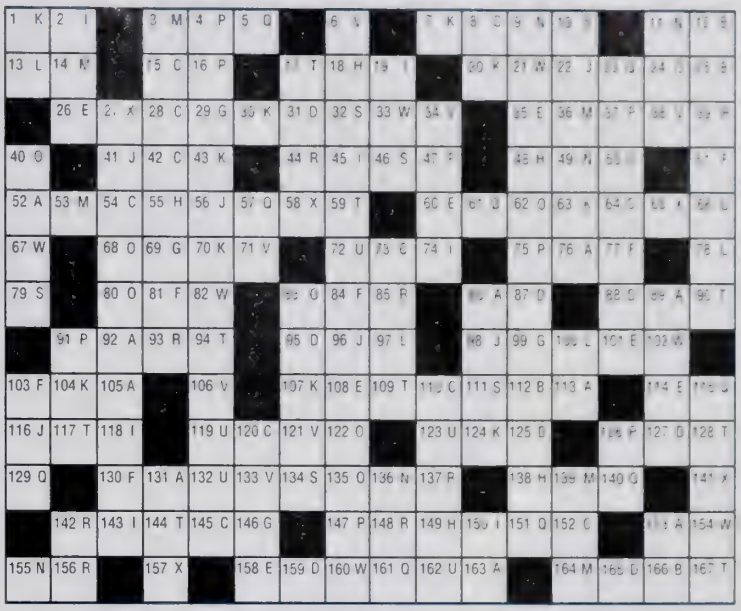
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DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 193

By Thomas H. Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: the first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken. The letter in the upper right-hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 69.



CLUES WORDS

A. Surly, unpleasant (hyph.) 52 76 89 113 86 153 131 / 163 92 105

B. "Who is worse —— than the shoemaker's wife?" (Heywood, ("Proverbs, 11") 25 12 112 166

C. 1925 Sinclair Lewis work 42 152 145 73 28 64 110 15 / 54 120

D. It became a serpent that "swallowed up" other miraculous serpents (2 wds.; Exodus 8:12) 165 95 61 127 87 125 159 88 / 31

E. Made birdlike sounds 114 35 101 108 158 26 60

F. Islamic salutation meaning "peace" 130 103 77 84 81 51

G. Maritime hail 29 99 69 146

H. Spume 138 55 149 48 18

I. "Thursday come, and —— is gone" (2 wds; Herbert, "Jacula Prudentum, no. 49") 2 118 143 74 45 19 150

J. Type of harem guard 56 116 96 22 98 41

K. Eng. novelist (1689–1761, "Pamela," or "Virtue Rewarded" 7 1 107 20 124 30 43 63 / 70 104

L. 1871 Verdi opera 100 78 97 13

M. Most depressed 164 139 3 36 53 14

N. Reluctant, unwilling 136 9 155 11 49

O. N.Y.C. area once noted for cheap hotels, bars, and bums (2 wds.) 122 80 62 135 8 83 24 68 / 40

P. Type of guy employed to keep things in shape 147 75 47 91 37 126 4 16

Q. Strong coffee 129 57 161 140 151 23 5 115

R. Doc, medic 93 39 142 44 148 156 137 85

S. "Hope . . . as darker grows the night, —— brighter ray" (2 wds.; Goldsmith, "The Captivity") 46 10 32 79 111 134

T. Standard of measurement or judgment 167 144 128 90 59 17 109 117 / 94

U. "Each wish of my heart would —— itself verdantly" (Moore, "Believe Me, If All Those Endearing Young Charms") 162 66 119 123 132 72 50

V. Rigid, uncompromising 121 38 106 71 6 84 133

W. Selfish type of motorist (2 wds.) 102 [illegible] 33 82 154 21 67

X. Seaport, SW Lebanon [illegible] 157 65 27 141

Heart Transplants

By Richard E. Maltby, Jr.



Each Across answer, before being entered, must either: donate its exact heart (one or more letters) to become the heart of another Across answer, or receive the heart of another Across answer, or both. The resulting new words are the "lights" (words to be entered in the diagram). I.e., if the clue answer were RESTED, it might send the ST to another Across word (entering REED); it might receive PEC from another word (entering RESPECTED), or it might send the ESTE and receive an O (entering ROD). One "heart" (a single letter) will be left over, and is to be entered in the bottom-most square. Naturally, word lengths for Across answers are omitted.

Down answers are to be entered normally.

Clue answers include two foreign words and four proper names. Across "lights" (diagram entries) include foreign words at 10A and 33A, one archaism at 29A, and one proper name at 25A. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 69.

ACROSS

1. Reading from right to left is inevitable; in turn . . .
5. . . . reading left to right is nonsense
8. Tapioca pudding gets little credit as a binder—it condenses
9. Cheer about sanitarium leader breaking out
10. Latin known for being a bit of a wheel, bit of a louse, a cipher
11. Two basketball teams in contention
13. Talk about bowler, perhaps
17. Notes sent off pursuant to this, being cut short!
19. Some Nicaraguans, in a manner of speaking? Just the opposite! They are always the opposite!
20. It helps to make dad mittens to own
22. Tears for art equipment that's defaced?
24. He runs around during preliminaries!
25. Yes, I am one with you
28. Egg on face of Bill is mostly Republican
29. Where there are yards put together, reportedly
30. Three Stooges namesakes, some funny
31. Shooting down British fliers caught in scam
33. Grand Am's fitted for little old ladies
35. Neighbor has one on the other hand
36. Poet provides heart
37. *(See instructions.)*

DOWN

1. Non-Christian acts to elevate women's magazine during a hiatus (8)
2. Story set in electronic type (almost) (4)
3. Firm membership in NY State or otherwise (9)
4. Incomplete appearance by head of England? (3)
5. Found trampled (3, 4)
6. Warm spots in lives—let's say that comes up first (9)
7. More than one swell of great prominence is nuts, Ma, nuts (8)
9. Queen invested in Pomeranian (4)
10. Caesar's cohort leaves to be processed (4)
12. Don't care for the infirm after one is taken in (4)
14. Unusually terse and direct (5)
15. *King Rat*'s being reissued (4)
16. Jerk's outpouring is also damnably particular (4)
18. Arm-twisting to get crack (3)
21. What develops in the spring? (4)
23. Participant in a hanging, spared the end, turns up in time (4)
24. Islam's undiplomatic posts (5)
26. Cast, Ray bounds off, stars in *The Flag of Kansas* (5)
27. Famous Greek aborts after miscarriage (6)
32. Rod gets touch-up (3)
34. Porter for one having cabbage (4)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Heart Transplants," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by February 8. Solutions and the correct solution opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the April issue. Winners of the December puzzle, "44 Across," are Ward H. Pharsheim, Trenton, New Jersey; Lenore Fleischer, Hadassah's [illegible] and Robert M. Hora, Dorchester, Massachusetts.

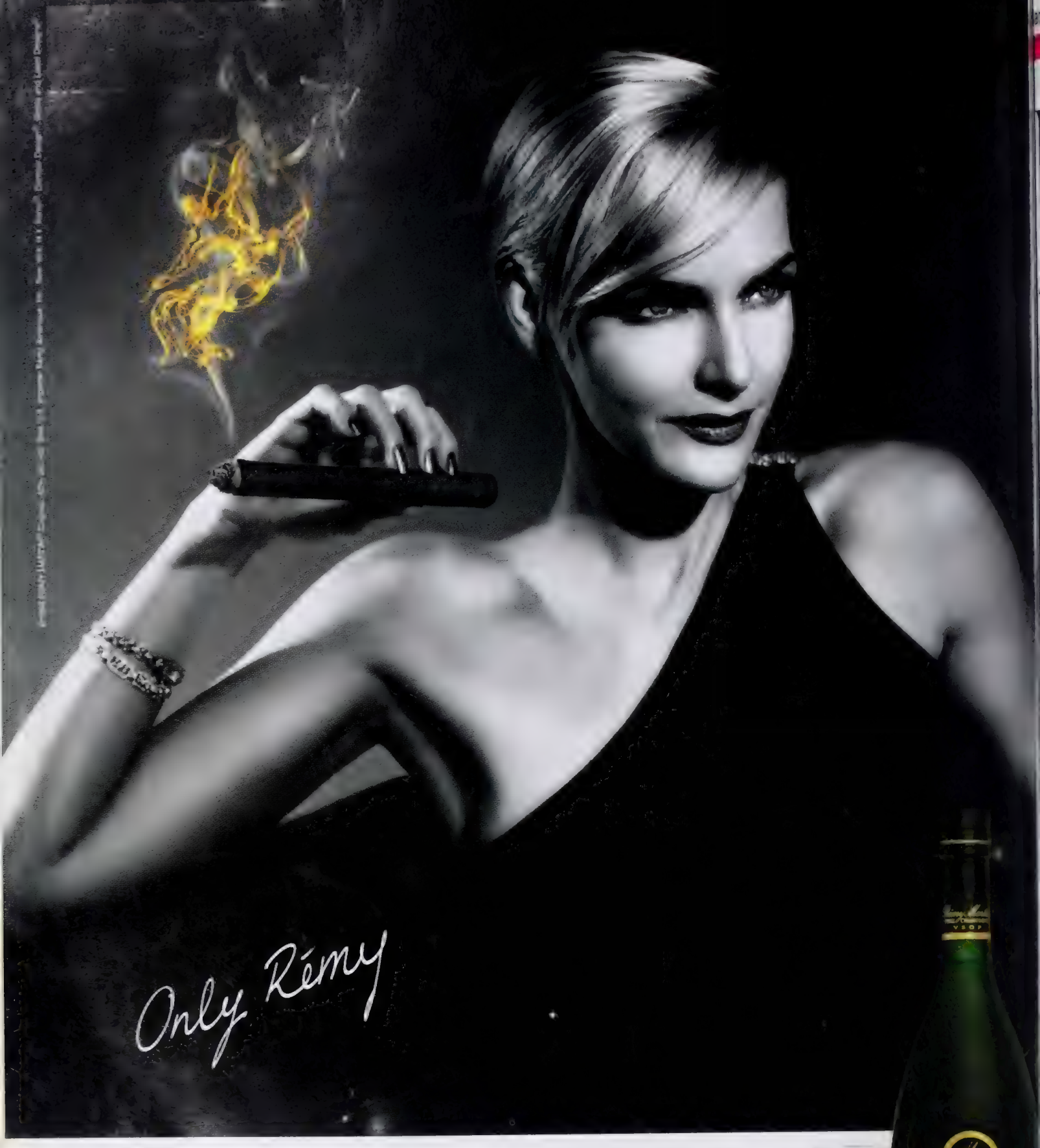
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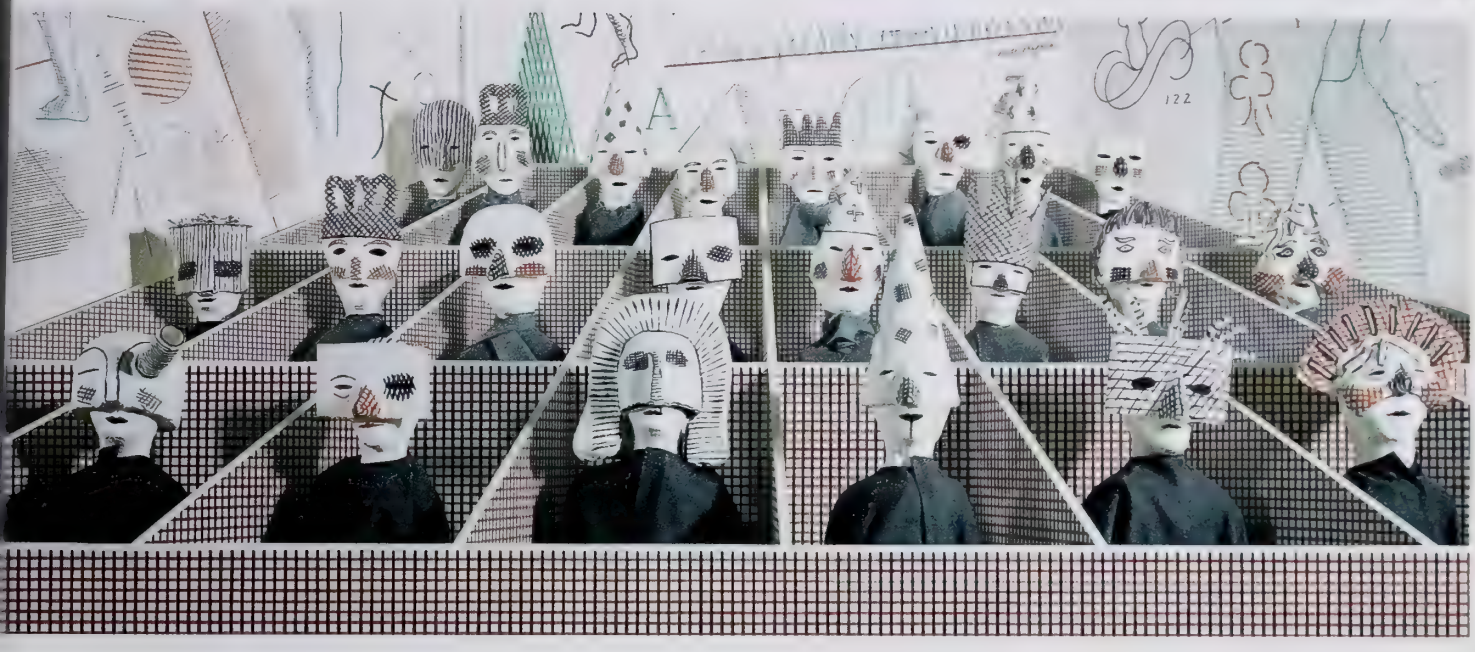
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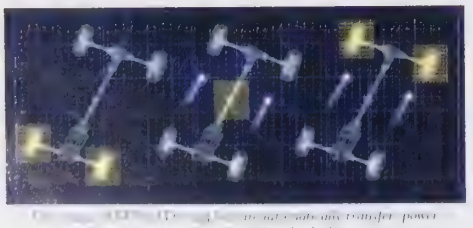
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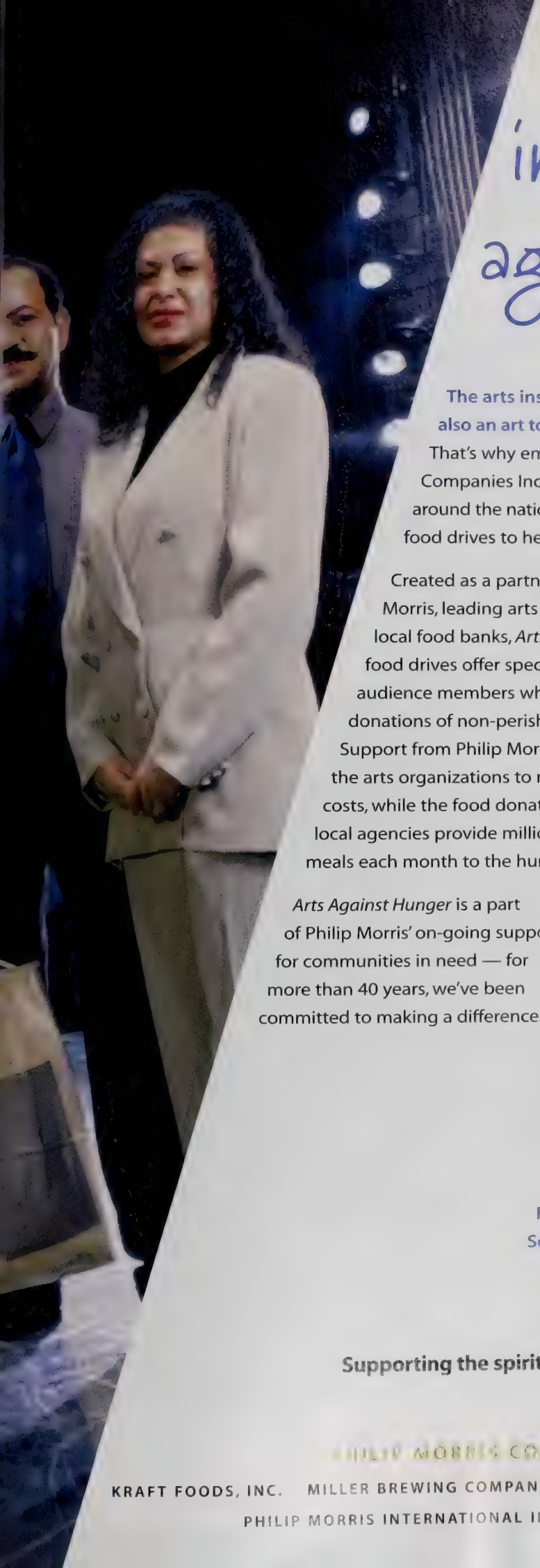
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LETTERS

The Literature of Hackademia

Nicholas Delbanco may believe that "the academy, of late, has served as patron for the writer much the way the court or wealthy individual did before" ["Scribble, Scribble, Scribble," January], but as a former professor of English, I know that this frequent observation does not bear scrutiny. Patrons of the arts support the artist as artist. Universities pay salaries to employees who perform a service—teaching.

The university is becoming the graveyard of American prose and poetry precisely because the practitioners of literary arts who live there are not required to have an intense personal stake in their literary work. A lot of attention is paid to Art, but the writing professor's bread is buttered at the seminar table, and when you own an artist's belly, his mind will soon follow.

For writers in the academy, literature is something they produce when they can; it is not how they *sustain* themselves. If their extracurricular work is pretty good, it's good enough, and if it's better than most, with more literary quarterlies publishing more pages than any one person could possibly read, it will find its way into print. That's not the same as grabbing the lapels of an audience, but teaching six or nine hours pe[r] week for eight months a year sure beats the pursuit of an uncertai[n] livelihood while striving for high art.

Besides, the rewards for writin[g] much exceed the rewards of writin[g] well. A lengthy résumé of published albeit rarely read, work will go far to[ward] garnering the perquisites of life in cap and gown—tenure, residence in a lovely college town, an unend[ing] stream of admiring youth, grant and awards juried by colleagues wh[o] in alternate years themselves becom[e] grant recipients, conference gigs nea[r] Italian lakes or in Celtic castles. An[d] if the paying customers get an adde[d] fillip and a sense of belonging be[-] cause at the evening cocktail part[y] the Great Writers exchange knowin[g] chuckles at the plight of literature i[n] the hands of philistines, so much th[e] better; in-crowds require persecutio[n] for their sense of identity.

To answer Delbanco's question "Will a first-rate teacher produce a first-rate student?" Yes, every time. Unfortunately, first-rate students ar[e] dirt common; genuine originality is a much rarer commodity.

Perry Glasser
Haverhill, Mass.

Harper's Magazine welcomes reader response. Please address all mailed correspondence to Letters Editor, or e-mail us at letters@harpers.org. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Volume precludes individual acknowledgment.

Fools and Their Money

Ted C. Fishman's essay "Up in Smoke" [December 1998] was a brilliant first step in exploring the many ways Wall Street manages to separate us from our money and the in[-] adequate punishment that attend

h actions. What Fishman does
explore is the ethically corrosive
out of such fraud.
The compromise of values in the fi-
nce industry is reflected in the cul-
e at large. When President Clin-
t's defenders suggest that some lies
okay, they only echo what Wall
eet's regulators have said for years:
t some theft is okay. The practice
certain Wall Street firms of settling
ıd cases without admitting wrong-
ng validates the prevailing wisdom,
ıich can be summed up with the
ɔtto: "It's just a bit gray but okay."
The result? The children of Wall
eet bankers are being taught that
ɔney and power can overcome
ongdoing, and we all are being
ught to distinguish hundreds of
ades of gray.

ichael Lissack
litor, *Emergence: A Journal of*
ɔmplexity Issues in Organizations
d Management
ɔston

As an attorney who has represent-
l some of the firms mentioned in Ted Fishman's fine essay, I was surprised to see that he emphasizes a few of the more recent calamities that have beset Wall Street without noting, with equal verve, the thousands of public companies, brokerage firms, and mutual funds that try to do the right thing.

There are well over 500,000 brokers in the United States, some 60,000 branch offices of brokerage firms, nearly 10,000 registered brokerage firms, and 3,000 to 4,000 mutual funds managing trillions of dollars. The vast majority of these individuals and institutions is supervised by in-house compliance and legal staffs, which do their best to protect the investing public.

The securities and commodities industries are probably the most regulated industries in the United States. They are watched over by the Department of Justice, the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Commodities Futures Trading Commission, state attorneys general, local and county prosecutors, self-regulatory organizations such as the New York Stock Exchange, the National Association of Securities Dealers, and the National Futures Association, and last but surely not least, the legal community, which has a propensity to sue the moment a stock drops in price.

To be sure, Wall Street has had its problems, but the United States capital markets are the envy of every country in the world, and, not so coincidentally, are burdened with the greatest number of statutes, rules, and regulations.

"Rogue brokers" thrive on a basic human frailty—greed. Nevertheless, the hope is that a better-educated public, protected by safeguards in the marketplace, will not suffer the consequences of this failing.

Ira Lee Sorkin
New York City

If, as Ted Fishman points out, Americans lose $1 million an hour to securities fraud, it is due to their own avarice and their belief in the promise of an insider's advantage. To lift ourselves from this morass, shareholders must view stocks not as race-

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[illegible] betting slips but as evidence of corporate citizenry. Unfortunately, the responsibility of shareholders to vote in corporate elections is obscured by our complacency with an undemocratic process that offers no alternative to voting for or against the board's handpicked cronies. As Fishman implies, even our own crooks can't be trusted. But perhaps it's time we took a governing approach to our investments instead of a gambling approach.

James McRitchie
Editor, *Corporate Governance*
Sacramento, Calif.

Although Social Security is not the subject of Ted Fishman's essay, his description of the brutal chicanery of America's capital markets makes clear the folly of putting even a single strand of our social safety net into Wall Street's kleptocratic hands. Should Congress "save Social Security" by moving some of those funds into the equity markets (instead of simply raising FICA withholding, the suggestion advanced by former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich) and the Lords of Finance guess wrong, the hapless victims won't be only "the ignorant, the trusting, and the easily tempted." All, save the ruling class, will feel the knife.

Bryn Barnard
Friday Harbor, Wash.

Deconstructive Criticism

Congratulations to Michael Chabon ["Son of the Wolfman," December 1998] and to *Harper's Magazine* for publishing a story, a real story, with a beginning, a middle, and an end—a story whole with message, conflict, challenge, suspense, climax, victory, and inspiration!

Lucille L. Larson
Franklin, Wis.

"Son of the Wolfman" is too clinically depicted to be considered literature. At times I felt more as though I were reading an overly detailed and convoluted [illegible] from a newspaper's Sunday [illegible] than a work of fiction. The [illegible] and infertility are merely vehicles for Chabon's happy and hollow ending, which might be better suited for Hollywood schlock.

B. P. Fitzsimmons
Darien, Conn.

Muddy Waters

"We might well ask how much longer the republic can stand with a worm such as this slithering through its heart." So ends Ben Metcalf's attack on the Mississippi River and its deleterious effect on the fortunes of his family ["American Heartworm," Readings, December 1998]. I do not question his various complaints about the physical and geographical failings of the river nor do I take issue with his dislike for the river-centric mythology flourishing, but his final statement represents a flaw in an otherwise exemplary expression of rage.

If Metcalf must cling to the notion that the Mississippi is a sinister, sluggish body of brackish water, a curse on this country, he might consider that it is more apt to avow that our national imagination runs through the river than that the river runs through our nation. Our country's self-image is the source of the various delusions, damaging or not, about the Mississippi, not the river itself or its mistakenly perceived ability to affect the behavior of those who live near it (behavior that is probably not so unlike the behavior of those who live along the Hudson or the Nile, since rivers always attract people, and people are always trouble).

Simply put, every republic gets the metaphorical river it deserves.

Brendan Costello Jr.
New York City

Take heart, Ben Metcalf. If the geologists are to be believed, the "big one" is more likely to occur in the Midwest than on the left coast. Instead of the Isle of California or Las Vegas Bay, we may be able to look forward to the Canyons of Mississippi.

John Williams
[illegible]ner Lake, Oreg.

Political Capital

Regarding "Let Us Now Praise Infamous Men" [Readings, January] How easy it is to ridicule former mayor Marion Barry Jr. and how difficult it is to appreciate the tragic history of Washington, D.C. It never fails to amaze me how even the progressive media have embraced the caricature of Barry-as-crackhead and ignored the deplorable techniques used by political foes to entrap him, techniques that make Kenneth Starr look positively gentle by comparison.

While Marion Barry was far from a model mayor, neither did he wear the crown for urban mismanagement. Following his popularity as a civil-rights hero and school-board administrator, he was elected four times over the course of twenty years by a grateful citizenry—more than two-thirds African American, overwhelmingly Democratic—who have been traditionally underrepresented in the political arena.

Continuing to reduce Barry's nearly two decades in office to a joke does a disservice to the weary residents of Washington. If we can look at the President's current 65 percent approval rating as a triumph of public opinion over false Puritanism, perhaps we can evaluate Mayor Barry's local popularity within its rightful context, in the myriad of political forces that have served to disgrace one of D.C.'s few hometown heroes.

Johnny Temple
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Dying Arts

Like many great works, Mary Gordon's reflection on the place where her relationship with her ailing mother meets her relationship with the works of Pierre Bonnard ["Still Life," December 1998] succeeds on more than one level, and both its individual achievements and its weave deserve praise.

Anyone who has cared for an aging parent or visited a nursing home can find a resonant chord in Gordon's descriptions of her mother. No amount of enlightened rationalization can eliminate the pain of reject



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tion when someone central in your own life, the bulwark of your infancy, fails to recognize you. It is the dramatic realization of our worst childhood fear, that of abandonment.

What Gordon gives us is a compelling demonstration of how art can guide us through a process that can never be wholly understood in the realm of the social sciences alone.

Cortland Kirkeby
Bellevue, Nebr.

Mary Gordon's moribund memoir portrays her mother and the other "wilting" and "decomposing" nursing-home residents as sufferers of "a slow disaster." What, I want to ask, is the alternative? Which is preferable, death at sixty-two of heart failure or at sixty-six in an auto accident or at seventy-five of breast cancer?

Nursing homes are filled with people who didn't die before their time, Mary Gordon's mother and my mother included. Like Gordon, I visit my mother knowing that two minutes after I leave she may forget that I've been there. We hug—that is, I hug her and instruct her on how to return my hug. When she lets go she talks about how handsome my father is. (He died nine years ago.) Watching our mothers deteriorate into generic old women is painful, for when we watch our mothers, we watch our future selves necrotizing into anonymity.

By the time Gordon and I reach old age, the popularity of assisted suicide will likely have increased to the point of institutional acceptance and perhaps social expectation. Those of us who have watched our parents' slow demise may be the first in line to sign up for this early-out therapy. But the trick will be to dodge the duty to die, to demand the opportunity to go slowly.

Priscilla Hodgkins
Bennington, Vt.

Despite the recital of her weekly good-daughter visits and her loving selection of snapdragons and brightly colored paper plates and plastic forks for her mother's ninetieth birthday, Mary Gordon seems to be denying her secret wish that her mother not wake up one morning. It's one thing to discuss her repugnance for her mother's messiness and incontinence with close friends and family, but it's quite another to write about them for a national magazine. If Gordon's mother had any of her faculties left, she would be as saddened and outraged as I was by her daughter's smugness.

Ann Colbert
Jackson, N.J.

The Agony and the Empathy

I couldn't agree more with Dr. Joshua Steinberg [Letters, January], who found himself dismayed by the tenor of the response to Vince Passaro's essay ["Who'll Stop the Drain?" August 1998; Letters, November 1998]. I, too, am taken aback by the mean-spiritedness and self-righteousness of some of those who pen letters in response to personal essays. I can't imagine the reason for this absence of pathos for the suffering or shortcomings of others, though I guess it reflects a denial by the letter writers that they are vulnerable, susceptible to hardship and subject to frailty of character.

Why the howl, for instance, because Vince Passaro is going into debt to pay for private school, music lessons, and sports activities for his three children? Is he a child abuser? Hardly. And why the vicious letters that followed Bob Shacochis's achingly poignant account of the infertility he and his wife face? The reaction to both these essays is quite striking in a country that professes to love children.

Someday (when they seek the kindness of others) these poison-pen writers will discover just how badly they've wronged their fellow travelers by withholding their sympathy.

Mary Cook
Yuba City, Calif.

As one of the critical respondents to Vince Passaro's story of personal debt, I find the reaction of Dr. Steinberg to our letters interesting. Consider that a colleague, a surgeon, must sometimes make an aggressive cut and cause pain in order to aid healing. He may even judge that it's im

portant to convey to the patient the necessity of making certain lifestyle changes. When it comes to societal illnesses, too, I would rather take action than simply view the problem, passively, under a microscope.

Lynn Gustafson
Rockville, Md.

Joshua Steinberg avers that he is "disappointed and fed up with the *Harper's* Letters section" for airing criticisms of articles published in the magazine. He seems to believe it unseemly for others to take writers to task merely because they told their own stories.

I'd be fed up and disappointed if those writers were *not* taken to task. What's the point of having a forum for the discussion of controversial ideas if no comments are ever offered about those ideas? I could understand Dr. Steinberg's point if *Harper's* published recipes or computer advice. But if it is going to put forth fresh viewpoints about such behaviors as the pursuit of maternity or economic recklessness, then its worth is dependent on the degree to which it can provoke reaction.

In comparing troubled writers with his troubled patients, Dr. Steinberg ignores one important point: his patients suffer in relative obscurity and are not attempting to bring a larger audience around to their points of view. Anyone who lays out his take on morality in a widely read magazine is de facto extending an invitation to be scrutinized.

Moreover, in taking the letter writers to task for suggesting that they are "morally and intellectually superior" to those who write articles, doesn't Dr. Steinberg hoist himself by his own petard by doing precisely the same to those who write letters?

Lee Gruenfeld
Blue Jay, Calif.

Correction: The introduction to "Managed Despair" [Readings, January] misidentified the producer of *The Infinite Mind*, the program on which Dr. Timothy Hogan's suicide note was read. The radio program is produced by Lichtenstein Creative Media.



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NOTEBOOK

Exorcism

By Lewis H. Lapham

Take but degree away, untune that string,
And, hark, what discord follows! Each thing meets
In mere oppugnancy. The bounded waters
Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores
And make a sop of all this solid globe.
—William Shakespeare,
Troilus and Cressida

Early in the afternoon of January 7 the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court converted the members of the Senate into a jury fit to pass judgment on the President of the United States, and during the half hour required to perform the ceremony it was possible to believe, even from the skeptical height of the periodical press gallery, that nothing important to the country's political history and character had been irretrievably lost. The nineteenth-century furnishings of the Senate chamber—the oval ceiling, the antique desks, the mahogany paneling on the doors—evoked the memory of the successful American past, and the ritual dignity of the proceeding invested the actors in it with the solemnity of figures moving in a world out of time.

Each senator in turn rose to swear, "so help me God," that he or she would "do impartial justice" with respect to the Articles of Impeachment placed before them by the House of Representatives, and then, again in turn, they stepped forward to inscribe their names on the clerk's register, testifying with their signatures to the sacred honor of their spoken word. Mindful of the stateliness of the occasion, the senators walked the short distance from their desks in nearly perfect silence, glancing neither right nor left, omitting the customary exclamations of fully pleased antry and reassuring gesture. For a full thirty minutes they sustained the illusion of *gravitas* once prized by Cicero and Cato the Elder—the United States Senate alone with its conscience, gathered by constitutional directive under the marble busts of Aaron Burr and Andrew Johnson, making good on Dan Rather's promise of an historic moment.

Not, however, a moment made for television. The ceremony took too much time, and although the mood and feeling evident in the chamber possibly could be expressed in words, the sense of it didn't segue into a quick series of lively camera shots. Cut the scene into videotape, and on the screen it comes up dull and slow—a dreary crowd of middle-aged lawyers with bad haircuts and missing teeth, wandering aimlessly around a static set without a script, and no music on the soundtrack.

The lack of charismatics in the scene also could be inferred from the absence of broadcast people in the press galleries. For three weeks the network talking heads had been awarding their gaudiest hyperbole ("amazing," "heady drama," "astounding," "beyond fiction") to a trial billed as the equal to O. J. Simpson's, but the day was given over to parliamentary formalities—Representative Henry Hyde of Illinois, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, shuffling into the well of the Senate with his twelve fellow prosecutors and their two indictments; Chief Justice William Rehnquist, resplendent in a black robe tricked up with gold stripes on the sleeves, administering the oath of impartiality; various prominent senators making various misleading statements of procedural intent—and why would anybody squander footage on a history lesson

Because the calendar was long on ceremony and short on news, I had time to pursue the thought about the differences between the modus operandi of the print and electronic media. Remembering Marshall McLuhan's observation that the habits of mind derived from the latter deconstruct the texts of the civilization founded on the premises of the former, it occurred to me that maybe the argument at the root of the impeachment trial was epistemological, not moral. Content follows form, and new systems of communication give rise to new structures of feeling and thought. The linear order of the printed page aligns itself with perceptions of the world biased in favor of sequence, composition, narrative, hierarchy, classification, continuity, cause and effect; perceptions of the world associated with the electronic media tend toward discontinuity, improvisation, intuition, repetition, simultaneity, and incantation.

The disagreement between the two languages and the two ways of thinking offered at least the beginning of an answer to the question why the President was on trial for misrepresenting the character (and falsely reporting the actions) of his penis. Sympathetic to a pagan rather than a Christian appreciation of the world, the camera sees but doesn't think; it cares only for the sensation of the moment, for any tide of emotion strong enough to draw a paying crowd. A plane crash in the mountains of Peru commands the same slack-jawed respect as Mick Jagger in a divorce court, Monica Lewinsky eating Belgian chocolate, cruise missiles falling on Baghdad.

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Because the camera doesn't know how to make distinctions—between treason and fellatio, between the moral and the amoral, between an important senator and an important ape—its insouciance works against the operative principle of a democratic republic. Such a government requires of both its politicians and its citizens a high degree of literacy, also a sense of history, and, at least in the American context, an ethics derived from the syllabus of the Bible. None of those requirements carry any weight in the Kingdom of the Eternal Now governed by the rule of images. Bring narrative to Jay Leno, or hierarchy to Howard Stern, and you might as well be speaking Homeric Greek.

December's impeachment debate in the House of Representatives suggested some of the difficulties in translation. The Republican majority defended the realm of Christian print against the pagan worship of celebrity. Invoking the names of God and Alexander Hamilton (also Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Lincoln, and the truth), the captains of Henry Hyde's crusade cast themselves as rescuers of the nation's children and implacable upholders of "the rule of law." When briefly at a loss for another calumny to slop upon the head of President Clinton, they deplored "the politics of personal destruction."

What was remarkable about the Republican argument in the House was the utter lack of self-awareness on the part of the congressmen who dressed up their attempt at political assassination in the rhetoric of high-minded conscience. Themselves creatures of the electronic media, they behaved in the manner of the people whom they professed to despise. How else had they come to Washington if not by the "politics of personal destruction"? Who else had armed them with the weapon of impeachment if not the lawless special prosecutor, Kenneth Starr? Where else did they find the texts for their snow-white sermons if not in the men's room of a [illegible]

The [illegible] media is necessarily primitive, rendering argument [illegible] fable, and the [illegible] defenders of [illegible]

Roman eloquence ("the gentleman from Oklahoma is recognized for one minute") didn't permit the kind of oratory that opened the Oregon Trail or won the Civil War. Even when granted the privilege of three minutes, the members could muster little more than repetitions (incantatory and discontinuous) of ornamental cliché—"this is God's country, and I know He will bless America," "Catch the falling flag as we keep our appointment with history," etc. The Democrats could do no better than the Republicans. Several of them sought to characterize the impeachment of President Clinton as a right-wing "coup d'état," but within the parameters of the vicious sound bite and the twelve-second slander they couldn't give meaning to the plot.

On Thursday, January 14, the network cameras showed up in force. So did a large crowd of spectators waiting patiently in a cold rain behind the ropes on the west front of the Capitol. Here at last was the day on which the House prosecutors would make their opening arguments on behalf of the Magna Carta and against what several of them condemned as the "divine-right-of-kings theory of governance." Another historic moment, and for the first hour the anticipation in the press gallery compared favorably with the excitement of a train wreck or the glamour of the Academy Awards.

In a voice heavy with unctuous piety, Representative Hyde began by reminding the Senate of its grave duty and summoned the departed spirit of Sir Thomas More, lord chancellor of England during the reign of Henry VIII, who had chosen to die under the headsman's ax rather than swear an oath that he deemed heretical and false. Making the point about the sanctity of oaths—the one sworn by President Clinton to uphold the Constitution, the one sworn by each of the hundred senators to do impartial justice—Hyde quoted the line given to the blessed Sir Thomas in the film *A Man for All Seasons*: "When a man takes an oath, Meg, he's holding his own self in his hands like water, and if he opens his fingers, then he needn't hope to find himself again."

The twelve Apostles who followed Hyde to the rostrum over the next three days presented a set of variations on the theme of a man being as good as his word. Any man, but especially the President of the United States, the exemplar of the nation's honor, the living embodiment of the rule of law. All the speeches dwelled on the same precept—no man above the law, truth-telling the foundation stone of the American republic—and they all reviewed, and re-reviewed and then reviewed again, the familiar narrative of the President's dalliance with Monica Lewinsky. Yes, the circumstances were private and not public, and yes, what we've been talking about here in this august chamber is the President of the United States accepting the compliment of a blow job—eleven of them to be precise, together with some stuffed animals and a ceramic frog—but the man lied, lied to his wife, lied to his friends and cabinet ministers, lied to the American people. Perjury discolors and poisons the stream of justice, subverts and undermines the integrity of government. Fail to remove the President from the body politic (as one would remove a cancer or a festering sore) and you desecrate the American flag and everything for which it stands.

The managers told a more coherent story than the one told in the House, but the points had been made so often over the past year that after the first three hours several senators clearly were finding it hard to stay awake. In the corridors behind the press gallery the reporters were talking mostly about Michael Jordan, whose retirement from basketball had played as bigger news on the front page of that morning's *New York Times* than had the commencement of the President's impeachment trial. At least 500 correspondents had crowded into Chicago's United Center; not as many as 100 were seated in the Senate.

The deference to Jordan accurately reflected the society's order of value, which was why, as I understood after listening to the last of the speeches in the Senate early Saturday afternoon, the Republican managers had brought their Grand Remonstrance against the pagan, Clinton. They objected to the society's order of value and wished to overturn it. It was the

overnment, the majesty of the law, nd possibly the editors of *The Week- Standard* that deserved the nation's ffection and respect, not a sum of tings points or the roaring of the ob. Representative Charles Canady Florida cited the wisdom of Judge ouis Brandeis: "Our government is e potent, the omnipresent teacher. r good or ill, it teaches the whole eople by its example."

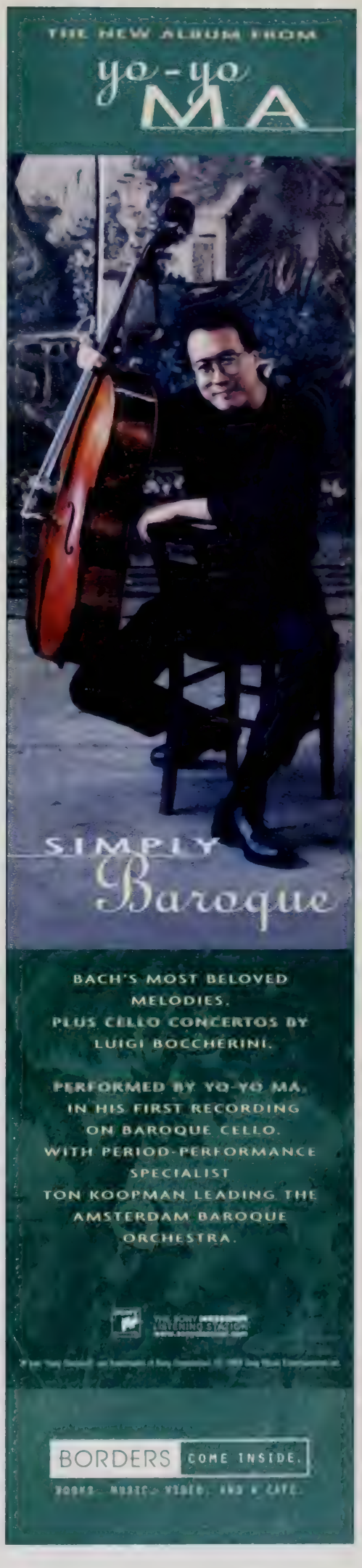
But what if it doesn't? Suppose the tizenry looks elsewhere for instruc- on. Not to Congress or the White ouse, not to the state capitol in Tal- hassee or to San Francisco's city hall, ut to Giants Stadium and *Entertain- ent Tonight*, to a brute wrestler elect- d governor of Minnesota or Hulk logan telling Jay Leno about his rthcoming presidential campaign, the pornographer Larry Flynt, who hased Representative Robert Liv- gston out of Washington (almost as on as he was elected speaker of the louse of Representatives), to Dick lorris, columnist and talk-show host, ansformed into a sage by virtue of is long and patient study of a prosti- ute's toes.

The electronic media believe, and elieve passionately, in "the divine- ght-of-kings theory of governance," lso in Dionysus and the great god an. They invest authority in persons, ot in institutions, and the identity of he state comes to be embodied in a mall repertory company of miracu- ous mandarins dressed up by publi- ists in the wardrobe of immortality. elebrities who can hold the interest f the camera receive the emblems of ivinity once assigned to Zeus and phrodite. It doesn't matter who they re (Monica Lewinsky, Michael Jor- an, Cindy Crawford, Saddam Hus- ein); what they say (about lipstick or ibet); how they acquired their fame in a baseball park or a brothel, by ealing the sick or murdering the oor); whether they favor the teach- gs of Zoroaster or L. Ron Hubbard. nce possessed of the sovereign pow- r to sponsor perfume or sell basketball noes, all the names are royal.

Not a pleasing prospect for the ad- irers of Alexander Hamilton or the iends of Henry Hyde. The accelerat- d technologies of electronic media pparently were carrying the country backward into the forests of pagan superstition, and somebody had to be called to account. Lacking the subpoena power to impeach the Internet or the Super Bowl, the Republican majority in the House directed its entire flow of fear and rage into the empty reservoir otherwise known as William Jefferson Clinton. Who better to bear the blame for everything else that has gone so badly wrong in the once happy land of Christian print? Both product and personification of the television screen, not a man for all seasons but a man for a thousand cable channels, polymorphous and perverse, the President's character lends itself to the project—a natural-born catch basin and as hollow as an abandoned mine, the apple of every salesman's eye, a free-range appetite happy to devour anything on offer (all the limelight, every loaf of scandal), the great American consumer who, if asked, probably could drink the Colorado River.

Saturday's speeches rose to the pitch of exorcism, Congressman Hyde delivering the final peroration in language as Victorian as the drapery on the Senate walls. The President, he said, had dishonored his noble office, broken his sacred covenant with the American people, impaired their freedoms, injured their history, debased their trust. Thus had his low crimes become high crimes, and the time had come for him to go. Go and take with him all the other evils of which he was both proof and symbol—not only his saxophone and his bandleader's smile, but also every homosexual bartender in Santa Monica, every new-made billionaire in New York.

Calling upon a long list of the country's most heroic victories (Bunker Hill, Lexington, Flanders fields, Normandy, Iwo Jima), the congressman offered his speech as a prayer for the safe return of an imaginary American past, and when he finished, the nearly perfect silence in the Senate chamber again brought to mind the ritual stillness of a world out of time. For a long moment none of the senators moved in their chairs, and in the periodical press gallery skepticism was temporarily in short supply. The evening-news broadcasts cut the scene to what seemed like a very long twenty seconds. ■




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HARPER'S INDEX

Percentage by which Iraq's oil sales last year fell short of the maximum allowed under U.N. sanctions : 22

Rank of the U.S. among countries that bought the most oil from Iraq last year : 1

Percentage change in Iraq's oil sales since 1997 : +45

Percentage change in total oil sales of other OPEC countries since then : –35

Ratio of the price of a gallon of crude oil to the wholesale price of a gallon of Evian water : 1:11

Percentage change in gasoline prices in Nigeria after government price caps were lifted last December : +127

Estimated percentage of Indonesian businesses that are in bankruptcy : 70

Number of ships ordered from Japan's four largest shipbuilders in 1998's last quarter : 0

Average hourly outflow from Brazil's currency reserves on January 13 and 14, after the *real* was devalued : $214,000,000

Size of the business loan given Amazon.com last April after 11 consecutive months without a profit : $275,000,000

Percentage change since 1996 in the value of initial public offerings of stock in Silicon Valley companies : –45

Chance that an IBM-compatible personal computer made since 1997 has Y2K flaws : 1 in 2

Keys required, along with the alt key, to type the euro symbol on new Windows-compatible keyboards sold in the U.S. : 0,1,2,8

Date and time of the annual pi celebration held at San Francisco's Exploratorium : 3/14, 1:59

Number of pies brought to last year's event : 15

Number of professional-style kitchens in the home Mike Tyson is attempting to sell : 7

Amount *Fortune* magazine estimates that Michael Jordan's NBA career has contributed to the U.S. economy : $10,000,000,000

Minimum amount John Gotti Jr. told a federal judge last fall that he required each month for private guards : $21,000

Severance pay received by Viacom CEO Frank Biondi after he was fired by the company in 1996 : $15,000,000

Severance pay Biondi received last year after he was fired by Universal Pictures : $30,000,000

Average amount each American living in poverty would receive if 1998's budget surplus were divided among them : $1,967

Ratio of federal emergency spending appropriated for 1999 to the average appropriation in the last five years : 5:2

Percentage of America's nuclear power plants that were found to have "serious security lapses" last year : 47

Number of people detained or evacuated from buildings in California last December due to anonymous anthrax threats : 3,000

Number of times one New Jersey high school was evacuated in the last school year due to bomb threats : 30

Number of American children crushed to death by television sets since 1990 : 28

Estimated chances that a U.S. child diagnosed with leukemia will be in remission five years later : 4 in 5

Estimated chance that an Iraqi child diagnosed with leukemia will live that long : 0

Ratio of Cuba's infant mortality rate to that of the U.S. : 1:1

Ratio of the number of doctors per capita in the U.S. to the number of doctors per capita in Cuba : 1:2

Number of virgins who have bought an insurance policy against immaculate conception next year : 10,113

Percentage of the 2,397 surveillance cameras monitoring public spaces in New York City that are privately owned : 89

Number by which emigrants from the U.S. to Ireland between 1995 and 1998 exceeded those from Ireland to the U.S. : 4,300

Copies of *Songs for the Open Road: Poems of Travel & Adventure* with which Volkswagen will equip its 1999 cars : 40,000

Estimated number of jokes donated to the Library of Congress last year by Bob Hope : 1,000,000

Number of times last fall that patrons unzipped the fly of the Bill Clinton wax figure at Madame Tussaud's in Sydney : 120

Rank of the U.S. among industrial democracies with the highest rate of sexual infidelity : 1

Number of consecutive years that Colorado state legislators have voted down a bill banning female genital mutilation : 3

Number of GOP House members who voted for 1996's Defense of Marriage Act who have since been exposed as adulterers : 4

Breasts from which Rep. Bob Barr licked whipped cream at a fundraiser in 1992, according to a Georgia newspaper : 2

Figures cited have been adjusted for inflation and are the latest available as of January 1999. Sources are listed on page 71.
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*The Citizens Index Fund (Investor Shares) received a five-star rating among 2,802 domestic equity funds for the three-year period ended 12/31/98. Morningstar proprietary ratings reflect historical risk-adjusted performance. The ratings are subject to change every month and are calculated from the Fund's three-year average annual return in excess of 90-day Treasury bill return with appropriate fee adjustments, placing 10% of funds in each category receive 5 stars.

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READINGS

[Essay]

RUSHDIE'S FALSE REPRIEVE

From "Salman Rushdie's Delusions, and Ours," by Daniel Pipes, in the December 1998 issue of Commentary. *Pipes is the editor of the* Middle East Quarterly *and the author of* The Rushdie Affair.

On September 24, 1998, a decade after the publication of *The Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie, the foreign minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran met with his British counterpart and declared that the Iranian government

> has no intention, nor is it going to take any action whatsoever, to threaten the life of the author of *The Satanic Verses* or anybody associated with his work, nor will it encourage or assist anybody to do so. Accordingly, the government dissociates itself from any reward that has been offered in this regard and does not support it.

Proclaiming this statement a momentous shift in Iranian policy, British foreign secretary Robin Cook responded: "These assurances should make possible a much more constructive relationship between the United Kingdom . . . [and] Iran, and the opening of a new chapter in our relations." He went on to announce the resumption of full diplomatic relations, which had been severed in 1989 after Ayatollah Khomeini's edict condemning to death "the author of the book entitled *The Satanic Verses* . . . and all those involved in its publication who were aware of its content."

But nothing in the statement by Iranian foreign minister Kamal Kharrazi suggested even the subtlest change in Iranian policy. For years, Teheran has been telling the United Kingdom and other European states that it has no intention of carrying out the sentence passed by Ayatollah Khomeini. In fact, just days after Khomeini died in June 1989, an unofficial Iranian spokesman in London announced that, while the death threat would not formally be withdrawn, Teheran was "prepared to let the matter drop." Several months later, Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati formalized this position when he suggested that West European governments "don't need to connect the question of Salman Rushdie to political relations between Iran and those countries."

Furthermore, the Iranian government has kept a conspicuous distance from the $2.5 million that the 15th Khordad Foundation offered for Rushdie's murder. In February 1997, when the Foundation announced that it would raise its prize by another $500,000, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani went out of his way to emphasize that "this foundation is a nongovernmental foundation and its decisions are not related to government policies." And as far as Kharrazi's pledge not to "encourage or assist" in Rushdie's murder, Iran's ambassador to Hungary stated in May 1997 that "Iranian

[Editorial]

RUSSIA'S NEW PUBLIC-HEALTH HAZARD

From an editorial in the November 25, 1998, edition of the Moscow Times, *an English-language daily. Earlier that month, the Russian Ministry of Health proposed regulations that would require newspapers, magazines, and books to obtain "hygienic certification" before they could be sold.*

Warning: the *Moscow Times* does not yet have a certificate of hygiene from the Health Ministry! This means that you, the reader, have no guarantee from the Russian government that the size of this typeface and width of these columns will not cause eye strain, nor do you have the Ministry's assurance that the ink on these pages will not rub off on your fingers.

To obtain the certificate of hygiene, the *Moscow Times* will have to pay a fee to the Ministry and provide "protocols for use." Although we have a few questions about this fee, we have already prepared our instructions: "This newspaper is meant to be read. Do not read it in the dark, as this is bad for your eyes. No other use of this newspaper is authorized by the government."

Once we have obtained our certificate, we will eagerly join the Ministry in a campaign to shut down noncompliant publications in the name of public safety. Exactly who was it that gave *Izvestia* the right to print as many copies of their possibly unhygienic newspaper as often as they please? For that matter, we have seen copies of the Russian Constitution that look quite dirty. They should all be gathered and burned to protect the public.

In short, no publication without the government's stamp of approval should be sold. This is exactly the sort of proactive leadership we have been hoping to see from Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov's cabinet. We welcome his government's reintroduction of sweeping state control of print media and hope similar hygiene standards will soon be set for television.

The cabinet might also consider regulating the content of articles, since they too can have adverse health effects (bad news can cause indigestion; exposés of corruption can cause anxiety). This threat to public health demands state intervention. The government must act now, before it's too late.

leaders have never said or suggested that someone should kill" Rushdie.

Kharrazi's own understanding of this matter does not differ in the least. He not only acknowledged on September 24 that his statement signaled no change in Iranian policy but made this point explicit a week later: "We did not adopt a new position with regard to the apostate Salman Rushdie, and our position remains the same as that which has been repeatedly stated by the Islamic Republic of Iran's officials." This statement was echoed by countless Iranian politicians, theologians, and news analysts. One newspaper editorialized that "the issue of Rushdie will end only with killing him and all the elements associated with the publishing of the book." A leading ayatollah declared that executing Rushdie remains a duty incumbent on all Muslims "until the day of resurrection." In parliament, 150 of the 270 members signed an open letter stressing the edict's utter irrevocability. The Association of Hezbollah University Students announced it would add a billion rials ($333,000) to the reward for Rushdie's assassin, theological students and clerics in the holy city of Qom pledged a month's salary as an additional bounty, and a small village in northern Iran sweetened the pot by offering his executioner ten carpets, 5,400 square yards of agricultural land, and a house with a garden.

Despite what the diplomats say, to the Iranian elite the edict against Rushdie is a permanent sentence, one that both constitutes government policy and at the same time is beyond the government to affect. The Islam practiced in Iran distinguishes between two types of religious pronouncements, the *fatwa* and the *hukm*. The former remains valid only during the lifetime of its issuer; the latter continues beyond his death. Although the edict against Rushdie is commonly referred to in the West as a *fatwa*, Ayatollah Abdallah Javadi-Amoli made the distinction clear in February 1997, when he said, "This is not a *fatwa* which died with the death of the religious leader who issued it.... It is a *hukm* which is permanent and it will stay in place until it is carried out."

There seems to be no dissent among Iranian political leaders that they are powerless to repeal this "unchangeable religious decree" (as the deputy chairman of the Iranian parliament's foreign-affairs committee put it). Only Khomeini could have taken such a step, and he specifically refused to do so, admonishing his successors before his death never to retreat from the *hukm*, no matter what the pressure. And for fundamentalist Muslims around the world who hold Khomeini in uniquely high re-

gard, the death sentence against Rushdie remains a shining legacy, far beyond the control of apparatchiks in Teheran.

The truth is that neither Foreign Minister Kharrazi nor, by extension, President Mohammed Khatami speaks with authority for the government of Iran. Time and again, it has become apparent that this president, however "moderate" his own views, is not the supreme power in Teheran. That belongs to the man who now fills Khomeini's position as Iran's spiritual leader—namely, Ali Hoseyni Khamene'i, a politician who has steadily supported the edict and whose hard-line followers retained decisive control of Iran's ultimate decision-making body in elections held last October.

Which only raises the question: Why did Kharrazi's statement have such an electrifying effect on Britain and other Western governments? The answer is that governments have the ability, when they wish, to turn non-news into news, and in this case, London clearly wanted to do just that. As the Associated Press correctly surmised, "Kharrazi and Cook sought to portray the move as something new and significant as a way to improve ties that have remained strained over the [Rushdie] issue."

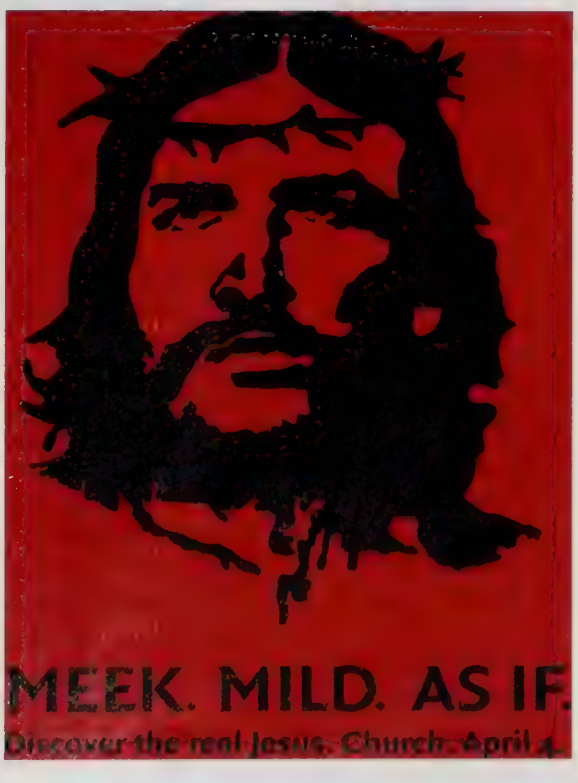
And why this push to improve ties? Here, one can hardly do better than to quote Salman Rushdie himself in 1997: "When it's Danish feta cheese or Irish halal beef against the European Convention on Human Rights, don't expect free expression to win." The lure of the Iranian market, however small, is a mighty one. Rushdie has been an impediment to European governments wishing to enter that market; now they have found a way to brush the issue aside.

The Europeans are not alone. Like their British counterparts, American policy-makers, too, have allowed their desire for oil contracts and pipelines to cloud the nasty reality, which is that repression, terrorism, and territorial aggressiveness continue to be hallmarks of the Iranian regime, augmented lately by the push to acquire weapons of mass destruction. In early 1998, the U.S. State Department's annual report on terrorism noted correctly that even under President Khatami, no change had occurred in Iran's pattern of violent conduct, and concluded that Iran remains the world's principal state sponsor of terrorism. Higher-ranking State Department officials would have none of this and simply ignored the report. Similarly, the fact that Iran's missile program has accelerated under Khatami has not affected the Clinton Administration's push for rapprochement with the Islamic Republic.

Delusions among American policy-makers place us, and the world, in greater danger. The sanctions on Iran have been our functional equivalent of bodyguards: passive, open-ended, inconvenient, even annoying, but, under the circumstances, better than nothing at all, and better than any alternative that is likely to be pursued. Just so, Iran's missiles and weapons of mass destruction are the functional equivalents of lurking assassins. Swooning over President Khatami's improved tone, or Foreign Minister Kharrazi's cautious equivocations, will protect us from those threats as much as Salman Rushdie would be protected by the giddy insistence that Ayatollah Khomeini's edict is no more.

[Poster]

THE REVOLUTION WILL BE EVANGELIZED



This poster was created for the Churches Advertising Network (CAN), a Christian volunteer organization based in England, to promote church attendance this Easter. According to Chas Bayfield, who worked on the campaign, the group decided to recast Jesus as the Latin American revolutionary Che Guevara in order to challenge the image of Jesus as a "guy in a white nightie with a halo."

[Interview]

HELLO, MY NAME IS ADOLF HITTLER

From an interview with a man named Adolf Hittler, in the August 24, 1998, issue of Focus, *a German newsweekly. Hittler, a retired tour-bus and taxi driver, lives in the Tyrol, Austria. The interview was conducted by Frank Gerbert. Translated from the German by Sarah C. Vos.*

FRANK GERBERT: You spell your name with two t's, but that probably doesn't make a difference. How many times have you heard "Heil Hitler"?

ADOLF HITTLER: I've lost count. People still do it. I get crank calls too. At one point I got ten calls in one week! Usually it was people saying, "Let's call Hitler!" I could hear yelling or music in the background.

GERBERT: They'd call in the middle of the night?

HITTLER: Around three in the morning. They'd say things like, "We've got one in the gas chamber for you," or something like that. The calls aren't so much of a problem anymore, though. I turn the ringer down so that I can't hear it in my bedroom.

GERBERT: Why do you keep your name listed in the phone book?

HITTLER: I remain true to my name.

GERBERT: But don't most people think that you must be a Nazi?

HITTLER: No one can accuse me of sympathizing with the Nazis. I hate war and violence. I don't even own a pocketknife.

GERBERT: But you served in the military.

HITTLER: Yes, but only for the required term. I actually wanted to serve longer to train to be a professional driver, but I didn't. I knew I wouldn't get very far in the military.

GERBERT: Did one of your superiors tell you that?

HITTLER: No, no. I could have been a lieutenant. But a lieutenant named "Adolf Hittler"? It just doesn't work.

GERBERT: If your name has held you back so much, why haven't you changed it?

HITTLER: My name has been a handicap, but I've managed.

GERBERT: Did your name ever cause any problems when you were driving a tour bus?

HITTLER: I was about to start a job once when I received a fax at my hotel, from the head office. They were telling me to call myself Adrian Heller. When I picked up the group the next day, I knew why: they were all Israeli. I drove them for around two weeks.

GERBERT: Why did your parents name you Adolf?

HITTLER: I had a German godmother, presumably a Nazi. I've never met her. She insisted I be named Adolf. We were a poor family and didn't have much interest in politics.

GERBERT: Does your name make it hard to meet women?

HITTLER: Actually, it doesn't, though perhaps I have a hard time keeping them.

GERBERT: Are you married?

HITTLER: Divorced. I believe part of it had to do with my name. My ex-wife often says silly things about it.

GERBERT: Any children?

HITTLER: Two sons. One is in construction; the other is an engineer.

GERBERT: Both go by Hittler?

HITTLER: The younger one doesn't. He changed his name. When I found out, I was surprised.

[Essay]

THE CITY THAT DEMOCRACY BUILT

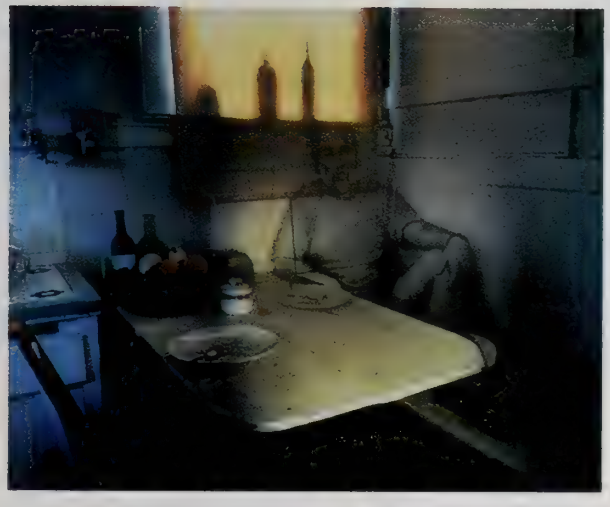
From The Immaculate Invasion, *by Bob Shacochis, to be published this month by Viking. Shacochis is a contributing editor of* Harper's Magazine. *His essay "Missing Children" appeared in the October 1996 issue.*

I'd come to Ft. Dimanche, Port-au-Prince's notorious prison, as a mass grave on the site was being prepared for exhumation by forensic anthropologists. Ft. Dimanche was to the Duvaliers and the Macoutes what Auschwitz was to Hitler and the SS. Now it had been liberated and reinhabited by over three thousand squatters, cramming into its cells and stacks of airless kennel-sized tiger cages, erecting shanties on its killing grounds out of scraps of tin and cardboard. Graffiti splashed across the wall facing into its courtyard—*Here is the city of democracy because of USA.*

But where was the apathy, the sag of defeat? The people, young and old but more so with the young, wore their pathos like campaign ribbons, proud of their inexplicable survival, the terrible obstacles they had surmounted, the daily persecution, the most horrible kind of brutalities, man-made and god-made, and they were ready to climb aboard this bus of American democracy, cling to its slippery roof if no seats were available, and ride to a better world.

Here was the barefoot Guy Gilvert, twenty-five years old, like all youth in the slums a






From Untitled Memories, *a series of photographs by Shimon Attie that was on display last fall at the Jack Shainman Gallery in New York City. To make the portraits, Attie transferred onto slides snapshots he'd taken of his friends and family in his apartment over a period of twenty years. He then projected and rephotographed the images in their original locations. Attie's exhibit* Sites Unseen *will be on display this fall at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston.*

frontliner in Haiti's long war against her people, who welcomed us with a sunbeam smile, pumping our hands with gratitude. He and his fellow squatters had renamed the infamous prison Village Demokrasi; they'd organized a letter-writing campaign to Aristide, asking the president to help them with their problems, but there was never any response from the palace.

He had never had a job in his life but collected rocks from the otherwise barren landscape of the prison yard to try to sell because there was nothing to do. He was optimistic: the Americans had brought "security *a go-go*," and because of that you didn't have to see pigs eating the corpses of your friends and family anymore. Here in the most unlivable of slums, if you needed a measure for progress, this one worked pretty well.

That the animals—free-ranging swine, dogs, rats—so recently prevailed over the dead and their disposal attested to two essential truths in Haiti during the time of the tyrants, and you couldn't really say the first was less cruel than the second, or that both were less inhumane than the circumstances the dead found themselves in during the barbaric reign of the Duvaliers. Proper internment was expensive in Haiti, especially during the embargo—a few hundred dollars, about a year's wages for most peasants or slumdwellers.

Non-burial quickly became a facet of the style of the de factos, a macabre trademark. They liked it better when their victims remained on the surface among the living, on stage in the streets and alleys and yards, in your face, in your nose, nobody's secret, everybody's fear. They liked it so much that cleaning up the dead became an act of opposition against the state. Only the animals were free to perform this mercy, which of course was the end of mercy, day after day as your loved ones watched, the last morsels of human dignity transformed into the excrement of scavengers

and then dispersed throughout the city on the boot heels of assassins.

The by-no-means-circumspect Duvaliers had taken a somewhat more conventional approach to the sowing of mass terror, less vulgar, less flagrant, but no less taxing on the spirit of the population. Who did the killing? Except for a handful of all-star murderers like Ft. Dimanche's warden, Madame Max, no one would say. Nothing could be established, documented. Whole families, entire neighborhoods, disappeared into the maw of Ft. Dimanche. What happened to them, these tens of thousands, year after year? I suppose it was a matter of taste, an aesthetic proclivity for the pretensions of the Duvaliers, this preference for the unknown as the servitor of horror, rather than the military de factos' more literal-minded methodology, that steered the presentation of death. The imagination versus reality, not-seeing versus seeing, the disappearance of your wife into an unmarked mass grave versus the artistic presentation of your brother's trussed-up body in the gutter.

Across rotten planks and stepping stones lodged in the putrid mud, Guy Gilvert led us into the quagmire behind the prison. Ahead, near a cluster of shacks that seemed to be nothing more than abandoned tool sheds, I could see four or five men clearing the desecrated earth with hoes and machetes. The square hole the workers had scraped away was about the size of a kitchen garden and not yet deep enough for the scientists to begin quarrying the bones. One of the laborers used a bucket to drain the puddles of dark, greasy muck that oozed into the depression.

I lit a cigarette, then lit another, as if the smoke might be an antidote to all this. So close that we had almost stepped on her, her feet only inches away from the precipice of the grave, sat a voluptuous young woman in the dirt threshold of the shack that was her home, a woman beautiful enough to conquer faraway worlds with the sensuality of her eyes, but here her beauty seemed like an affront—far worse than an affront, it seemed mocking and insane.

She held a naked infant in her arms, a five-month-old boy with angry skin, red and peeling as if he'd been dipped in lye. The infant pawed her exposed breast, gumming the black swollen nipple as he nursed. Humanity's most cherished tableau, mother and child, deformed into this perversion: mother and child on the banks of the River Styx.

It's what's beautiful in the world that most easily breaks our hearts, but the vision of this woman was like sandpaper drawn across my exasperation with Haiti, and I felt an irrational bloody-minded animus at the living. I wanted to shout at the young woman, *Your baby is dying, your baby is dead!* As surely as he would be before long, born in unspeakable filth and suckled with poison here in this mortal dump. But where was she going to go? What was she going to do? How were you ever going to make room for her in the house of your own life, even if she had already claimed for her own the emptiness in its corners? And what about the others? A whole nation cannot emigrate.

[Forecast]

SLEEPING WITH THE ENEMY

From an astrological analysis of the compatibility of Bill Gates and Janet Reno as business partners that appeared in January on the Web site of Starmatch International. Gates, born October 28, 1955, and Reno, born July 21, 1938, have an overall "business harmony index" rating of 8.1 out of 11.

AREAS OF COMPATIBILITY

Bill Gates's Saturn Trine Janet Reno's Saturn
Weight: 11.0
Bill Gates and Janet Reno will work well together, especially on detailed science or analysis. They might reinforce each other's workaholic traits, if any exist in either partner.

Bill Gates's Moon Trine Janet Reno's Saturn
Weight: 7.6
Bill Gates may feel put down by Janet Reno at times. If Janet Reno acts more as a focusing agent than a wet blanket, she may be able to stabilize any erraticness in Bill Gates's behavior. Clearly, Janet Reno ought to be the boss.

Bill Gates's Jupiter Trine Janet Reno's Neptune
Weight: 6.7
Bill Gates and Janet Reno will have a tendency to create wonderful but impractical schemes. They will each support each other's fantasies and probably have a great time, but business-wise nothing much will come of it.

Bill Gates's Mercury Sextile Janet Reno's Uranus
Weight: 5.7
This aspect will enhance creativity. Janet Reno will get behind Bill Gates's plans and projects with enthusiasm, especially if they are about sex.

AREAS OF POTENTIAL FRICTION

Bill Gates's Neptune Square Janet Reno's Saturn
Weight: 4.6
This square may lead to confusion. Bill Gates may act soft and easygoing when Janet Reno wants to work.

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[1] Class A results with the 4.75% max. load were **23.19%**, **18.02%** and **22.09%** for the 1-year, 3-year and since inception periods ending 12/31/98.

No fees or sales charges apply to benchmarks. Performance provided by Lipper Analytical Services, Inc.

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[Testimonials]

AUTOMATIC APHRODISIACS

From entries submitted last fall to a contest held by X-10 (USA) Inc., makers of the ActiveHome home-automation system, which lets users program their personal computers to control lights, stereos, coffeemakers, and other appliances. Prizes went to those who submitted the best account of how ActiveHome improves their lives.

I use ActiveHome to run macros (sets of home-automation instructions). I have a home-security macro, a home-theater macro, and an "Ahhhh yeah, baby" macro, which allows me to have Marvin Gaye's "Sexual Healing" turned on through an appliance module hooked up to my boom box.

—Jason Johnson

A while back, an acquaintance I hadn't seen for sixteen years dropped in on me unexpectedly. As she strolled through the house, I explained to her how my ActiveHome system controls my thermostat and automatically turns on lights at night, making my home safer, more energy efficient, and just plain fun. She was so impressed that she wants to go on a date with me. Way to go, ActiveHome! Thanks.

—Carl Todd

After we arrived home one night, my wife and I were interested in spending some additional time with each other. We lay down on the couch, and I casually turned on some mood music and started some incense burning with my SuperRemote controller. I didn't have to spoil the mood by getting up. That night was one of the most romantic nights I have ever spent with my wife. ActiveHome made everything come off flawlessly.

—Philip Obermeyer

For romantic situations, I have created a macro that will slowly dim the lights as my date and I are watching a movie. After a couple of hours the lights in the living room go out completely and the ones in the bedroom come on. This usually starts a discussion about my home automation, just like a bug zapper, my groupies drawn to the light.

—Carlo Peratoner

Bill Gates's Pluto Square Janet Reno's Mercury
Weight: 4.1
This is not a favorable combination for business, professional, or scientific endeavors. Bill Gates and Janet Reno are likely to suspect each other's motives or disagree over joint finances. They are apt to argue. They will rub each other the wrong way.

Bill Gates's Jupiter Square Janet Reno's Mercury
Weight: 3.3
Janet Reno and Bill Gates may have a tendency to engage in long-winded discussions without reaching a conclusion or waste their time in other meaningless, unproductive activities.

Bill Gates's Mercury Square Janet Reno's Saturn
Weight: 2.4
Projects will be difficult to complete for business partners with this square. Janet Reno will be constantly criticizing Bill Gates, whose mind is apt to always be off in new directions.

[Study]

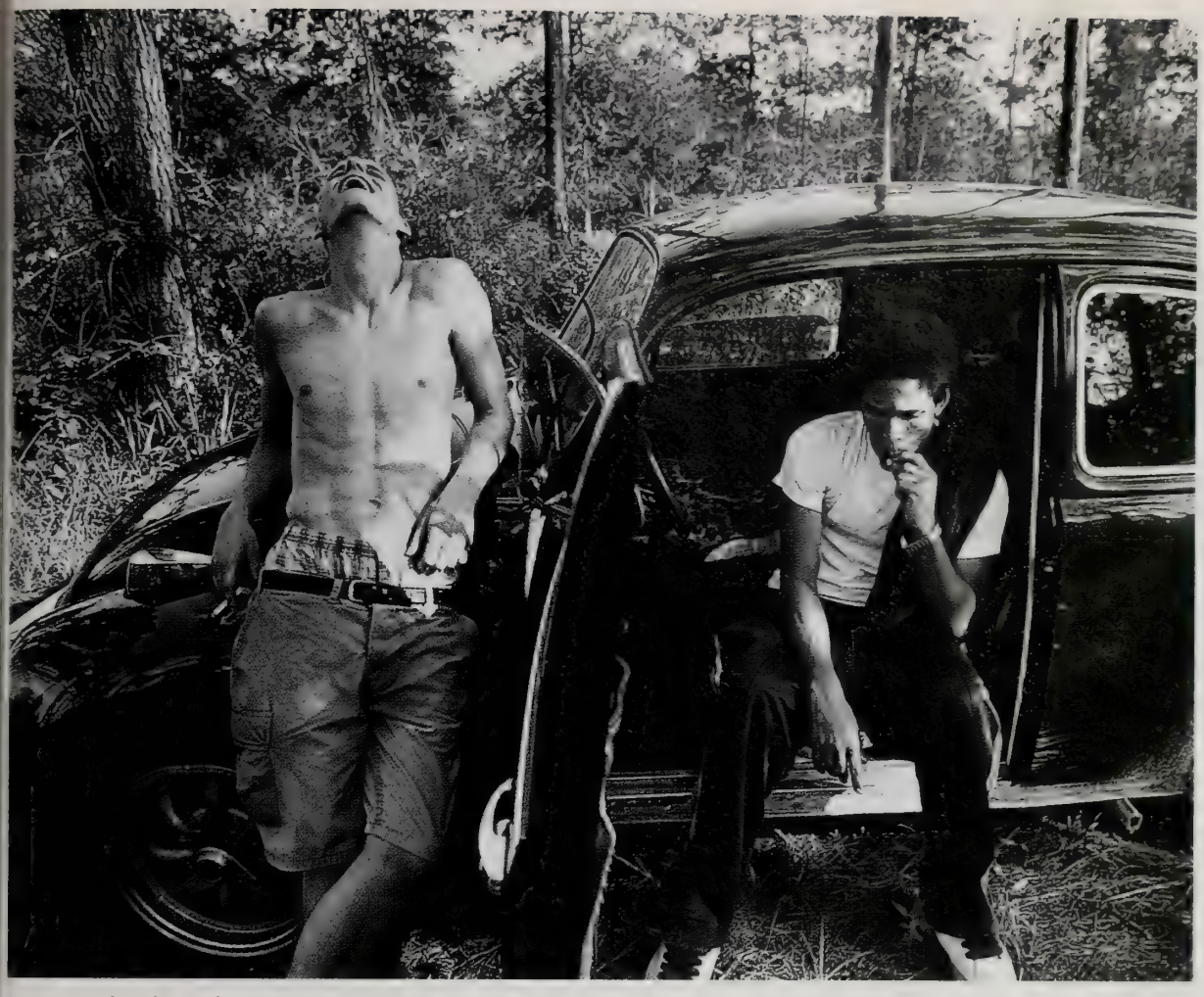
IT'S HARD TO SAY "I HATE YOU"

From "Nonverbal Courtship Patterns in Women: Rejection Signaling," a study by Monica M. Moore in the February 1998 issue of Semiotica, *the journal of the International Association for Semiotic Studies. Moore is a professor of psychology at Webster University in St. Louis.*

Recent ethological studies of nonlinguistic communication in human courtship have begun to establish the existence of a nonverbal signaling system for negotiating sexual relationships. Previous research has shed some light on the nonverbal behaviors women employ to signal interest in potential male partners. This study shows that women also use nonverbal displays to *end* courtship interaction.

The participants in this study were 200 randomly selected women judged to be between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five years. The women were covertly observed late in the evening at bars known for high levels of singles' activity in a Midwestern college town.

Gaze avoidance occurred when the woman did not make eye contact with the man, despite the fact that he was looking directly at her. Instead, she looked at other people, made eye contact with someone else at the table, or directed her gaze to another point in the room. Other signals included the *upward gaze*, in



"Jason and Mike at the Cabin, Huntsville, Texas," by Houston artist Jesse DeMartino, part of a four-year series documenting the lives of a group of Houston skateboarders. His work appeared in the summer 1998 issue of DoubleTake.

which the woman looked directly at the ceiling, lifting her head approximately one-quarter inch, and the *hair gaze*, in which the woman drew her hair across her face and looked at the ends. All of these behaviors consisted of prolonged (more than ten seconds) inattention on the part of the woman.

Sometimes, a woman would turn her head and *look away* from a man while he was speaking or engaging in some other behavior to draw her attention. In contrast, other women would *stare* at a man for a long period of time, often until he looked away. This behavior was frequently combined with another facial pattern: the *frown* or the *sneer*. In the *frown*, the corners of the woman's mouth were turned downward with compressed lips and her brow was furrowed. In the *sneer*, the woman's mouth was twisted and her nose was wrinkled.

Two other facial patterns that met the criteria for rejection signaling were the *negative head shake* and the *yawn*. When women flirt with men they often engage in a great deal of affirmative head nodding. Here, women shook their heads negatively, moving their faces from side to side by rotating their heads on their necks. They also yawned. In this signal, the mouth was opened wide and the nose was wrinkled while the eyes were squinted or, in some cases, closed. Sometimes a woman covered her mouth with her hand.

Women also engaged in self-grooming behaviors. However, unlike behaviors displayed by flirtatious women, these gestures were exhibited not to draw attention to the body (such as *primping* or *hair flipping*) but to engage in self-care behaviors more commonly done in private. In this regard, women sometimes *cleaned* their *nails* or *picked* their *teeth*.

These nonverbal behaviors are a powerful tool, since they allow women to exert selectivity in partner choice. Women can judge a man's attractiveness and value as a mate through observations of his status, ambition, lack of other commitments, intelligence, and income. Mixing rejection signals with nonverbal courtship behaviors buys women time to make these evaluations.



"The Project," a charcoal drawing by Frank Mulvey, is currently on display at the Galerie de Bellefeuille in Montreal, Canada, where Mulvey lives.

[Pitches]

EXPERIMENTAL THEATER

From proposals for plays submitted last fall to New York City's Ensemble Studio Theater for its EST/Sloan Foundation Science & Technology Project, which was established "to foster new dramatic works related to scientific and technological issues." Readings of several of the plays below will be staged at the theater this month.

Title: *Schrödinger's Girlfriend*
Author: Matthew Wells

Einstein meets *The Blue Angel* in this Ormnesque romantic comedy in which love obeys the crazy laws of subatomic physics.

Behind every great man is a woman, and behind physicist Erwin Schrödinger is the mad-dening Ute Haas, a cabaret singer and [illegible] who describes herself as "a woman with two bedrooms." Ute's had flings with [illegible] and now she's doting on Schrödinger.

As the besotted Schrödinger grapples with the logical absurdities that govern subatomic (and female) behavior, he finds himself falling in love with a woman who is the embodiment of Heisenberg's uncertainty principle. The more he gets to know her, the more the mysteries of particle physics seem tame by comparison. Their romance develops into a passionate affair in which they attract and repel each other like two particles in an acceleration chamber.

It is this passion that gives Schrödinger real-world examples of wave/particle duality, the paradox of non-locality, and the solipsism of observer-created reality. He begins to believe that Ute is his own creation—that she has no life of her own outside his attentions. Ute naturally objects, and the affair ends in an explosion of possessive jealousy when Ute leaves Schrödinger for another physicist.

Enraged, Schrödinger devises a twisted revenge: he plants a vial of cyanide in Ute's apartment, placing it so that the vial will shatter if she opens the door to the bedroom she uses for sex. But as he waits outside her apartment, Schrödinger realizes that a truth of love—i.e., as long as you don't ask the ques-

tion, the answer can always be yes—is also a truth of quantum physics.

Title: *Ig and Ed*
Author: Brian Kaufman

Ig and Ed is a nuclear *My Dinner with André* in which physicists Igor Kurchatov and Edward Teller, the two men most responsible for developing nuclear weapons in Russia and the United States, grapple with scientific responsibility and the nature of patriotism in the nuclear age.

Title: *Fringe Benefits*
Author: Julie McKee

Fringe Benefits is a monologue given by a showgirl who works in a Reno casino. Because she will soon turn thirty-five, she is very concerned for her future and knows she has to start looking for a new job. She struggles to convey to the audience how greatly all of our lives have been enriched by the scientific mind, a mind she would like to develop for herself by enrolling part-time at the University of Reno.

Title: *Cooking with Salt*
Author: Salty Loeb

I would like to present a one-woman show, a comic monologue. The setting would be a Food Network program for children called *Cooking with Salt*, in which a Marion Lorne–type grandmother discusses kitchen science and chemistry.

When the monologue opens, we learn that this woman has been locked in the kitchen by her husband. Angry that all the time she has devoted to her television program has kept her from cooking meals for him, he leaves her a note telling her that he has run off with a beautiful young graduate of the Gourmet Institute of Mount Pleasant.

Torn between her need to present her program to the children and her despair over losing her husband, she becomes increasingly frantic as the monologue progresses.

Title: *Maria the Jewess*
Author: Billy Aronson

Maria the Jewess was an alchemist who lived around 100 A.D. in Alexandria, the intellectual center of the Roman Empire. Among alchemists, she was particularly ingenious and prolific, and the theories that guided her are fascinating: she believed that metals, like people, yearn to copulate but need to meet a mate of the right type in just the right position if they are to reach perfection (i.e., gold/orgasm).

When the play opens, Maria is sitting with intellectuals from around the world. Her peers lament that nothing great is left to be discovered. After all, Ptolemy's picture of the Earth-centered universe says everything about our place in the grand scheme of things. Maria, too, feels restless about her work. Like her love life, it's going nowhere. She needs to turn a corner. But how?

That night, while having sex with two or three men, Maria has an idea: metals are like lovers. She leaps naked from her bed and ransacks her cupboards for materials with which to create a lab. She carefully positions metals, controls temperatures, arranges reactants, and goes back and forth between the people in the bed and the metals in her lab.

Title: *The Gene Game*
Authors: Yvonne Adrian, Cheryl Stern, and Tom Kochan

We propose an evening of sketches, songs, and vignettes entitled *The Gene Game*. This

[Offer]

THE ROLE OF A LIFETIME

From a letter sent to former Washington, D.C., mayor Marion Barry last November by Cherry Red Productions, a Washington theater group. In October, at the annual Mayor's Arts Awards ceremony, Barry said that he had always wanted to act in a play.

Dear Mayor Barry:

I was thrilled to learn that you recently expressed a long-held desire to act in a play, and that you are willing to accept even a supporting role. Since you will soon be out of a job, we'd like you to consider the following offer. There is a part in our upcoming production of Billy Bermingham's *Cannibal Cheerleaders on Crack* that we think would be perfect for you. We see you in the role of Dan Citizen, President Pro-Temp. He is a crack-smoking, womanizing, fast-talking political genius.

We are prepared to offer the role: no audition necessary.

Although you do not have as much acting experience as a number of other Washington politicians, we feel that, if we work together, your performance would be believable.

I look forward to your reply.

Ian Allen
Artistic Co-Director

piece of provocative, edgy, and often comedic theater would take a look at the marvelous technological and scientific advancements in the world of genetics and fertility.

Ideas include:

The Egg Cycle. An operetta about a donor egg awaiting an unknown implantee and the two prospective parents. Each member of the cycle expresses his or her fears, prejudices, and wonder at the process that lies before them.

Three Brown Mice. A trio sung by cloned mice expressing their unique perspective.

The Woman Who Lives in a Shoe. A single mother laments having to raise her multiple-birth children alone. But never fear, she has enough love for twenty kids and vows to "move mountains" on her own for each of them.

Puttin' on My Paternity Suit. The DNA Game! A big production number complete with doctors, lawyers, husbands, and wives.

[Meditations]

ROCK PROPHETS

From "What Would Journey Do?" by Bill Wasik, in the September 24, 1998, issue of The Weekly Week, *a humor magazine published in Somerville, Massachusetts. "W.W.J.D." bracelets were created in 1989 to encourage teenagers to ask "the question 'What Would Jesus Do?' with each decision they made"; since then, over 14 million of the bracelets have been sold in the United States alone. Journey, a rock band, released eleven albums between 1973 and 1986, including* Escape *and* Frontiers, *both of which reached* Billboard*'s Top 10 chart in the early 1980s.*

You've all seen the "W.W.J.D." bracelets and T-shirts that remind teens and adults alike about a good rule of thumb for living a holy life. Many, however, ask themselves these questions: Does Journey know about my battles with the enemy of my soul? Do they understand the fierce temptations that challenge me? Do they have any clue what *I* am going through—the sorrow, the sadness, the depression that overflow my cup? I've been betrayed by a friend, a lover, someone very dear—does Journey understand?

I am here today to tell you that Journey [illegible] understand. Because, my friend, Journey has been here before.

[illegible] Gregg and Heather have a pic[illegible] marriage. The two are young and [illegible] Heather is a bank-credit ana[illegible] Gregg [illegible] department store. *But Heather's job requires her to work long hours, and Gregg often feels neglected. If she really loves me, he wonders, why is she away from home so much?*

It's the quintessential modern struggle: a two-income family, overworked, always pressed for time. You may wonder how Journey, who walked the Earth so long ago, could relate to a problem like this. But did you know that Journey faced precisely this same dilemma—*nearly twenty years ago?*

In Frontiers 5, 0:48, they tell the story of a musician, always on the road, and the woman he's left behind: "They say that the road ain't no place to start a family. But right down the line, it's been you and me. And lovin' a music man ain't always what it's supposed to be. Oh girl, you stand by me. I'm forever yours—faithfully."

Faithfully. It's clear that Journey intends a double meaning to this term: faithfulness to the absent spouse, yes, but also faith in Journey—and their power to heal broken relationships.

Devotional meditation: How secure is my faith in Journey? When is it strong? When does it falter?

SITUATION TWO: *Alice loves her boyfriend, Sam, deeply. They've shared long conversations, walks on the beach, romantic dinners by candlelight. But now Sam is pressuring her to have sexual relations with him, and Alice doesn't know what to do. She doesn't feel comfortable having sex before marriage, and someone has told her that Journey thinks it's wrong.*

At many points in the Albums, Journey speaks out strenuously on this subject. And their message is always the same: "Any way you want it—that's the way you need it." False prophets who tell you otherwise are leading you astray. Do not pay them heed.

The most striking passage on the topic comes from Departure 1, 0:50: "I was alone—I never knew—what good love could do. Then we touched, and we sang, about the lovin' things! All night, all night—oh, every night!"

Devotional meditation: Do *I* love to move? Do *I* love to groove? Do *I* love the lovin' things?

SITUATION THREE: *Martin has reached the end of his rope. His happy marriage, his beautiful family, his thriving bakery—none of it means anything to him. At night he finds himself awake, alone, wondering: if all life ends in death, then what's the point of going on with it?*

Journey was no stranger to existential hunger. Escape 1, 2:02, perhaps captures this hunger best of all: "Workin' hard to get my fill—everybody wants a thrill. Payin' anything

to roll the dice, just one more time. Some will win, some will lose—some were born to sing the blues. Oh, the movie never ends: it goes on, and on, and on, and on."

In the face of such sorrow and hopelessness, does Journey go on to say that we should give up the fight?

NO!

Instead, we are told to not stop believing. To hold on to that feeling.

May the streetlight person in each of us have the courage to listen.

Devotional meditation: Have *I* ever stopped believing—in life, in love, in Journey? When weighed down by the cares of the world, have *I* let go of that feeling? Have *I* taken a midnight train going anywhere?

[Discussion]

THE MALCOLM X-FILES

From an interview with rapper Killah Priest in the Fall 1998 issue of Transition, *a journal published jointly by the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for Afro-American Research at Harvard University and by Duke University Press. Killah Priest's album* Heavy Mental *was released on Geffen Records last March. The interview was conducted by Kelefa Sanneh, the journal's assistant editor.*

KELEFA SANNEH: Why do you rap so much about outer space?

KILLAH PRIEST: Because that's where we're from! Black people come from space. When you look at the sky, it's black. Without sunlight, forget it: it's black. In the beginning, there was darkness.

SANNEH: Elijah Muhammad wrote that Earth was created when the moon was deported from this planet 66 trillion years ago. Is that "the beginning" you're talking about?

KILLAH PRIEST: I ain't talking about that. I'm talking about pure facts. In the beginning, "darkness was upon the face of the deep." Man was made on a certain day, he went and got corrupt, and he's been corrupt ever since. He's been destroying the world, he's been hiding identities, he's been lying, stealing—all of that. But space travel is real. When they speak of unidentified flying objects, a lot of people don't understand what that means. Ezekiel saw UFOs back then, only they were *IFOs*, because he *identified* them. He knew what they were. They were chariots of fire. They call them spaceships now. That's where the old Negro song comes from: "Swing low, sweet chariot, coming for to carry me home."

SANNEH: Are these spaceships different from the Mothership that the Nation of Islam preaches about—the craft that abducted Louis Farrakhan in Mexico in 1985?

KILLAH PRIEST: No, it's the same. People call it

[Dream]

DESPERATELY SEEKING SOLIDARITY

From an open letter to Madonna from The Artist formerly known as Prince. Since leaving Warner Brothers Records in 1996 to release his music independently, The Artist has been demanding, in vain, that the record label give him the master tapes of his original recordings. Madonna has been with the label since 1982. The letter was posted on The Artist's Web site in January.

Madonna: Artist 2 artist, eye am sure u understand the connection eye feel 2 my music. U more than any1 at Time Warner knows the patience and care with which we give birth 2 creation—and u maybe more so than any1 knows how much a new artist longs 2 find a place amongst "the chosen few" 2 flaunt those creations (and at the same time put food on one's table).

Eye dreamt of u and eye at the Grammy Awards and felt a need 2 write this letter 2 u. In my dream, eye approached u and asked u if u remembered me, and u said "sure." U were on ur way up 2 receive 1 of numerous awards u will no doubt receive that night, and eye asked u 2 help me with my fight 2 retain ownership of my legacy and u said, "eye don't own ur masters, Time Warner does. If it was my company, u could have them."

But eye say 2 u, dear sister, "it IS ur company as long as u remain in their graces. 4 all Artists, Madonna, make a stand 4 what is RIGHT. Surely they will listen 2 u!" In the dream u seemed 2 feel me and yet u were a bit non-committal, so as u approached the podium, eye followed u, and as we stood side by side, eye said, "b glad this a commercial break!" and eye walked offstage. Interpretations aside, artist 2 artist, U Can Help Us—and eye know u will becuz u REMEMBER ME.

Mothership, chariot, UFO, but it's all the same thing.

SANNEH: Fard Muhammad taught that despite the Mothership, the true home of the Original People was Earth. Do you believe that this spaceship is going to take African-American people someplace else?

KILLAH PRIEST: That's what's been predicted. Christians talk about the rapture, Christ coming back and the sky cracking up. The American government says that if anything comes out of space, we should all help fight it. The whole world has gone mad: one group of people is waiting for a spaceship, while another group is waiting to shoot it down. Isaiah 66:15: "the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind." He's going to come and wreak vengeance, because there are a lot of lies out there.

SANNEH: Are you talking about movies like *Independence Day*? The Nation of Islam's newspaper *The Final Call* attacked that movie as a racist perversion of the Day of Judgment.

KILLAH PRIEST: Word. Like the movie *Independence Day*. There are people who know what's going to happen. They are part of the elite 10 percent of society, the ones that know truth and hide it. When you talk about religion, there's always a righteous 5 percent and a devious 10 percent—the other 85 percent of people are ignorant.

SANNEH: The government—that's the 10 percent, right?

KILLAH PRIEST: Yeah. And I have to watch myself, too. When Christ spoke out like this, they came against him.

[Fiction]

THE OPERA OF ELEPHANTS

From Dreamland, *a novel by Kevin Baker, to be published this month by HarperCollins. Baker was the chief historical researcher for* The American Century, *by Harold Evans, and is also the author of the novel* Sometimes You See It Coming. *His annotation "The Great San Diego Fire Sale" appeared in the April 1994 issue of* Harper's Magazine. *He lives in New York City.*

Each of the great parks on Coney—Dreamland, and Luna Park, and Steeplechase—generated its own electricity; enough to light a large town, out in the dark fields of the republic. Dreamland's powerhouse lay just west of the central lagoon, next to the Fall of Pompeii building. It was shaped like the rolling, white armature of a dynamo, monumental and ornate. An attraction unto itself with its glowing, egg-white enamel engines, and gold-plated tools, and a mosaic table to hold the oil cups. There was a series of grand murals along the walls and ceiling, depicting the whole history of electricity—Edison and his bulbs, Sam Morse and his telegraph, Franklin and his kite, all the way back to God Almighty Himself; jump-starting the world with the same juice we had bottled up for your entertainment pleasure.

The attendants wore spotless, white duck jackets with brass buttons and white gloves—all emphasizing the cleanliness, the purity, the immaculate, magical divinity of electrical power. All except the chief engineer—a small, courteous, bitterly droll little Negro named Elijah Poole, who had worked with the Wizard of Menlo Park, Edison himself. He wore a sort of necromancer's hat—a little fez, covered with hoary gold stars, and suns, and crescent moons—and it was said that once he had actually been white, before an accident with the humming wires had left him charred his present, purple-black color.

That was all the usual nonsense, of course. Before Dreamland, Poole had worked on the Wizard's ceaseless campaign to prove how deadly alternating current was. Together with the other assistants, he paid local schoolboys to bring in subjects, two bits for each cat or each dog, until the town of West Orange, New Jersey, was nearly devoid of pets. They pushed the animals onto a wired tin sheet and pumped in a thousand volts—the schoolboys jumping up and down outside the windows, to watch their beloved pets get the chair.

After that they went from state to state, bidding for the new electric-chair contracts against Westinghouse's men. Each one trying to prove how much more dangerous the other one's power was—using the other side's apparatus to electrocute a dog, a pig, a cow, for the commissioners and concerned clergy, and prison officials. The state of New York announced that it would test the new method on a live, human subject, a murderer named William Kemmler, and Dr. Poole and his team had rushed up to Sing Sing on the flyer, carting along their latest chair and a Westinghouse dynamo in the baggage car.

"We used a low charge—to show just how dangerous it really was," Dr. Poole recalled, in his soft, bitter, wondering voice. "But of course it wasn't—it wasn't dangerous at all. That was the whole problem."

The execution was a bloody mess, even worse than a hanging. Kemmler screaming like



This painting by Beijing artist Fang Lijun was on display last fall at the Asia Society in New York City as part of the exhibition Inside Out: New Chinese Art.

a banshee, breaking his wrists and his ankles as he convulsed. The smell of slow-roasting flesh filling the room, until all the prison officials were bent over puking—and then a visible, crackling bolt of electricity burst right out of the man's temple.

The state of New York was altogether satisfied. It ordered up three chairs, and Poole quit and came down to Coney; where he was another attraction, along with the dynamos and the gilded oil cups. Now, every evening, as the sun began to fade, he pulled the levers and flicked the switches that brought up the new, garish light of a million individual bulbs. Dreamland going up most dramatically of all three parks; ride by ride, attraction by attraction. Until finally he lit the luminous, white central tower, and it went on story by story, blazing window by window, right up to its crowning ball and eagle; the highest structure on the island, holding sway over all the rest of Coney.

This is how you kill an elephant.

They tried the carrots first. Buckets of carrots. Whole bushelfuls of carrots, and each one loaded with enough strychnine to kill a man but only intended to make her stand still.

She ate them. She ladled them into her great, pointed maw by the dozen, and after an hour of carrots she was still standing—still looking as mad and dangerous as ever, and the big holiday crowd was growing restless.

Next they tried sending in the trainers—one-armed Captain Jack, and Herman Weedom, and even Mademoiselle Aurora, to smooth her huge, rough shoulders with their hands and whisper into her enormous ears. She only stomped her feet and waved her trunk around their heads until they turned and ran for cover. After that they tried the police, wading in with their new blue coats and their nightsticks to clap the chains around her legs like they would slap cuffs on a pickpocket. She knocked them down like ninepins; slapped and tumbled them around the ring like vaudeville mayhem players.

Finally they sent in the pygmies—figuring, hell, that even if they weren't in the same weight class, at least it was their game. No one was sure if they had ever seen an elephant before, but they were troopers: racing around the beast, hooting and gesticulating, yelling at it in their strange heathen tongues

the penniless boy, selling matches and candies and newspapers car to car on the train—

"I saved the stationmaster's son from getting run over by the express. Gave me a job, and a lot to work on my experiments, and that was all I needed to rise—"

The band struck up the processional from Aida, the favorite opera of the ghetto—the opera of elephants—and the crowd grew quiet. The Wizard went over the controls, setting the last fuses. All that remained was for someone to get out and pull the gigantic, ornamental prop switch, set up for the benefit of the festive, holiday crowd.

The rides kept running in the three, vast parks: all of them filled with customers, still humming and spinning and whirring like so many mechanical gears. The bathers still swaggering out into the surf, clutching onto the guidelines, braving the chilly, late-season water. More crowds still coming, all the dry-goods clerks and the ladies' maids and the cigar rollers and the factory girls and the day laborers and the streetcar conductors—still pouring into the park with each train and trolley and excursion boat.

There was something for everybody at Coney Island.

All it required was a fool, a freak—a dwarf in a harlequin's suit—to trip the switch and set off the sparks.

I danced out before the big, eager holiday crowd, my face painted harlequin white.

I danced out—grinning coyly, watching the furious yellow eye of the elephant watching me and knowing what was going to happen next.

Not knowing everything, of course. Not knowing that when the big, fake switch was pulled it would seem to the crowd like nothing had happened at first, even with 10,000 volts now pulsing through her body. Not that eventually she would begin to twitch, ever so slightly, within the chains wound round and round her ankles. Or that the smoke would then begin to trickle out of her ears, and the great, sweet stew of her mouth, and the groping muscles of her trunk. Or that finally, like an expertly cut tree, she would fall over suddenly, very quietly—as quietly as an elephant can fall—the great trunks of her legs toppling over, her convulsing, splitting muscles snapping every last loop of chain and cable, thick as they were, so that in her death throes she would be, at last, completely unchained. If only she could roar—

No, she did not know everything. After all, she was only an elephant.

She knew enough. ■



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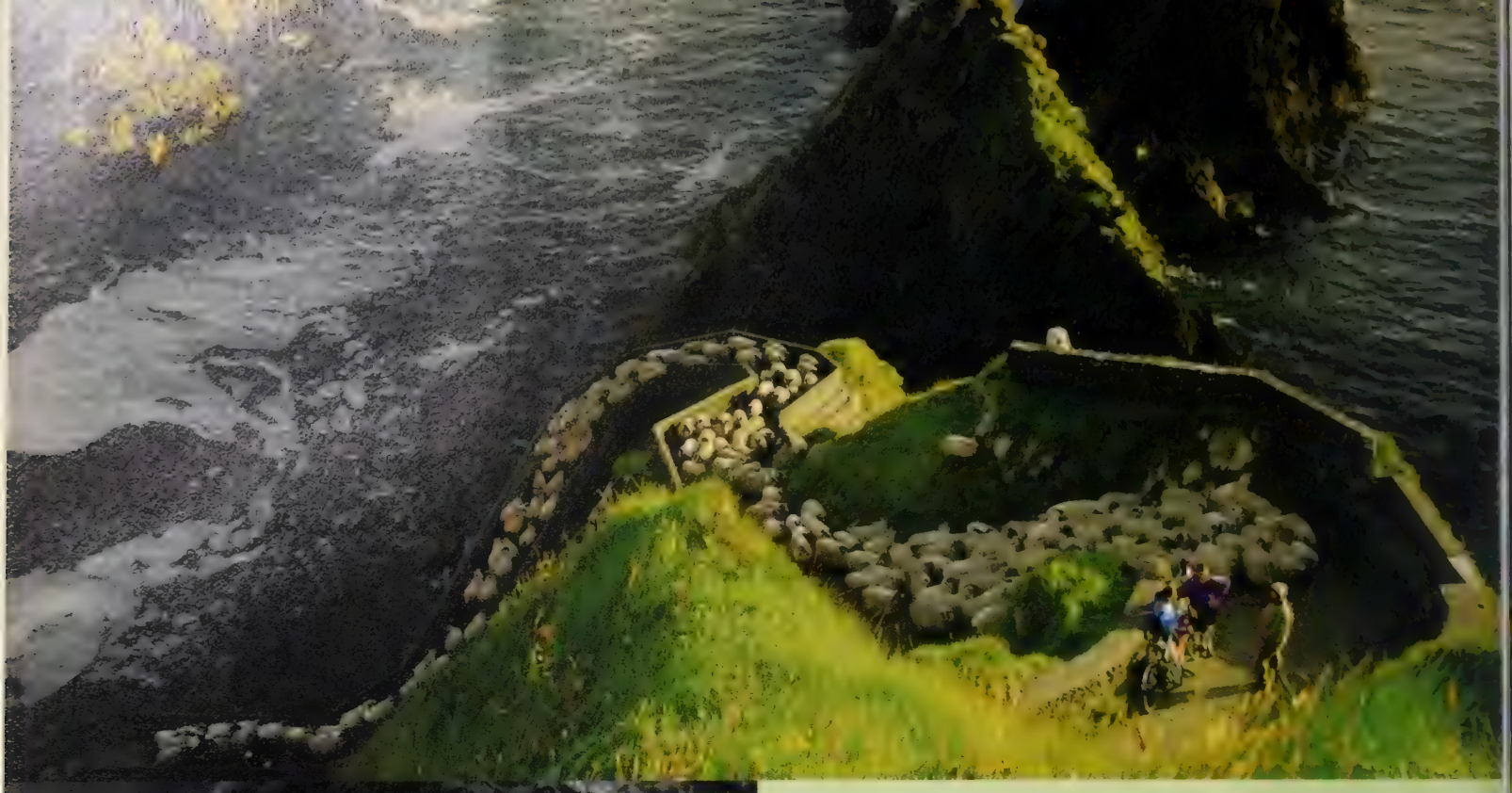
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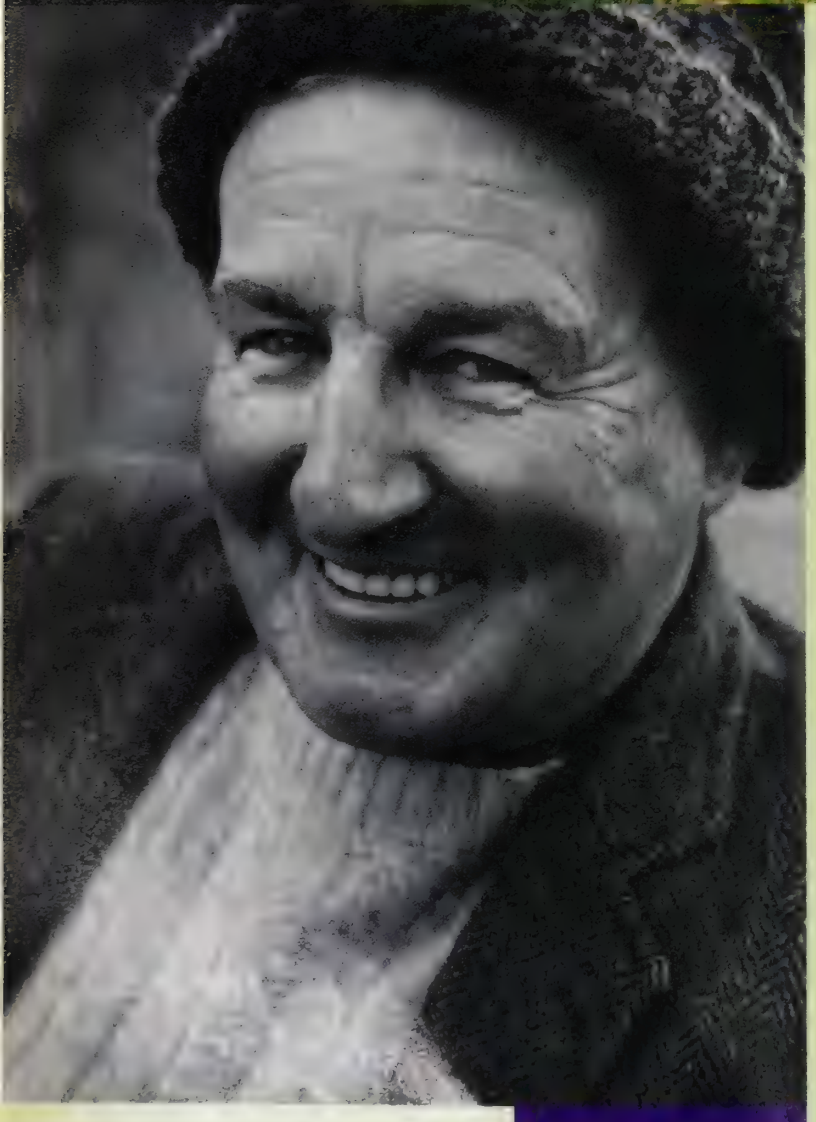
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ON BROADWAY

Notes on the past and future of American theater

By Arthur Miller

Twenty-five years ago I used to defend Broadway against its detractors, because it was where American theatrical innovation almost always began, the rest of the country timorously following behind. Now the Broadway producer is scared stiff, and in those rare cases when he does produce a serious play—Harold Pinter's *Betrayal*, or Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*—it needs to have proven itself somewhere else, such as Texas or London. A play likely to alienate some part of the audience, as so many great plays have done, or whose style is strange or requires some effort to penetrate, simply will not get produced on today's Broadway. George Bernard Shaw once remarked that businessmen always want to talk about art, but playwrights want to talk about business. This is inevitable, especially now, when one knows, for example, that a play like my *Crucible* would be inconceivable, with its cast of twenty-one and its four large sets. Put another way, the aesthetic of that kind of play is beyond the reach now of the commercial theater, though it would be a mistake to think that serious, expensive-to-mount plays like this were exactly welcome in the theater of the Forties or earlier. On the contrary, producers then as now prayed for the next *Life with Father*, a genial comedy with a smaller cast and one set. The difference is that there existed then a handful of producers, most notably Kermit Bloomgarden and Robert Whitehead, who longed for artistically ambitious and socially interesting plays and could put their money where their mouth was. The nub of the problem is that a "straight" play could be mounted in those times for well under $50,000, as opposed to the $1,000,000 or more frequently required today.

Directly and more subtly, theatrical economics translates into theatrical style, unless one is thinking of closet drama put on for a few recondite

Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman *opens on February 10 at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre in New York City. This year marks the play's fiftieth anniversary. His poem "Waiting for the Teacher" appeared in the July 1998 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

WHAT OUGHT TO BE JUDGED IS NOT WHETHER A PLAY IS "NON-LINEAR" OR "DREAMLIKE" BUT ITS EFFICIENCY IN GETTING ACROSS THE PLAYWRIGHT'S VISION OF LIFE

friends. Fantastic production costs have combined almost lethally with the rise to near total domination of a single paper, the *New York Times*, and its critic over a play's fate, so that stylistic innovation has been left to small and off-Broadway venues, where the risk of financial loss is lessened. It seems to me that a resulting confusion has crept into the reviewing and discussion of the various styles of playwriting in fashion today. "Realism" is now a put-down; "poetic" is praise. "Experimental" is attractive; "traditional" is not. "Metaphorical" is intriguing, though perhaps not so much as "lyrical," "non-linear," "dreamlike," and "surreal." It is almost as if "realism" can hardly be poetic, or as if the "poetic" is not, at its best, more real than the merely "realistic" and, at its worst, more conventional beneath its elusive or unfathomable skin. It would be impossible in a small essay to comb out all this fur, but perhaps at least some of the fundamental faultlines, as well as the overlaps among various approaches to the art, can be illuminated by examining a tiny bit of the history of age-old stylistic strategies employed by playwrights to trap reality on the stage.

Perhaps the obvious needs stating first: there is no such thing as "reality" in any theatrical exhibition that can properly be called a play. The reason for this is that stage time is not, and cannot be, street time. In street time, Willy Loman's story would take sixty-two years to play out instead of two and a half hours. Thus, whether a play strives for straight realism or for some more abstracted style, with the very act of condensation the artificial enters even as the first of its lines is being written. The only important question is the nature of that artificiality and how it is acknowledged by the play, and what ought to be judged is not the extent to which the artifice is "non-linear" or "metaphorical" or "dreamlike" but rather its efficiency in getting across the playwright's vision of life. This in turn raises questions about a style's suitability to its subject and about the kind of language—what variation on "real" speech—the playwright chooses.

When I began writing plays in the late Thirties, "realism" was the reigning style in the English-language commercial theater, which was just about all the theater there was at the time in America and Britain. Theater could still be thought of then as a popular art, though one knew (and this was long before television) that something of its mass appeal had gone out of it, and a lot of its Twenties glamour, too. In general, one blamed the movies, which had stolen theater's audience and thus its civic power, such as it was, as well as its cultural influence. Despite the obvious fact that our audience was predominantly middle class, we continued to believe that we were making theater for an audience comprising a representative variety of New York City people and even beyond; in other words, theatergoers of many different cultural and educational levels. In New York, where plays had a ticket price of 55¢ to $4.40 (as opposed to $40 to $100 today), one somehow took for granted that a professor might be sitting next to a housewife, a priest beside a skilled worker, or a grammar school teacher, or a business executive, or a student. This perception of a democratic audience, accurate or not, influenced the writing of plays directed at the commonsensical experience of everyday people. (Black or Asian or Hispanic faces were not represented, of course, but these were beyond the consciousness of the prevailing culture.) Even into the Forties, production costs were relatively within reason; plays such as *All My Sons* or *Death of a Salesman*, for example, cost between $20,000 and $40,000 to produce, a budget small enough to be raised among half a dozen modest contributors who could afford to lose their investment with some embarrassment but reasonably little pain, given the killing they occasionally would make.

We were torn, those of us who tried to convince ourselves that we were carrying on the time-honored tradition of theater as a civic art rather

than as a purely commercial exercise, because to attract even the fitful interest of a Broadway producer, and thus to engage the audience, we had to bow to realism, even if we admired and wished to explore the more "poetic" forms. An Expressionist like the German Ernst Toller, for example, would not have been read past his sixth page by a Broadway producer or, for that matter, by a producer in London. There is not one "important" playwright of Toller's era who was then, or is now, welcome in the commercial theater, not Chekhov, not Ibsen, not Hauptmann, not Pirandello, Strindberg, Turgenev, or even Shaw.

To perform a Beckett play like *Waiting for Godot* in the proximity of today's Broadway, one has to have a cast of movie stars for a very short run, as was done a little while back at Lincoln Center with Robin Williams, Steve Martin, F. Murray Abraham, Bill Irwin, and Lukas Haas. Things were probably worse half a century ago or more. One need only read Eugene O'Neill's letters castigating the "Showshop" mentality of Broadway and the narrow compass of the American theater audience's imagination, or Shaw's ridiculing of British provincialism, to understand that for some mysterious reason the Anglo-Saxon culture has regarded theater as an entertainment first and last, an art of escape with none of the Continental or Russian involvement in moral or philosophical obligations. The English-language theater was, in fact, almost pridefully commercial; it was a profit-making enterprise wedded to a form whose "realistic" veneer would be universally recognized. Musicals were the exception—they alone had the happy license to part from reality, at least to some extent—but for straight plays even satire was uncommercial enough to merit George Kaufman's definition of it as what closes on Saturday night.



The point is that what we think of as "straight realism" was tiresome half a century ago but nonetheless went unquestioned as a reflection of life by audience and reviewer alike. At a time when "experimental" is all that need be said of a play for it to gain serious consideration, it is not a bad idea to confess that an extraordinarily few such researches have achieved any kind of enduring life. It is not quite enough to know how to escape restrictions; sooner or later one also has to think of arriving somewhere.

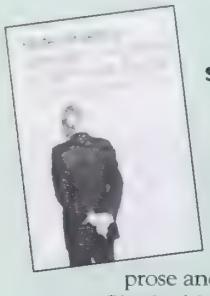
WHEN "EXPERIMENTAL" IS ALL THAT NEED BE SAID OF A PLAY FOR IT TO GAIN SERIOUS ATTENTION, WE SHOULD ADMIT THAT FEW SUCH PLAYS ENDURE

American theater's one formal innovation in the Thirties, and probably the single exception to realism's domination, was the WPA's Living Newspaper. An epic in presentational form, written like movies by groups of writers under an editor-producer rather than individually, the Living Newspaper dealt exuberantly with social issues such as public ownership of electrical power, labor unions, agriculture, and medicine, and was extremely popular. The WPA was government-subsidized, using un-

Illustrations by Ray Bartkus

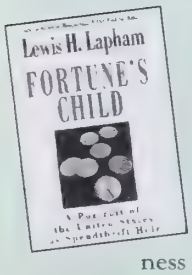
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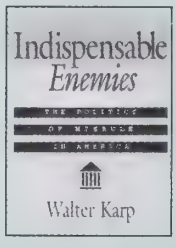
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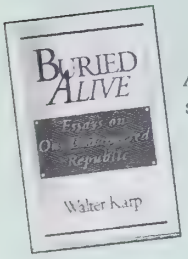




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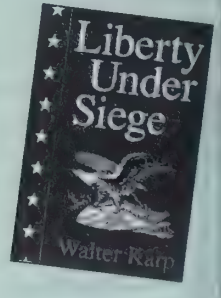


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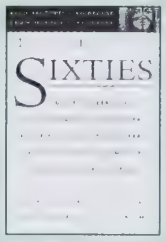


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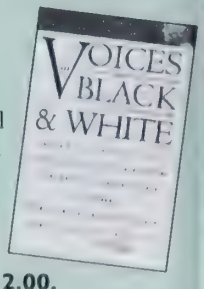


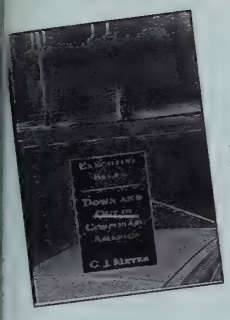
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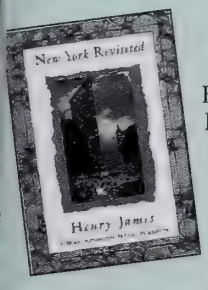
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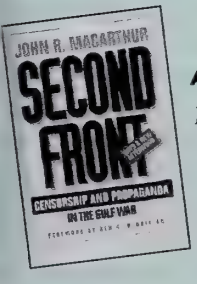
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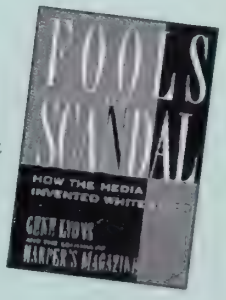


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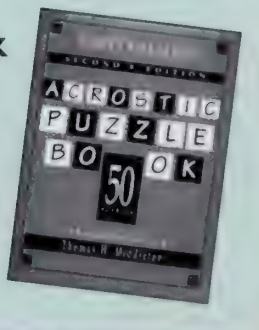


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COULD A STYLE BE CREATED THAT INSISTED ON A REALITY OF CHARACTERS AND THEMES YET ALSO OPENED THE STAGE TO QUESTIONS OF PUBLIC MORALITY?

employed actors, designers, and technicians, and had no need to make a profit, so a show could call upon large casts and elaborate production elements. And the ticket price was low. It could send Orson Welles, for example, into Harlem storefronts with a big cast playing *Macbeth*, charging a quarter a seat. Theater-for-profit was hardly affected by what might be called this epic-populist approach, because, then as now, it was simply too expensive to produce commercially.

My own first playwriting attempt was purely mimetic, a realistic play about my own family. It won me some prizes and productions, but, interestingly, I could not wait to turn at once to a stylized treatment of life in a gigantic prison—modeled on Jackson state penitentiary in Michigan, near Ann Arbor, where I was in school. Jackson, with something like six thousand inmates, was the largest prison in the United States. I had visited the place over weekends with a friend, who, having taken one psychology course in college, was appointed its lone psychologist. The theme of my play, *The Great Disobedience*, was that prisons existed to make desperate working men insane. There was a chorus of sane prisoners chanting from a high overpass above the stage, and a counter-chorus of the insane trying to draw the other into their ranks. Inevitably, I discovered a strange problem of dramatic language, which could not engage so vast a human disaster with speech born in a warm kitchen. And this led to the question of whether the essential pressure toward poetic dramatic language, if not toward stylization itself, came from the inclusion of society as a major element in a play's story or vision. Manifestly, prose realism was the language of the individual and of private life; poetry, the language of the man in the crowd, in society. Put another way, prose was the language of family relations; it was the inclusion of the larger world beyond that naturally opened a play to the poetic. Was it possible to create a style that would at once deeply engage an American audience that insisted on a recognizable reality of characters, locales, and themes while at the same time opening the stage to considerations of public morality and the mythic social fates—in short, to the invisible?

Of course, this was hardly my preoccupation alone. I doubt there was ever a time when so much discussion went on about form and style. T. S. Eliot was writing his verse plays; Auden and Isherwood, their own. The poetic mimesis of Sean O'Casey was most popular, and W. B. Yeats's dialogue was studied and praised, if not very often produced. The realism of Broadway—and the Strand and the Boulevard theater of France—was detested by the would-be poetic dramatists of my generation, just as it had always been since it came into vogue in the nineteenth century. What did this realism really come down to? A play devoid of symbolic or metaphysical persons and situations, its main virtue verisimilitude, with no revolutionary implications for society. Quite simply, conventional realism was conventional because it avowedly or implicitly supported convention. But it could just as easily do something quite different, or so it seemed. We thought of it as the perfect style for an unchallenging, simple-minded, linear, middle-class, conformist view of life. What I found confusing at the time, however, was that it was not so very long before the term "realism" came to be applied to the revolutionary style of playwrights like Ibsen, Chekhov, and, quite frequently, Strindberg, writers whose whole thrust was in opposition to the bourgeois status quo and the hypocrisies on which it stood.

Clifford Odets, for a few years in the mid-Thirties, was more wildly and lavishly celebrated than any playwright before or since. For younger writers such as myself, Odets was the trailblazer not just because of his declared radicalism but because of the fact that his plays were so manifestly written. But there was a misapprehension behind his popularity, too; since his characters were the very exemplars of realistic theater, lacking strangeness or stylish elegance, Odets was called a realist—indeed, a kind of reporter, no less, of Jewish life in the Bronx. I had never lived in the

Bronx, but the speech of Brooklyn Jews could not have been much different, and it had no resemblance whatever to the way Odets's people spoke:

> I'm super-disgusted with you!
> A man hits his wife and it is the first step to fascism!
> Look in the papers! On every side the clouds of war—
> Ask yourself a pertinent remark: could a boy make a living playing this instrument [a violin] in our competitive civilization today?
> I think I'll run across the street and pick up an eight-cylinder lunch.

Odets was turning dialogue into his personal jazz, and the surprised audience roared with delight. But had any Bronxite—or anyone else—ever really exclaimed, "God's teeth, no!" or, "What exhaust pipe did he crawl out of?" or, "I feel like I'm shot from a cannon"?

Inevitably, in a theater defined by realism, this had to be mistakenly labeled as simply a kind of reported news from the netherworld. But of course it was a poet's invented diction, with slashes of imagery of a sort never heard before, onstage or off. Odets's fervent ambition was to burst the bounds of Broadway while remaining inside its embrace, there being no other theatrical place in America for him to go. When the time came, as it probably had to, when some of the surprise was no longer there, and when critics took the same pleasure in putting him down as they had in building him up, he found himself homeless on Broadway, and he left for the movies.

I suppose his fate may have had some effect on my own explorations into "alternative" forms as I came out of the Thirties. All I knew for sure was that the word "poetry" wasn't enough if a play's underlying structure was a fractured one, a concept not fully realized. A real play was the discovery of the unity of its contradictions, and the essential poetry, the first poetry, was the synthesis of even the least of its parts to form a symbolic meaning. A certain consistency was implicit. The oak does not sprout maple leaves, and a certain kind of self-conscious lyricism does not belong in a realistic work. In short, I had come to believe that if one could create a very strong unity in a work, any audience could be led anywhere. Ideally, a good play must offer as sound an emotional proof of its thesis as a law case does factually, and you couldn't really do that with words alone, lovely as they might be.

Odets's contribution, ironically, was not his realistic portrayal of social reality—his alleged aim—but his willingness to be artificial; he brought back artificiality, if you will, just as ten years later Tennessee Williams did so with his birdsong from the magnolias. But Williams had an advantage: his language could be far more faithful to its real-world sources. Southern people really did love to talk, and often elaborately, and in accents much like Amanda's in *The Glass Menagerie:*

> But Laura is, thank heavens, not only pretty but also very domestic. I'm not at all. I never was a bit. I never could make a thing but angel-food cake. Well, in the South we had so many servants. Gone, gone, gone. All vestige of gracious living! Gone completely! I wasn't prepared for what the future brought me. All my gentlemen callers were sons of planters and so of course I assumed that I would be married to one and raise my family on a large piece of land with plenty of servants. But man proposes—and woman accepts the proposal! To vary that old, old saying a little bit—I married no planter! I married a man who worked for the telephone company! That gallantly smiling gentleman over there! [*Points to husband's picture*] A telephone man who—fell in love with long distance! Now he travels and I don't even know where!

This, too, was called realism, but then how did it differ from the conventional realistic play? Clearly the very action of Williams's plays, certainly the best of them, was working toward the building of a symbolic meaning that would express both the psychological development of his characters and his personal specter of a menacing America struggling with

"POETRY" WASN'T ENOUGH IF A PLAY'S STRUCTURE WAS A FRACTURED ONE. REAL POETRY WAS THE SYNTHESIS OF A PLAY'S PARTS INTO SYMBOLIC MEANING

IN THE DEPRESSION IT WAS ALL BUT IMPOSSIBLE FOR A LEFT WRITER NOT TO THINK OF THE ACT OF WRITING AS A FULCRUM FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

its own repressed sexuality. His earliest work is shot through with the left-wing attitudes of the time, which he managed gradually to fuse with his own vulnerability, his pain and anxiety at being overwhelmed and defeated by a crazy violence that underlay the American, one might say the whole Western, ethos. Without that confession of his pain and anxiety—his tragic vision—his words alone would have seemed, I think, flowery and excessively romantic.

To consider such writers as purely private, self-involved persons is to disserve the truth. Odets when he began thought his egalitarian Marxism would heal America and create its new community, and Williams unfurled the banner of a forlorn but gallant resistance to the mendacity and the violence aimed at the oddball, the poet, the sexual dissident. But it may as well be admitted that in their different ways both men in the bitter end unwittingly collaborated with the monster they believed was trying to destroy them.

O'Neill, of course, was an aesthetic rebel, but his socialism was private and did not inform his plays (though *The Hairy Ape* is surely an anticapitalist work). It was his formal experiments and tragic ambience that set him apart. But O'Neill was a totally isolated phenomenon in the Broadway theater as a maker and user of new and old theatrical forms. Odets, on the other hand, while describing himself as a man of the left, was, with the possible exception of his first produced play, *Waiting for Lefty*, no innovator where form was concerned. His was a poetic realism, but it was still bound to recognizably real types in actual social relationships. And this was perhaps inevitable; as both actor and revolutionary he had his eye on the great public and the reconstitution of power once a failed capitalism had been brought down. In the Depression, it was all but impossible for a left writer not to think of the act of writing as a fulcrum for social change. Odets saw himself not only as a political realist but as an anarchic poet, a word-nurse (he kept a file of startling locutions) whose novel twists of language would lift his work into the skies. O'Neill, on the other hand, was not the revolutionary but the rebel, a despairing anarchist who, if he glimpsed any salvation, knew that it could come only with the tragic cleansing of the life-lie that is permanently ensconced in the human condition. Since, unlike Odets, he did not obligate himself to even foreshadow some new and better polity in place of the present corrupt one, he was free to explore all sorts of theatrical means by which to set forth the extant situation of the damned—that is, the Americans. Moreover, if O'Neill wanted his plays to register in the here and now, as he surely did, they need not necessarily be popular to justify his having written them, for he was hunting the sounding whale of ultimate meaning, and he expected to suffer for it (and to be misunderstood) as his models, like Strindberg, had. As much



as any playwright could be, O'Neill seemed hardened to the possibility of failure, pledged as he was to drag the theater into the unfamiliar world of spirit and metaphysic.

A critical or box-office failure for Odets meant rejection of a far more personal kind, a spit in the eye by an ungrateful and self-satisfied bourgeois society. A failed play was a denial of what Odets was owed, for he was chasing the public no differently than did his bourgeois and nonrevolutionary contemporaries, a public as fickle as it always was and is. O'Neill could say, as he did, that he was interested in relations not among men but between Man and God. For America, in his view, was damned, from virtue estranged by fixations on gain, property, racism, social climbing, and the rest of the materialist agenda.

A good style for O'Neill was basically a question of the apt use of metaphor, imagery, and argot. "I wish to God I could write like that!" he wrote to O'Casey, who, incidentally, would no doubt have called himself a "realistic" writer in the sense that he was trying to turn Irish attention to Irish reality. But like Williams, O'Casey came from a culture that loved talk and sucked on language like a sweet candy:

> MRS. GOGAN: Oh, you've got a cold on you, Fluther.
> FLUTHER: Ah, it's only a little one.
> MRS. GOGAN: You'd want to be careful, all th' same. I knew a woman, a big lump of a woman, red-faced and round-bodied, a little awkward on her feet; you'd think, to look at her, she could put out her two arms an' lift a two-storied house on th' top of her head; got a ticklin' in her throat, an' a little cough, an' th' next mornin' she had a little catchin' in her chest, an' they had just time to wet her lips with a little rum, an' off she went.

Even in the most mundane of conversational exchanges, O'Casey sought, and as often as not found, the lift of poetry. Indeed, that was the whole point—that the significantly poetic sprang from the raw and real experience of ordinary people. J. M. Synge, O'Casey's forerunner at the turn of the century, had struck a similar chord. Synge was in a supremely conscious revolt against the banality of most theater language. As he wrote, the popular imagination was still

> fiery and magnificent, and tender; so that those of us who wish to write start with a chance that is not given to writers in places where the springtime of the local life has been forgotten, and the harvest is a memory only, and the straw has been turned into bricks.

Synge rejected the then-dominant Ibsen and Zola for their realism with "joyless and pallid words" and instead, as in *Riders to the Sea*, when the women are lamenting the deaths of so many of their men working the angry sea, wrote

> MAURYA: In the big world the old people do be leaving things after them for their sons and children, but in this place it is the young men do be leaving things behind for them that do be old.

Here it might be useful to remember that James Joyce, another Irish poet, revered Ibsen notwithstanding the pallor of his words in English, for Joyce had, by learning Ibsen's Norwegian, penetrated the poetic structure of the plays and their outcry against the spiritual failure of the modern world.

The advent of the Absurd and of Beckett and his followers both obscured and illuminated the traditional discussion of theater style. The Beckett difference, as it might be called, was to introduce humble people, or social sufferers—bums, in fact—with the plainest of language arranged so as to announce and develop pure theme. His could be called a presentational thematic play, announcing what it was about and never straying very far from what it sought to prove or what his instinct had led him to

BECKETT INTRODUCED HUMBLE PEOPLE (BUMS, IN FACT) WITH THE PLAINEST OF LANGUAGE ARRANGED SO AS TO ANNOUNCE AND DEVELOP PURE THEME

MY OWN TENDENCY HAS BEEN TO SHIFT STYLES ACCORDING TO THE NATURE OF MY SUBJECT SO THAT THE SPEECH COMES NATURALLY FROM THE CHARACTERS

confirm. Beckett had parted with the time-honored tradition of inferential playwriting, in which the author's thematic intentions were inferred from a seemingly autonomous story whose climax consisted of the joining together of story and the finally revealed underlying theme. With Beckett, the story *was* the theme, inseparably so, from page one. Moreover, he blatantly interpreted the story himself in his dialogue.

By the Fifties, the notion that an elevated tone or diction was required for an escape from common realism was discarded in favor of the most common, undecorated speech. But it was not the traditional speech of realistic plays. Rather, it was a speech bent almost out of recognition by a surreal deracination. The Absurdist approach at first seemed to me to be celebrating the impotence of human hopes, even the futility of action itself. All but the flimsiest connectiveness between utterances was eventually eliminated, creating an atmosphere of sinister danger (in Pinter) or (in Beckett) the threatening sense of immanence familiar from bad dreams. Man was unique because he tripped over himself, and it was quite as though the emphatic absence of purpose in the characters had created a loss of syntax. I take it that in later years Beckett took pains to clarify this impression of human futility, emphasizing the struggle against inertia as his theme. In any case, however ridiculous so much of his dialogue is, the tenderness of feeling in his work is emphatically not that of the cynic or the hard ironist.

Beckett fused style and meaning organically, the dominating theme of *Godot* being stasis and the struggle to overcome humanity's endlessly repetitious paralysis before the need to act and change. We hear this theme as blatantly as a train announcement and as stripped clean as a bleached bone.

ESTRAGON: Then adieu.
POZZO: Adieu.
VLADIMIR: Adieu.
POZZO: Adieu.
VLADIMIR: Adieu.
POZZO: Adieu.
ESTRAGON: Adieu.
Silence.
POZZO: And thank you.
VLADIMIR: Thank *YOU.*
POZZO: Not at all.
ESTRAGON: Yes yes.
POZZO: No no.
VLADIMIR: Yes yes.
ESTRAGON: No no.
Silence.
POZZO: I don't seem to be able . . . (*long hesitation*) . . . to depart.
ESTRAGON: Such is life.

This is a vaudeville at the edge of the cliff, but vaudeville anyway, so I may be forgiven for being reminded of Jimmy Durante's ditty—"Didja ever get the feelin' that you wanted to go? But you wanted to stay? But you wanted to go?" Here is a language shorn of metaphor, simile, everything but its instructions, so the listener may hear the theme like a nail drawn across a pane of glass. *Godot* does not make the mistake of so many of its imitators; in its flight from realism it does not leave structure behind.

My own tendency has been to shift styles according to the nature of my subject. *All My Sons, The Crucible, A View from the Bridge, Death of a Salesman, The Price, The American Clock,* my earliest work like *The Golden Years,* about the destruction of Mexico by the Spaniards, and the more recent plays like *The Creation of the World, Some Kind of Love Story, The Last Yankee,* and *Broken Glass* all differ greatly in their language. I have done this in order to find speech that springs naturally out of the charac-

ers and their backgrounds rather than imposing a general style. If my approach to playwriting is partly literary, I hope it is well hidden.

It is necessary to employ the artificial in order to arrive at the real. More than one actor in my plays has told me that it is surprisingly difficult to memorize their dialogue. The speeches sound like real, almost reported talk when in fact they are intensely composed, compressed into a sequential inevitability that seems natural but isn't. But all this, important though it may be, is slightly to one side of the point. Experimental or traditional, the real question to ask of a work is whether it brings news, something truly felt by its author, an invention on his part or an echo.

The struggle with what might be called reportorial realism, written "the way people talk," is at least as old as the century. And although realism can land us further from common reality than can the most fantastic caprice, in the end stylization in the theater will be justified not by its novelty—at least not for long—but by the degree to which it illuminates how life works in our time. How a thing is said is only as new as what it is saying. The proof of this is the deep pile of experimental plays of two, three, five, ten years ago, which can only be appreciated anymore by the scholar-specialist. It is a pile, incidentally, no smaller than the one for so many conventionally realistic plays of the same era. Finding truth is no easier now when we are totally free to use any stylistic means at hand than it was a century or half a century ago, when a play had to be "real" to be read at all and had to make sense to sensible people.

Call it a question of personal taste rather than principle, but I think that in theater work there is an optimum balance between two kinds of approaches: One is the traditional attempt to fill characters with acknowledged emotion, "as in life." The other is in effect to evacuate emotion from characters, merely referring to their subjective life rather than acting it out, the so-called camp style. In his speculative prose, Brecht, for one, called for such a drying out of script and acting, but except in his most agitprop and forgettable plays he failed or declined to practice this method. The strict containment not of emotion but of emotionalism is the hallmark of the Greek tragic plays, of Molière and Racine and the Japanese Noh plays, whereas Shakespeare, it seems to me, is the balance, the fusion of idea and feeling. In short, it is by no means the abstracting of emotion I dislike; it is the lack of feeling and the substitution of fashionably alienated ironies in its place.

There has been a plethora of plays in recent years whose claim to modernity is based on indicated rather than felt emotion. The assumption, I suppose, is that this *sec* quality lends a play an intellectuality it may or may not have earned and in any case rescues it from the banality of work aimed at the audience's belly rather than its head. The big devil to be avoided is sentimentality, emotion unearned.

Theater, like politics, is always the art of the possible. And when economics makes it impossible to employ more than four or five actors in a single unchanging set, when competition for actors by TV and films prevents them from maturing in theater work, when the cost of advertising makes it effectively impossible for a play to survive without nearly unanimous critical praise, it seems to me a shame to dismiss a play that is not camp simply because it moves an audience. Can't it be art if it moves people? If the pun can be pardoned, man lives not by head alone, and the balance between the two modes, one aimed at the mind and one the flesh, as it were, is what will interpret life more fully. After all, at least part of what we ask of a modern play is to show us what life now *feels* like.

Ultimately, every assault on the human mystery falls back to the ground, changing little, but the flight of the arrow continues claiming our attention over a longer time when its direction is toward the castle of reality rather than the wayward air. ■

STYLIZATION IN THE THEATER WILL BE JUSTIFIED NOT BY ITS NOVELTY BUT BY THE DEGREE TO WHICH IT ILLUMINATES HOW LIFE WORKS IN OUR TIME

ENTER THE CHICKEN

On the bayou, cockfighting remains undefeated

By Burkhard Bilger

"Suddenly we noticed barnyard cocks beginning a bitter fight just in front of the door. We chose to watch."—St. Augustine, *De Ordine*

The road from Baton Rouge to Lafayette snakes through the heart of Louisiana's Cajun country, and is barely elevated, at times, above the swamp's reach. On the night I traveled it, floodwaters from the north had already strained the levees to bursting, threatening to capsize chemical barges along the Mississippi; now a thunderstorm swept in to finish the job. My plane had spent hours in a holding pattern above this storm, and the kerschlick of my tires ticked off every second of delay: midnight in the bayou seemed an inauspicious setting for a cockfight.

I was looking for a club called the Red Rooster, near the town of Maurice. A cockfighter named Jim Demoruelle had promised to meet me there, though I was three hours late. Ours would be a perfectly legal meeting—cockfighting has never been outlawed in Louisiana—yet I felt like I was going undercover. Cockfighters are strange attractors of vice, I'd been told, conduits for drugs and gambling and episodes of [illegible] publicity and bile [illegible]

[illegible]

assiduously as any drug cartel or pornography ring. A few weeks earlier, I'd tracked down the editor of a cockfighting magazine at an unlisted number in rural Arkansas. When I called, she barked into the phone, "You sound like one of them animal lovers to me" and hung up.

If Demoruelle had agreed to meet me, I thought, it was because he was a little desperate. As president of the Louisiana Gamefowl Breeders' Association, Demoruelle had managed to fight off "the humaniacs" for years, but history seemed to be turning against him. Once a sport of kings and country gentlemen, cockfighting was a misdemeanor in twenty-nine states and a felony in sixteen. Arizona, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, and Oklahoma still allowed it, but in Louisiana some of the sport's biggest boosters had been swept out of office, and in Arizona and Missouri animal-rights groups were mounting state referendums on the sport. "It's the beginning of the end," a spokeswoman for the Humane Society of the United States said. "When it's so few states left, you get a kind of landslide effect."

And yet, at the same time, cockfighting has never been more popular. There are at least 500,000 cockfighters in the United States, and due to immigration of Asians and Latin Americans, the number grows every year. There are three national cockfighting magazines—*Feathered Warrior*, *Gamecock*, and *Grit and Steel*—and there are cockpits in even the most tranquil, law-abiding communities. When I told the name of my hometown in Oklahoma to a criminologist who specializes in cockfighting, he laughed. "Oh yeah. I know that place. There's a pit just outside of the city limits."

Part of me wanted to go back and see that side of small-town life, to rattle my memories like the false fronts of a Hollywood set. But another part, Demoruelle must have known, was just looking for a thrill. When he wasn't fighting chickens, Demoruelle worked in a drug-rehab center, and he knew all about forbidden pleasure. "Be careful," he'd told me, only half joking. "If you get into this thing, you might really like it. I can get somebody off drugs or alcohol better than I can off of chickens."

Beyond my headlights, the night was nearly absolute, the skeletal landscape exposed by lightning now and then, as if by X ray. I was almost to the next town by the time a low, rickety building swam into view. Turning in, I saw a few dozen pickup trucks scattered across the mud and gravel, as if flung there by the storm. Off to the side, perched on the embankment, a portable neon sign flickered and buzzed in the rain: R D R OST R.

Demoruelle was standing on the top rung of the bleachers across the

oom, arms folded over his beefy hest. Athough I'd only heard his oice, I picked him out of the crowd ght away: silver hair, bullish fea-ures, melancholy eyes. Even at that istance, he radiated a kind of sullen ower, surveying the scene like Hen-y VIII inspecting his troops. A few yes locked onto mine as I came in, ut when Demoruelle raised his and and called me over, they drift-d back to the fight. A moment later was standing within his protective ircle, shaking hands with two men vho flanked him like lieutenants.

It was then that I began to notice n odd thing: the Red Rooster was a airly cozy place. Warm and brightly it, high-ceilinged and amiably sloppy n its construction, it seemed better uited to a Boy Scout jamboree than a ockfight. Over in the central tier of leachers a mother was tickling her oddler into ecstatic peals of laughter. A few rows down, a woman was nurs-ng her baby within touching distance f the cocks, cupping her hands over he child's ears when their squabbling rew too loud. There were crawfish armers in overalls and old-timers rading gossip, a woman hawking ockfighting T-shirts, and teenagers oitering in the aisles, flirting between ips of Dr. Pepper. It was 2:00 A.M. by ow, and the Red Rooster looked as armless as a bingo parlor.

Where were all the drunks and cofflaws, dope fiends and edgy hus-lers? Where were the "vain, idle, and vanton minds," as William Penn vrote in 1682, who "gratify their own ensualities and raise the like wicked uriosity in others"? I felt like some South Sea explorer, making my way ast spooky totems and grim palisades nly to find a few peaceable villagers nside, eating roots and swatting at lies. "It's almost like a demographic rozen in time," sociologist Clifton Bryant later told me. "The country hanged, but cockfighters didn't." In 974 and again in 1991, Bryant con-ducted national surveys of cockfight-ers. "They're mostly middle-class, rom small towns or the country, nore likely to be married, more likely o stay married, more likely to go to hurch, to be veterans," he says. "In act, if you tried to go back and put ogether a typical American of the 1940s or '50s, that would be a cock-fighter."

Demoruelle's friends were typical cockers. Sonny Wabinga, to his left, was an Army ranger on his third tour of duty. He had a moon-shaped face, wide, dreaming eyes, and a body as compact and lethal as any game-cock's. I'd once seen film clips of rangers on patrol so sleep-deprived they mistook tree branches for tele-phones and tried to call home. Sur-viving that sort of thing, and raising chickens, had given Sonny an oddly upbeat Darwinian outlook. "My wife's German and I'm Filipino, so my boys have the power and the speed." John Hickerson, to Demoru-elle's right, was lanky and gray-haired, with the loose, loquacious manner of a cowboy poet. He is from Michigan, but had to come south to do his cockfighting. "Where I come from," he said, "it's a felony just to own cockfighting *equipment*."



Photograph by Nathan Benn / Corbis Bettmann

They made a strange threesome, standing on that bench together, calling out their bets: a St. Bernard, a pit bull, and a bloodhound all howling at the same moon. As Son-ny put it, "If you have chickens, great, we can talk. Otherwise . . ." He smiled his strange smile and turned to the fight.

The cockpit rose from the center of the room like a miniature thunder-dome: an octagonal cage, eight feet high and more than twenty feet across, surrounded on three sides by bleachers. The cage was meant to protect the audience, not to confine the birds, Demoruelle told me. "They say we're cruel, that we're making them fight. But I guarantee, if you put those chickens on either end of a football field, they'd crow and charge and end up fighting at the fifty-yard line." He spoke in a flat, faintly Gal-lic grumble, with flashes of local col-or but not much music—the voice of a man who'd never gotten used to defending himself. But I believed him. The two men entering the pit just then were cradling their birds like jars of nitroglycerin. The cocks' heads jutted from their owners' arms, wild-eyed and quivering, desperate for release. From where I sat, they looked less like farm animals than birds of prey, barely a chromosome removed from gyrfalcons.

If cockfighting is still legal in Louisiana, if calling it immoral can still get your nose broken, this is why: most blood sports are merely cruel; no bear or badger is willingly baited, and dogs rarely fight to the death. But chickens are different. Egg factories can lose as much as 80 percent of their layers to cannibalism, unless they cut off the birds' beaks; and even on a free range, roosters are seized by blood lust now and then. "We call it

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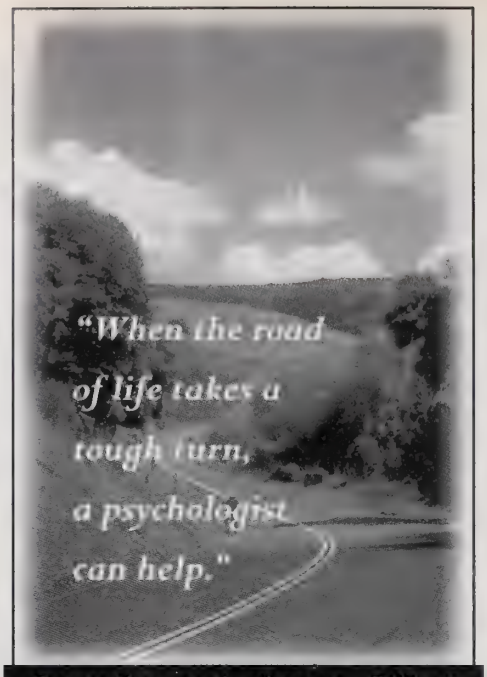
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comin' into their pride," one chicken breeder told me. "After a storm some times, you'll go out into the yard and it'll be littered with dead birds."

Still, a good gamecock, like a good roaster, is largely a human invention. Three thousand years ago, Asian cockfighters took the most unfriendly birds on the planet—jungle fowl, *Gallus gallus*—and proceeded to make them even meaner. Over the years, cockfighters crossed them with Himalayan Bankivas for speed and flying kicks, and with Malay birds for stamina and wallop. They taught them to punch and feint and roll. They marched them through gamecock calisthenics, trimmed their wattles and combs, and stuffed red pepper up their anuses. A few thousand generations later, this was the result: two birds programmed to kill each other, each a glimmering alloy of instinct, training, and breeding.

Below us in the pit, the two men were standing side by side now, swaying toward each other like dancers bumping hips, holding their birds at waist-level and letting them peck at each other. "Gamecocks are meant to fight," Demoruelle said, finally. "Anyway, they were doing it when Christ walked the earth, and he never said a word about it." Then he held up a roll of $10 bills and hollered, "Fifteen on the gray!"

Two rows down, a hairless old man with ears like flügel horns turned and nodded.

The art of cockfighting, the Kama Sutra tells us, is one of the sixty-four things that every sophisticated woman should know. The rules are simple: two roosters are matched by weight and given identical weapons (wild cocks use their bony back spurs to fight, but cockfighters cut these off and strap knives or gaffs, like curved ice picks, onto the stumps). Once armed, the birds are placed in a ring and launched at each other like self-guided missiles, exploding in a flurry of beaks and feet. The fight is no-holds-barred, but it's a controlled sort of mayhem, full of stops and starts and odd points of etiquette. When a cock stops fighting, the referee counts to twenty and then calls a twenty-second break. (In Bali, they

drop a pierced coconut into a pail full of water; when the coconut sinks, the birds fight.) If a cock goes down for three counts of ten and one count of twenty, or if he runs away or simply dies, the fight is over.

The whole thing can look a lot like a boxing match, but with one essential difference: "gameness" matters more here than landing punches. Your bird may be mortally wounded, he may even drop dead while chasing the other bird, but if he's the last one to show some fight, he wins.

Those are the basics, and any young adept could learn them in a day. But in a cockpit everything bristles with hidden meanings. Before a cock steps into the pit, for instance, the owner may lick his bird's weapons, or the referee may swab them with wet cotton and squeeze the water into the bird's beak. Both acts have a certain strange sensuality, a symbolic aptness, but the reason behind them is prosaic: some cockfighters have a fondness for poison. On the Venezuelan island of Margarita, for example, the locals like to coat their knives with sting-ray venom before a fight, or they may spread a foul-smelling ointment beneath the bird's wings: when the opponent runs to escape the odor, the referee will disqualify him. Some cockfighters have been known to poison the other bird's food, or else reach over and snap a small bone in his back when no one's looking.

To protect their birds, most cockfighters keep them hidden until just before a fight and sometimes put them under guard. Still, nothing can thwart the most determined cheater. In one famous case, in the Philippines, a local mayor was at a cockpit when his bird began to lose. Rather than wait for a decision, the man pulled out a .45 and blew the other bird away. All bets were off, he declared, since the fight never officially ended. His armed bodyguards made sure everyone agreed.

At the Red Rooster, the betting was more casual—Demoruelle was the highest roller here, and he was sticking to twenties—and cheating was a rarity. Once the voices died down, the handlers set their birds behind lines of white cornmeal, eight

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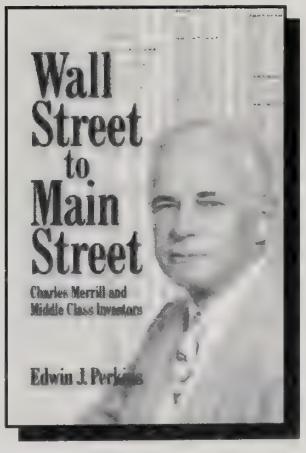
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feet apart in the dirt, and waited for the referee to shout "Pit!" To the left was a "gray," in cockfighter's terms: a tall, lean bird with creamy hackles, gray-green legs, and auburn wings. To the right was a stockier "red," with crimson hackles, yellow legs, and dark wings, his tail iridescent with ruby and turquoise. Like warrior monks preparing for an ordeal, they'd both spent two days fasting, in darkness and isolation, preserving their strength and stoking their frustrations. Depending on their owners, they might be fueled by injections of testosterone, vitamin K to clot their wounds more quickly, and digitalis to speed up their already racing hearts. Now the bright lights and shouting faces were sending them into overdrive. "A bird should have a little nervousness to him right before a fight," Demoruelle said, watching them squirm, "a tremble, a twitch to him, like a boxer."

What came next, to my eyes, was an almost meaningless blur. But to Demoruelle it unspooled in slow motion, every frame distinct: The referee's hoarse shout, unnaturally drawn out in the sudden quiet; the handlers watching his mouth, pulling back their hands as his lips pursed to speak; the cocks gathering themselves to leap, unfolding their wings as their necks strained upward; their legs driving toward each other, at the top of their arcs, talons spinning like teeth on a chain saw. And then the tumble, the scramble for footing, and another rattling clash.

"Oh, that was a good hit," Demoruelle said, when the red connected with a kick to the head. "The gray's hurt." Although most hits with a gaff aren't fatal, a good cock can do plenty of damage with it. "Oh hell, yes," Hickerson said. "If you hold a plastic milk jug up to them, they can punch eight holes in it before you can pull it away."

It was all a matter of opposing forces, Demoruelle explained. "When a rooster has his wings back, he brings his feet forward and his tail down like an air brake." He raised his hands and made a few quick jabs in the air. In his twenties, he went on, he was expert at the martial arts—"135 pounds and greased-chicken-shit fast"—and I could [illegible] the young fighter moving beneath his middle-aged bulk. "When you're watching a cockfight," he said, "you're watching pure karate."

Both roosters were striking home now, spraying the referee with blood and bits of down. They hurled themselves at each other in weary spasms, biting each other's necks and windmilling their feet, until their gaffs snagged and the handlers rushed in to separate them. Demoruelle had hoped the gray would gradually gain the upper hand—green-legged birds have more "bottom" than yellow-legged birds, he explained—but that didn't seem to be happening. After five minutes of fighting, both birds were wounded, though the gray looked worse: one eye dim, the other destroyed, pale feathers matted with blood, beak trembling with every breath. Between rounds, his handler held him close, swabbed his head with a wet sponge, and whispered to him urgently. When that didn't work, he put the bird's whole head in his mouth, sucked the blood from his throat, and then spat saliva into his beak. Little by little, the gray revived, twisting his head to glare across the ring.

A rooster's rage is a simple-minded thing. His courage is more complicated, and only certain weapons truly test it. So some cockfighters say, at least, and their choices divide them into camps as ardent and contrary as religious sects. In the Pacific islands and most of North America, cockfighters prefer the clean, quick kill of a knife fight. (Filipinos, who like their knives especially long, sometimes forge them from armor-piercing bullets.) In India and Pakistan, they breed huge, powerful Asile birds, wrap their feet to form miniature boxing gloves, and fight them for days on end. In the Caribbean and Louisiana, cockfighters tend to prefer gaffs, but even gaff fighters split into factions. Puerto Ricans cut off a bird's spur, scrape and varnish it until it's needle sharp, and strap it back on. Most Cajuns prefer their gaffs made of surgical steel, with a pointy end, but others favor a blunt gaff known as a peg awl.

Like a bullfight without a matador to finish the job, a gaff fight can go o for more than an hour, the cocks go ing each other again and again unt one surrenders from blood loss, e haustion, or fear. On this night, th gray and the red were soon lying si by side in the sand, chests heavin But even then the fight was far fro over. After a moment, the gray sta gered to his feet and flailed abo blindly, delirious with anger and pai

"Now that's heart," Hickerso murmured next to me. I looked ov at him: shoulders hunched tigh eyes squinting slightly, a twinge pleasure to his lips. Like most ga fighters, Hickerson was a throwback a believer in the ancient, prima meaning of the fight. Gaff fights ar long and brutal, he admitted, but th anguish was worth it, if only for tha one moment when two hearts ar put to the test. "At least with th gaffs, you're really only replacin their natural spurs," he told me late "And a gaff fight doesn't rely on few good kicks, it relies on this." H pointed to his chest.

Demoruelle started to chuckl when the red dashed away from th gray. "Did you see that guy's but start to pucker?" he said, jerking hi head toward the red's embarrasse owner. Gamecocks, for Demoruelle were more than symbols of courage they were stand-ins for their owner ("detachable, self-operating penises, in anthropologist Clifford Geertz' great phrase, "ambulant genital with a life of their own"). And whe they collided, he didn't just se windmilling feet; he saw convergin plotlines, intersecting histories crys tallized in a moment.

The gray eventually won hi match, and died in doing so. But th crowd barely seemed to notice. Mos of them weren't here for the gam bling, or the spectacle, or some terri ble communion. They were here fo something more mundane: a sense o community—one drawn all th tighter by secrecy and persecution "So what do you think?" Hickerso turned and asked. I shrugged. "If yo think it's hard for you to watch think how it is for me. I've raise chickens from birth, and they'r damn cute when they're little." H paused for a second, then added, "I'm

compassionate man. I have a lot of crippled roosters running around my yard that I should have gotten rid of a long time ago. It's bad business, really." Then he turned to watch the next fight, the same hungry look in his eyes.

Driving around Louisiana with Demoruelle and talking to him over the following months, I began to fill in the outlines of his double life. It had started, oddly enough, overseas. Although he grew up in the mecca of American cockfighting, he discovered the sport in 1960, as a nineteen-year-old Navy corpsman stationed in the Philippines. "There was this beautiful girl," he told me. "I wanted to date her, but when I finally worked my way around to asking, she said I had to meet her family first." The visit wasn't quite what he had expected. "I walked out into the courtyard and there all the men were," he remembered, "a beer in one hand, a rooster in the other."

He forgot about the girl eventually, but he fell in love with the birds. "Gamecocks will fight for their territory and defend it to the end," he told me. "They have a spirit about them that's very gallant." American men have very little of that spirit left in them, he said, but wherever he was stationed, he found it among cockfighters. He could stand on a hill in Borneo and listen to a rooster crow on another hill. If it was a gamecock—and he could always tell—he would knock on its owner's door, knowing he would not be refused. "I used to go out to the jungle to see fights between operations in Vietnam," he said. "I never worried about being kidnapped by the Viet Cong, though I'm sure they were there. I was a cockfighter like them."

It was back in the States, between tours, that he had to be careful. During the day he worked at Camp Pendleton in California, but evenings and weekends he gave to gamecocks, training them in secret for airline executives and others with a taste for the transgressive. Real cockpits were hard to hide from the authorities, so he would set up in local hotels. "We used to go up the service elevators real early on Sunday morning," he remembered. "We'd fight them in a suite with a tarp thrown over the floor, a few inches of dirt on top. By noon, we'd be out." Some say that cockfighting is more orderly where it's illegal, that codes of honor are more binding when they're a fighter's only guarantee. But Demoruelle disagreed. "In illegal states," he told me, "a lot of the people who do it are bad apples." Finally, in 1980, he went home to Louisiana, where he thought he had nothing to hide.

He lives and works back in Ville Platte now, not far from where he was born, and directs 156 employees at Evangeline Psychiatric Care. On the surface, he could be a poster boy for the Louisiana tourist board: farm owner, Cajun song composer, consumer of vast racks of baby-back ribs—"Laissez les bon temps roulez!" Yet his double life continues. Demoruelle's posh suburban house feels barely inhabited, its rooms oversized and echoey beneath their cathedral ceilings. His wife and children sometimes seem to float through the house like extras on a set. "Cockfighting wives tend to be either supporters or tolerators," he says. "Mine's a tolerator—and not much of one at that."

Standing in his driveway one morning after a cockfight, I felt oddly at home. The trim lawns and quiet neighbors, the sense of local culture pushed to the far edges of consciousness, could have placed me in any suburb in America. But fifteen minutes away, among rolling hills blanketed with pine, white oak, and magnolia trees, lay Demoruelle's game farm. And it was unlike anything I had ever seen.

When we stopped by, it was still early morning. A-frame huts, fashioned from cement or corrugated metal, marched across the weed-choked yard like miniature missile silos, their launching strips stretched out in front. Near each one a lone rooster kept vigil, often from the top of its hut, bound by one leg and screaming out challenges in ragged counterpoint to the others. "The crowing?" Demoruelle said. "That's all day. I don't even hear it anymore."

Although the farm looked like a bivouac in miniature, these birds were more pampered than any soldier. The average broiler chicken lives for six weeks, wing-to-wing with tens of thousands of others. These gamecocks, by contrast, typically lived for two to three years. And they lived like pashas. Every day, from 5:30 in the morning till sundown, three employees tended to their every need. They fed, trained, and vaccinated the birds; trimmed their feathers and searched their droppings for worms; put them on trapezes to strengthen their legs and slowly stroked the twitches out of them. If the birds still went a little stir crazy, the trainers might even bring around some nice, plump pullets to calm them down. "The prisons could learn something from us about conjugal visits," Demoruelle said. "The cocks won't fight as much if they get to see a female occasionally."

We walked around to his training room, crudely built of fiberglass and steel. An adolescent bird, or stag, begins its schooling at around nine months, he said, when he grows his spurs and starts to show some fight. He grabbed a scruffy red bird from one of the cages lining the wall. "First we'll put sparring muffs on 'em and let 'em hit each other once or twice," he said. "Then, about six weeks before their first fight, we'll start tamin' 'em and workin' 'em on the bench." He walked over to a table the size of an executive's desk, padded with foam and carpet, and ran the stag through a series of drills. He shoved the stag back and forth between his hands, making him sidestep as delicately as a dancer, pressed him down to strengthen his legs, then rolled him on his back ("that's not a natural position for a rooster") and flipped him backward through the air in a fluttering pinwheel; the bird landed deftly on his feet. "You can't train a rooster to fight," Demoruelle said. "But you're always looking for that little edge."

Every culture has its cockfighting secrets: In Louisiana old-timers feed their birds sulfur and gunpowder. In Martinique they rub them with rum

and herbs every morning. In Brittany they give them a sugar cube soaked in cognac before a fight. In Argentina, when a bird is wounded, the gauchos will rub his testicles until he ejaculates; if the sperm contains blood, the bird is retired. The one tradition that seems to cut across cultures—the one downside of training from the cock's perspective—is celibacy. Sex before a fight, cockers universally believe, will sap a bird of its fighting spirit. In the Philippines, the mere touch of a menstruating woman is said to spell doom.

Demoruelle had his share of tricks: to increase his birds' appetite, for instance, he gave them a little strychnine. But for the most part he put his money on exercise, nutrition, and breeding (like most American cockfighters, he could talk genetics like a postdoc). If a stag showed promise, Demoruelle would start fighting him at around eighteen months and keep on doing it for another two or three years. Then, if the bird was very lucky and survived, he would come back to the farm to stud.

Demoruelle had a few chickens in his yard that were more than six years old. One of them, a dark red bird with green legs known as Crooked Toe, was nine years old and had won seven fights. "I'd love to have 500 like him," Demoruelle said. "If I did, I'd have a Cadillac in every garage." As it was, he just about broke even, selling birds to Hawaiian businessmen at prices ranging from $75 to $500, though champion birds have been known to fetch $25,000. "If I quit everything else I could make a living at it—an old man's living," he said, "but I wouldn't get fat."

John Hickerson, walking next to me as we entered the feed shed, glanced around with unvarnished envy. "You have to understand that for 90 percent of cockfighters it's a losing proposition," he said. He scooped up a handful of greenish feed—a mixture of Canadian peas, corn, milo, oats, red wheat, and soybeans—from a drum the size of an oil barrel. "Look at this: nutrients. Not cheap." (Last year alone, Demoruelle's 300 gamecocks and chicks went through some 7,000 pounds of feed.) Hickerson went over to another drum, this one filled with a pink powder. "Oyster shell and granite for their beaks and gizzards. Not cheap." Then he swept his arm in a circle, pointing to the farm, the training rooms, the cages, and the surgery rooms. "Look around here and see the amount of work that goes into this each and every day, and you'll realize that the cockfight's only the culmination," he said. "It's only the last of things."

Hickerson had left behind his family, his job, and his roots in Michigan just to live in a house next to Demoruelle's farm and raise birds. More than for any of the others, cockfighting was a way of life for him—one he had been denied up North. In the battle over legal cockfighting in Louisiana, he was in this for the long haul. "We are the keepers of the chickens' genetic pool," he declared, as we climbed in the van and headed for another cockpit. "We can't afford to lose this stock." Wabinga nodded quietly in the front seat. "We are the keepers of the flame."

Outside our windows, beneath a lowering sky, the swamp forest was luminous green, its trunks and branches still black from recent rain. Hickerson popped in a tape by Woody Guthrie and told me about the Calumet copper strike of 1913. When the next song came on, he stopped in mid-sentence and began to sing along, half-smiling at the melodrama of it: *I ain't got no home, I'm just rambling 'round. Just a wand'rin' worker, I go from town to town. The police make it hard wherever I may go. And I ain't got no home in this world anymore.*

If ever there was a home for cockfighters, the cockpit we were visiting was it. Known as Sunrise, it was tucked along the border between Louisiana and Mississippi, and drew cockfighters from the entire region. Other pits were larger: Texoma, on the southern Oklahoma border, had given away $150,000 at a single fight the previous year, along with a new truck for the "Cock of the Year"; Sunset, in western Louisiana, had air-conditioning, plush seats, and a history of hosting the most famous cockfighters in the country. But as a symbol of big-time cockfighting—of what the sport might look like if it were widely accepted—Sunrise would do.

"From the sandlots of Florida to the bayous of Louisiana to the cotton rows of Mississippi and Georgia," Hickerson was saying as we passed some trailers in the parking lot, "these are some well-traveled chickens." Those at the Red Rooster, Demoruelle added, were a kind of aviar underclass, poorly conditioned and sloppy in their attacks. These birds were in a different league. Each owner had paid $300 for the right to enter six of them in the derby. Because 150 owners were signed up in all, that came to 900 chickens fighting for one $45,000 pot. Demoruelle pointed to a middle-aged man in jeans and a sport shirt. "That guy over there? He's the largest fish wholesaler in Mississippi."

But all I could think about were those 900 chickens. A cockfight, as I understood it, was a single combat between lone fighters. But this sounded more like a mass slaughter or a battle royal. True, not all 900 birds would fight: a cockfighter would stay in the contest only as long as his birds were undefeated, or were slated to fight an undefeated fighter's birds. (In Martinique, the list of matched roosters is called a "tableau de marriage.") Still, a good half of the birds would enter the pit tonight, and half of them might die.

Sunrise, at first glance, hardly seemed the place for such epic carnage. Slapped together of corrugated steel, painted sky blue, and thrust into a patch of scrub oak, it had an almost deliberate impermanence about it, as if it could be disassembled with a moment's warning and spirited into the woods. As we shouldered our way through the front door, one of the men we passed shook his head and said, "It's a madhouse in there. You can't even get a seat." But we pushed ahead anyway, past concession stands, surgery rooms, and bloody drag pits where the endgames of the longest fights were played out, past walls of raw particle board, and through leaning, unsquare spaces. Although we never descended any stairs, we seemed to be tunneling underground, the heat pipes like earthworms glistening in the walls. When

long corridor opened at last onto he cockpit, it felt like an animal's urrow, spacious yet claustrophobic.

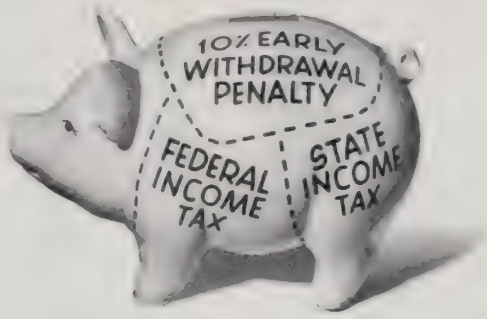
The bleachers rose in a steep- ided bowl around us, two stories igh and bristling with spectators. his was no neighborhood social lub, like the Red Rooster. These eople had paid $16 a seat and trav- led hundreds of miles to be here, nd they focused on the pit below vith clenched jaws and avid eyes. here was a sense of volatility in the ir, of minds at the edge of ignition, nd I kept imagining the chaos if a rease fire erupted in a concession tand and we had to claw our way ack through those tunnels.

The pit itself, by contrast, was a nodel of neatness and grim good or- ler. Most of the birds wore one-inch Spanish knives or three-inch Filipino knives on their heels, and their bouts were often over within seconds. A Fil- pino knife, driven by a powerful gamecock, can split a bird's head in a ingle stroke, and Spanish knives are nearly as deadly. ("I know a thoracic surgeon who handles his own chickens n the ring," Hickerson had said on he ride over. "Now how can you be hat smart and that dumb at the same ime?") The referee would cry "Han- dle!", the birds would flurry in the air a few times, and then one or both of hem would lie dead. No bludgeon- ng brawl, no show of courage or fear, surprisingly little blood.

Should cockfighting ever make it on *ABC's Wide World of Sports*, I hought, this is how it would be: a lit- le trash-talking between the handlers, a little fancy footwork by the birds, and then the knockout blow. Watch- ng a gaff fight required a nearly reli- gious devotion, a hard slog toward an uneasy enlightenment. But a knife fight offered instant gratification. It was all highlight film and no story. Throw in a few bets, to give yourself a stake in he outcome, and you had the ulti- mate in guilty pleasures.

Now I could see why Demoruelle had thought cockfighting might se- duce me. If he preferred knives to gaffs, it was partly because the fights were shorter and they gave him more chances to gamble. But part of him, too, had come here to see something killed. "Man is born a warrior," he

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told me later, "and the more we constrict his natural tendency to hunt and to kill, the crazier the world seems to become." After ten or fifteen bouts, though, Hickerson began to fidget. "Knives are going to kill this sport," he muttered. These cocks weren't bred for courage, they were bred for speed and power. Knife fights were mostly about luck and getting in the first punch, Hickerson said. Knife fights were a crapshoot.

But then a crapshoot was exactly what this crowd wanted. Whenever a gaff fight began, their attention went slack and they drifted into small talk. But as soon as two knife fighters came out, the crowd seemed to catch its breath. Soon the bets began to ring out, shyly at first, then with more urgency as some failed to find takers: "Ten on the red!" "I'll take twenty on the white shirt's bird!" A few rows over, a man handed a few bills to his skinny boy and whispered some instructions in his ear. The boy jumped on his seat, screwed up his face, and screamed an octave above the rest of the crowd: "Twenty on the red! Twenty on the red!"

This was where things get interesting at many Asian cockpits. Small-time fights are merely about money, but bigger ones are about status and kinship—you always bet on your kin group's cock, and you do so for prestige, not winnings. But these bets, unlike those at the Red Rooster, are as impersonal as coins tossed into a slot machine—six roosters in a row and you hit a jackpot. Hickerson, for his part, hardly bothered to assess the birds. When knife fighters came into the pit, he almost always stood up and yelled "25-20! 25-20!" meaning, "You choose the bird, but I get $25 if mine wins, and you get $20 if yours wins." As long as a cockfight is just a game of chance, he said, you might as well play the odds.

The fights would go on like this till dawn; there were a lot of chickens to get through. At one point, I stepped into the bathroom and found a referee scrubbing the blood from his face while a line formed behind him. He kept looking into the mirror, face soaped [illegible], and then bending down [illegible]

more. Finally, he glanced at my reflection in the mirror and laughed.

"Stuff still isn't comin' off!"

"Must get pretty thick by the end of the night."

"Heck yeah. I'll be covered in it head to foot. These white stripes won't be white no more."

The owners were honor-bound to stay till the end, but we were only spectators, and so we slipped out before midnight. By then, there were dead cocks lying in the hallways and heaped in trash barrels, their bodies twisted and brittle, their once-brilliant feathers dimmed by dried blood. "We used to eat the losers after a fight," Demoruelle said in passing, "but the dewormer some people use now makes the meat carcinogenic."

Surreal as it was, the scene made a certain sense. At pits like Sunrise, cockfighting was big business—less folk tradition than mass-market entertainment—and the audiences were hardly different from those at riverboat casinos in Baton Rouge. The cocks we had seen, impeccably trained though they were, had lost much of their glamour to commerce. Elsewhere, they might be symbols of sin or sexuality, courage or betrayal, stand-ins for their owners, or for the devil himself. But at Sunrise, a gamecock was just another form of disposable culture.

In Bali, Clifford Geertz once wrote, a cockfight is a story that people tell themselves about themselves. For more than a century, the same was true in this country. Long before the Revolution, George Washington loved a cockfight for the spirit of anarchy it embodied, and he once invited Thomas Jefferson to Mount Vernon to see his "yellow pile" gamecocks. By the 1830s, Andrew Jackson was fighting cocks on the White House carpet and cockfighting was a national pastime—an embodiment of the country's new arrogance. Three decades after that, Abraham Lincoln, a former cockfighting referee, saw something darker and more ambivalent in it: "As long as the Almighty permits intelligent man created in His image and likeness to fight in public and kill each other while the world looks on approvingly," he is reported t have said, "it is not for me to depriv the chicken of the same privilege."

But nowadays blood sports are story we would rather forget. La fall, volunteers with anti-cockfigh ing groups in Missouri and Arizon managed to gather 136,000 an 189,000 signatures, respectively, for ing state referendums on the sport. I early polls, 88 percent of Missouriar said they were against cockfightin and 87 percent of Arizonians, but i the privacy of the voting booth man must have had second thoughts: onl 63 percent voted against the sport i Missouri, and 68 percent in Arizon Still, today, hosting a cockfight is i legal in both those states, and Okla homans are said to be planning a re erendum of their own.

Only in Louisiana, where the once seemed most vulnerable, d cockfighters feel a measure of securit Twenty years ago, when Louisian passed a new set of animal-right laws, cockfighters had to dabble i taxonomy to avoid them: chicken are not animals, they declared in a amendment pushed through at th eleventh hour; they are birds. But 1997 anti-cockfighting bill that De moruelle had feared would pass neve even made it past committee. An last year, when an anti-cockfightin amendment reached the floor of th State Senate, it was defeated by vote of 22 to 5.

Nevertheless, most observers sa that legal cockfighting will be gon within the next ten years. Even i Louisiana, a single election and new crop of legislators could consig cockfighting to the chopping block "I think the forces of modernity an New South boosterism are just goin to do it in," says Frederick Hawley, criminologist at Western Carolin University who wrote his Ph.D. the sis on cockfighting. "And if I'm wrong now, it won't b long before I'm right."

Animal activists will tell yo this fight is all about morality. Cock fighters will tell you it's about indi vidual liberty. Most legislators, if yo catch them in an honest moment will tell you it's about economics— about the South reinventing itself t

ttract investors. But mostly it's a natter of appearances. Demographcs, more than animal advocacy, ave doomed legal cockfighting—the ore urban an area was, the quicker banned the sport. And although ountry values have given way to city alues, cockpits to KFCs, the sum toil of bloodshed has hardly been diinished, only swept out of sight.

Not long after I left Louisiana, I ent to visit a chicken factory an our south of Little Rock, Arkansas.)ne of forty-one "vertically integrated" operations owned by Tyson oods, this one slaughtered 1.3 illion birds a week and spat ut an endless stream of chickn parts and precooked wings. A mill, a hatchery, and dozens f henhouses lay around it like pokes on a wheel, and most of he work was automated (when chicken laid an egg, a tiny onveyor belt beneath the oost trundled the egg off for ncubation). Thanks to such fficiencies, American factories laughter some 7 billion chickens a ear, and chicken meat, once more xpensive than filet mignon, has beome blandly ubiquitous—poor an's fare. Breeders, meanwhile, eep picking up the pace: a century go, a broiler needed sixteen weeks o reach two pounds; today chicks each four pounds in six weeks.

My guide at the factory, a man amed Archie Schaffer III, was a rare eliever in full disclosure (the public-elations people at Perdue wouldn't et me near their factories). "Nobody as any idea in America where their ood comes from," he told me, "and he reason is people like me." Schafer was more than happy to show me he hatchery where 85,000 chicks umble down chutes every hour like otton balls at a cotton-ball factory; he vast hangers where the chicks row into broilers; the trucks that aul the broilers to the factory 7,000 t a time. And yet, when I asked to ee the killing floor, he nearly refused.

I could see why. If a broiler's life ometimes looked like a trip to the musement park—shuttling down oller coasters, standing in crowds, vatching gizmos pop and whir—this vas the nightmarish finale, the tunnel of fear. After their wild ride in the truck, the birds were dumped onto a broad belt that rolled into the dark mouth of the factory. Inside, most of the room was bathed in black light—it calms the birds down, I was told—and the stench was overwhelming. Assaulted by screaming machinery and Top 40 radio, the birds were jerked from the belt by a row of eight workers, wearing black goggles and industrial tunics, and hung by their feet from a running chain overhead. The chain whipped



them into the next room, where they were squeezed through mechanical bottlenecks, stunned by bolts of electricity, and then beheaded by a rotary saw. If a bird happened to lift its head to avoid the saw, a worker reached over and slit its throat. "The live hang job is about the nastiest job in the business," Schaffer admitted. "But a lot of people seem to like it."

These are things we don't want to know, that we zone away beyond city limits, and most meat producers are happy to oblige us. Every year we eat more chicken meat and see less and less of the living birds, and this strikes us as right and normal. Animal-rights activists, of course, condemn poultry factories as well as cockfighting, but most of us aren't that consistent. We're appalled at blood sports, yet when activists picket slaughterhouses or send lurid photos to the media, we resent them, deem them unrealistic. Like cockfighters, they threaten a cherished illusion: that society, in growing up, has lost its taste for blood.

When I was nine years old, and the only blood sports I knew were those my brother had invented, my family rented a house with some chickens in the back yard. It was a crumbling old adobe in a quiet part of Pasadena, where my father would do research in the summer, and the chickens seemed to have been there forever. After a while, I got used to their sudden flights of rage when I fed them, their strange, hysterical secrets. But I never got used to the dawn. In suburbia, more than most places, a cock's crow can sound like the end of the world.

One afternoon, when my mother answered a knock on the door, she found a policeman standing awkwardly on our stoop. "It's about your rooster, ma'am," he said. My mom stared at him blankly for a moment. Then, with a twitch of a smile, she asked: "What's he done?"

Our bird was arrested for disturbing the peace. After the humane society dragged him away—kicking and screaming as only a chicken can—we never saw him again. Looking back, we always laughed at my mom's reply and at the rooster in the paddy wagon. But the funniest part, we thought, was the fact that we had a suburban chicken coop in the first place. Now I think that the joke was on us. We thought of our neighborhood as an ideal of sorts, clean and safe and free of life's old brutality. But we lived in a glass bubble, one so fragile a rooster's call could shatter it.

These days, the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves grow ever more polished and predictable. We play out our primal urges on the Internet, in cineplexes, or in therapy, rather than in the town square at midday. Yet cockfighters still stir in the dark, incubated by secrecy and the heat of resentment, far from the glare of popular culture. Judging from the pits I visited, the twilight suits them best. "You can't stop us," Demoruelle says. "We have more gamecocks being fought this year than we've had in the history of this country." If they jangle a few nerves, so be it: disturbing the peace is a rooster's business. ■

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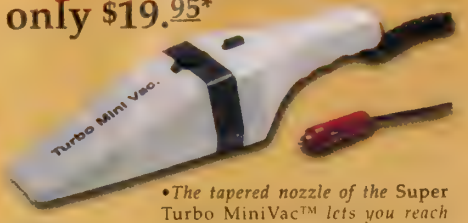


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A SON IN SHADOW

Remembering, in fragments, a lost parent

By Fred D'Aguiar



I know nothing about how they meet. She is a schoolgirl. He is at work, probably a government clerk in a building near her school. At the hour when school and office are out for lunch their lives intersect at sandwich counters, soft-drink stands, traffic lights, market squares. Their eyes meet or their bodies collide at one of these food queues. He says something suggestive, complimentary. She suppresses a smile or traps one beneath her hands. He takes this as encouragement (as if any reaction of hers would have been read as anything else) and keeps on talking and following her and probably misses lunch that day. All the while she walks and eats and drinks and soaks up his praise, his sweet body-talk, his erotic chatter and sexy pitter-patter, his idle boasts and ample toasts to his life, his dreams about their future, the world their oyster together.

Am I going too fast on my father's behalf? Should there have been an immediate and cutting rebuttal from her and several days before another meeting? Does he leave work early to catch her at the end of the school day and follow her home just to see where she lives and to extend the boundaries of their courtship? Throwing it from day to night, from school to home, from childhood play to serious adult intent? (Georgetown's two-lane streets with trenches on either side mean a mostly single-file walk, she in front probably looking over her shoulder when he says something worthy of a glance, or a cut-eye look if his suggestions about her body or what he will do with it if given half a chance exceed the decorum of the day—which is what, in mid-Fifties Guyana? From my grandmother it's, "Don't talk to a man unless you think you're a big woman. Man will bring you trouble. Man want just one thing from you. Don't listen to he. Don't get ruined for he. A young lady must cork her ears and keep her eye straight in front of she when these men start to flock around. The gentleman among them will find his way to her front door. The gentleman will make contact with the parents first. Woo them first before muttering one thing to the young lady. Man who go directly to young ladies only want to ruin them. Don't want to make them into respectable young women—just whores. Mark my words." My grandfather simply thinks that his little girl is not ready for the attentions of any man, that none of them is good enough for his little girl, and so the man who comes to his front door had better have a good

Fred D'Aguiar is a poet and the author of The Longest Memory, *which won a Whitbread Award in 1994. His third novel,* Feeding the Ghosts, *recently was published by the Ecco Press. He lives in Miami.*

Illustration by Kamil Vojnar

pretext for disturbing his reverie. He had better know something about merchant seamen and the character of the sea, and about silence—how to keep it so that it signifies authority and dignity, so when you speak you are heard and your words, every one of them, are rivets. That man would have to be a genius to get past my grandfather, a genius or a gentleman. And since my father is neither, it's out of the question that he'll even use the front door of worship. His route will have to be the yard and the street of ruination.

So he stands in full view of her house at dusk. It takes a few nights before her parents realize he is there for their daughter. Then one day her father comes out and tells him to take his dog behavior to someone else's front door, and the young man quickly turns on his heel and walks away. Another time her mother opens the upstairs window and curses him, and he laughs and saunters off as if her words were a broom gently ushering him out of her yard. But he returns the next night and the next, and the daughter can't believe his determination. She is embarrassed that her body has been a magnet for trouble, that she is the cause of the uproar, then angry with him for his keen regard of her at the expense of her dignity, not to mention his. Neighbors tease her about him. They take pity on the boy, offer him drinks, some ice-cold mauby, a bite to eat, a dhal-pouri, all of which he declines at first, then dutifully accepts. One neighbor even offers him a chair, and on one night of pestilential showers an umbrella, since he does not budge from his spot while all around him people dash for shelter, abandoning a night of liming (loitering) and gaffing (talking) to the persistence and chatter of the rain. Not my father. He stands his ground with only the back of his right hand up to his brow to shelter his eyes zeroed in on her house. She steals a glance at him after days of seeming to ignore the idea of him, though his presence burns brightly inside her heart. She can't believe his vigilance is for her. She stops to stare in the mirror and for the first time sees her full lips, long straight nose, shoulder-length brunette hair, and dark green eyes with their slight oval shape. Her high cheek bones. Her ears close to her skull. She runs her fingers lightly over these places as if to touch is to believe. Her lips tingle. Her hair shines. Her eyes smile. And she knows from this young man's perseverance that she is beautiful, desirable. She abandons herself to chores, and suppresses a smile and a song. She walks past windows as much as possible to feed the young man's hungry eyes with a morsel of that which he has venerated to the point of indignity. She rewards his eyes by doing unnecessary half-turns at the upstairs window. A flash of clavicle, a hand slowly putting her hair off her face and setting it down behind her ears, and then a smile, a demure glance, her head inclined a little, her eyes raised, her eyelids batted a few times—she performs for him though she feels silly and self-conscious. What else is there for a girl to do? Things befitting a lady that she picked up from the cinema. Not the sauciness of a tramp.

Her mother pulls her by one of those beautiful close-skulled ears from the window and curses her as if she were a ten-cent whore, then throws open the window and hurtles a long list of insults at this tall, silent, rude, good-for-nothing streak of impertinence darkening her street. The father folds his paper and gets up, but by the time he gets to the window the young man is gone.

My mother cries into the basin of dishes. She rubs a saucer so hard that it comes apart in her hands. She is lucky not to cut herself. She will have to answer to her mother for that breakage. In the past it meant at least a few slaps and many minutes of curses for bringing only trouble into her mother's house. Tonight her mother is even angrier. Her father has turned his fury against her for rearing a daughter who is a fool for men. Her mother finds her in the kitchen holding the two pieces of the saucer together and then apart—as if her dread and sheer desire for reparation would magically weld them whole. Her tears fall like drops of solder on that divided saucer. Her mother grabs her hands and strikes her and curses her into her face so that my mother may as well have been standing over a steaming, spluttering pot on the stove. She drops the two pieces of saucer and they become six piece
Her mother looks down and strid
over the mess with threats about wh
will happen if her feet find a splinte
She cries but finds every piece, and
be sure to get the splinters too she ru
her palms along the floor, this way a
that, and with her nails she prizes o
whatever her hand picks up. She cri
herself to sleep.

The next night he is back at his st
tion, and her mother and father, the
voices, their words, their blows soun
a little farther off, fall a little lighte
His presence, the bare-faced courage
it, becomes a suit of armor for her t
don against her mother's and father
attacks. She flies through her chore
She manages under her mother
watchful eye to show both sides of h
clavicle, even a little of the definitio
down the middle of her chest—tha
small trench her inflated chest dig
which catches the light and takes th
breath away, that line drawn from th
throat to the uppermost rib exudin
warmth and tension, drawing the eye
twenty-five yards away with its radi
ance in the half-light of dusk, promis
ing more than it can possibly contair
than the eye can hold, and triggerin
a normal heart into palpitations, a no
mal breath into shallowness an
rapidity.

"Miss Isiah, howdy! How come yo
house so clean on the west side an
not so clean on the east? It lopsided
Dirt have a preference in your house
Or is that saga boy hanging aroun
the west side of your house a dirt re
pellent?" The gossip must have bee
rampant in the surrounding yards, yard
seemingly designed deliberately s
people could see into one another'
homes and catch anything spilling ou
of them—quarrels, courtships, cook
ing pots, music—and sometimes
clash of houses, a reaction against th
claustrophobia of the yard, but no
enough yards, not enough room to pro
cure a necessary privacy in order t
maintain a badly sought-after digni
ty—clean, well dressed, head high i
the air on Sundays—impossible if th
night before there is a fight and every
one hears you beg not to be hit any
more, or else such a stream of obscen
ities gushes from your mouth that th
sealed red lips of Sunday morning jus
don't cut it.

My father maintains his vigil. Granny threatens to save the contents of her chamber pot from the night before and empty it on his head. Could she have thrown it from her living room window to his shaded spot by the street? Luckily she never tries. She may well be telling him that he doesn't deserve even that amount of attention. If there is any creature lower than a gutter rat—one too low to merit even her worst display of disdain—then he is it. How does my father take that? As a qualification he can do without? How much of that kind of water is he able to let run off his back? Poor man. He has to be in love. He has to be wearing his own suit of armor. Lashed to his mast like Odysseus, he hears the most taunting, terrible things, but what saves him, what restores him, are the ropes, the armor of his love for my mother. Others without this charm would have withered away, but my father smiles and shrugs at the barrage of looks, insults, gestures, silence, loneliness.

Watch his body there under that breadfruit or sapodilla tree; the shine of his status as sentry and his conviction are twin headlights that blind her parents. They redouble their efforts to get rid of his particular glare, then are divided by the sense of his inevitability in their daughter's life. My grandmother stops shouting at him while my grandfather still raises his cane and causes the young man to walk away briskly. My grandmother then opens the windows on the west side, ostensibly to let in the sea breeze but really to exhibit in all those window frames a new and friendly demeanor. My grandfather shouts at her that he can smell the rank intent of that black boy, rotten as a fish market, blowing into his living room and spoiling his thoughts.

But the windows stay open. And my mother at them. With the love Morse of her clavicles and her cleavage as she grows bolder. Smiling, then waving. And no hand in sight to box her or grip her by the ear and draw her away from there. Until one night she boldly leaves the house and goes to him and they talk for five minutes rapidly as if words are about to run out in the Southern Hemisphere.

My father's parents wonder what has become of their Gordon.

"The boy only intend to visit town."

"Town swallow him up."

"No, one woman turn he head, stick it in a butter churn and swill it."

"He lost to us now."

"True."

They say this to each other but hardly speak to him except to make pronouncements on the size of foreign lands.

"Guyana small?"

"What's the boy talking about?"

"Why, England and Scotland combined are the size of Guyana."

"How much room does a man need?"

"That woman take he common sense in a mortar and pound it with a pestle."

The two voices are one voice.

Opportunity is here now. The English are letting go of the reins, a whole new land is about to be fashioned. And he is planning to leave! What kind of woman has done this to our boy? The boy is lost. Talking to him is like harnessing a stubborn donkey. This isn't love but voodoo, obeah, juju, some concoction in a drink, some spell thrown in his locus. A little salt over the shoulder, an iodine shower, a rabbit foot on a string, a duck's bill or snake head dried and deposited into the left trouser pocket, a precious stone, lapis lazuli, amethyst, or anything on the middle finger, a good old reliable crucifix around the neck, made of silver, not gold, and at least one ounce in weight and two inches in diameter. A psalm in papyrus folded in a shirt pocket next to the heart. A blessing from a priest, a breathing of nothing but incense with a towel over the head. A bout of fasting, one night without sleep, a dreamless night, and a dreamless, sleepless, youngest son restored to them. He wants to stay around the house, he shows them why he loves his mummy and poppy and the bounteous land. There is no plan to flee. There is no city woman with his heart in her hand. And his brain is not ablaze in his pants. His head is not an empty, airless room.

They have one cardboard suitcase each, apart from her purse and his envelope tied with a string that contains their passports and tickets, birth certificates, and, for him, a document that

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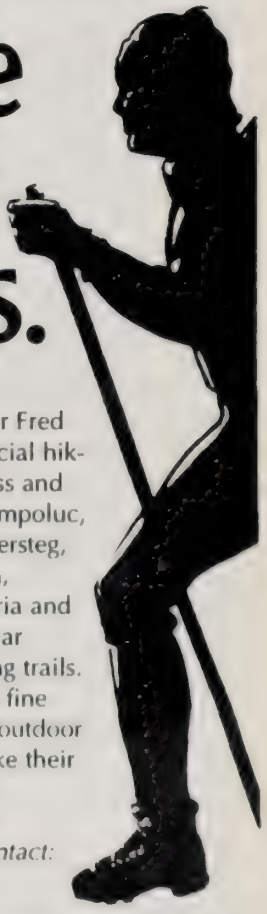
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[illegible] indeed a clerk with X amount of experience at such-and-such a government office, signed "supervisor"—a worthless piece of shit, of course, in the eyes of any British employer. But for the time being, these little things are emblematic of the towering, staggering optimism that propels them out of Georgetown, Guyana, over the sea to London, England.

So what do they do? My mother is a shy woman. My father, in the two photos I've seen of him, is equally reserved. Not liable to experimentation. The big risk has been taken—that of leaving everything they know for all that is alien to them. My mother knows next to nothing about sex, except perhaps a bit about kissing. My father may have experimented a little, as boys tend to do, but he, too, when faced with the female body, confronts unfamiliar territory. Each burns for the other, enough to pull up roots and take off into the unknown. Yet I want to believe that they improvise around the idea of her purity and respect it until their marriage night. That they keep intact some of the moral system they come from even as they dismantle and ignore every other stricture placed on them by Guyanese society: honor your father and mother; fear a just and loving God; pledge allegiance to the flag; lust is the devil's oxygen. All that circles in their veins.

Over the twelve days at sea they examine what they have left and what they are heading toward. At sea they are in between lives: one life is over but the other has not yet begun. The talking they do on that ship without any duties to perform at all! My mother tells how her father, despite his routine as a merchant seaman, finds time to memorize whole poems by the Victorians: Tennyson, Longfellow, Browning, Jean Ingelow, Arnold, and Hopkins. The sea is his workplace, yet he makes time to do this marvelous thing. She tells how when he comes back to land he gathers them all in the living room and performs "The Charge of the Light Brigade" or "Maud" or "My Last Duchess" or "Fra Lippo Lippi" or "The High Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire" or "Dover Beach" or "The Kingfisher" or "The Wreck of the Deutschland." He recites these poems to his creole-thinking children, who sit there and marvel at the English they are hearing, not that of the policeman or the teacher or the priest, but even more difficult to decipher, full of twists and impossible turns that throw you off the bicycle of your creole reasoning into the sand. If any of them interrupts my grandfather he stops in midflow, tells them off in creole, and resumes his poem where he left off. When particularly miffed by the disturbance he starts the poem from the beginning again. Does my grandfather recite these verses before or after he gets drunk, swears at the top of his voice, and chases my grandmother around the house with his broad leather belt?

But when my parents are out at sea, they have only the King James Bible in their possession. What they plan and rehearse is every aspect of their new life.

"Children. I want children."

"Me too. Plenty of them."

"I can work between births."

"Yes, both of us. Until we have enough money for a house. Then you can stay home with the kids."

"A nanny. Someone to watch the kids while we work. What kind of house?"

"Three bedrooms. A garden at the front, small, and back, large. A car—a Morris Minor. With all that room in the back for the children and real indicators and a wood finish." Neither has a notebook or dreamed of keeping one. They do not write their thoughts, they utter them. If something is committed to memory, there has to be a quotidian reason for it, apart from bits of the Bible and a few calypsos. My grandfather's labor of love, his settling down with a copy of Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* and memorizing lines that bear no practical relationship to his life, must seem bizarre to his children. Yet by doing so he demonstrates his love of words, their music, the sense of their sound, their approximation to the heartbeat and breath, their holding out of an alternative world to the one surrounding him, their confirmation of a past and another's life and thoughts, their luxury of composition, deliberation, their balancing and rebalancing of a skewered life. I imagine my mother benefits from this exposure in some obliqu way—that the Victorians stick to h mental makeup whether she cares f them or not, that a little of them com off on me in the wash of m gestation in her.

There is an old black-and-whit photo (isn't there always?) and fra ments of stories about his comin and goings, his carryings-on, as th West Indian speak goes, his mi chief. "Look pan that smooth fac them two big, dark eye them, don they win trust quick-time? Is hard t tie the man with them eye in hi head to any woman and she pickn them. He face clean-shaven like h never shave. He curly black hai dougla-look, but trim neat-neat. Th man got topside." His hair, thick an wavy because of the "dougla" mix East Indian and black, exaggerate an already high forehead. Automat cally we credit such an appearanc in the Caribbean and elsewher with intelligence—"topside." And European nose, not broad, with high bridge (good breeding, thoug the nostrils flare a bit—sign of quick temper!). And lips that invit kisses. "They full-full and pout like kiss with the sound of a kiss way be hind, long after that kiss come an gone." He is six feet tall and thin bu not skinny, that brand of thin tha women refer to as elegant, since th result is long fingers and economi gestures. Notice I say economic an not cheap. A man of few words. watcher. "But when he relax in com pany he know and trust, then he th center of wit and idle philosophizing He shoot back a few rums, neat n chaser, with anyone, and hold hi own with men more inclined to gi and tonic. He know when to min he Ps and Qs and when to gaff i the most lewd Georgetown, rum shop talk with the boys. Wha chance a sixteen-year-old closete lady got against such a man, I as you?"

But most of the puzzle is missing So I start to draw links from one frag ment to the next. He begins to be long—fleetingly, at first—in my life. A a man in poor light seen crossing road mercifully free of traffic, its tar macadam steamy with a recent down

lour. As a tall, lank body glimpsed ucking under the awning of a shop ront and disappearing inside and nev- r emerging no matter how long I wait cross the street, watching the door ith its reflecting plate glass and lis- ening for the little jingle of the bell that announces the arrival and departure of customers.

Or I cross Blackheath Hill en- anced by the urgent belief that my fa- ner is in one of the cars speeding up nd down it. Blackheath Hill curves a ttle with a steep gradient—less than ne in six in places. It's more of a ski lope than a hill. Cars and trucks, mo- orbikes and cyclists all come down he road as if in a race for a finish line. Going up it is no different. Vehicles ace to the top as if with the fear that heir engines might cut off and they vill slide back down. I want to be seen y my father. I have to be close to his ar so that he does not miss me. I mea- ure the traffic and watch myself get alfway, then, after a pause to allow a ouple of cars to pass on their way up, brisk walk, if I time it right, to allow he rest of the traffic to catch up with ne, to see the kid who seems to be in o particular hurry to get out of their vay looking at them. I step onto the idewalk and cherish the breeze of the earest vehicle at my back—Father, his is your son you have just missed. sn't he big? Pull over and call his ame. Take him in your arms. Ad- monish him. Remind him that cars an kill and his little body would not urvive a hit at these high speeds. Tell im to look for his father under less angerous circumstances.

I am searching the only way I know ow, by rumination, contemplation, onjecture, supposition. I try to fill the aps, try to piece together the father I never knew. I imagine everything where there is little or nothing to go n. And yet, in going back, in raking p bits and pieces of a shattered and rased existence, I know that I am ourting rejection from a source hith- rto silent and beyond me. I am con- uring up a father safely out of reach nd taking the risk that the lips I help o move, the lungs I force to breathe, vill simply say "No." No to everything ask of them, even the merest crumb f recognition.

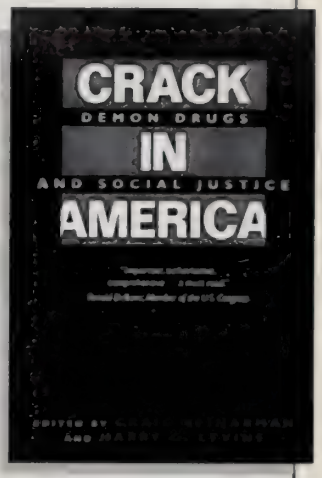


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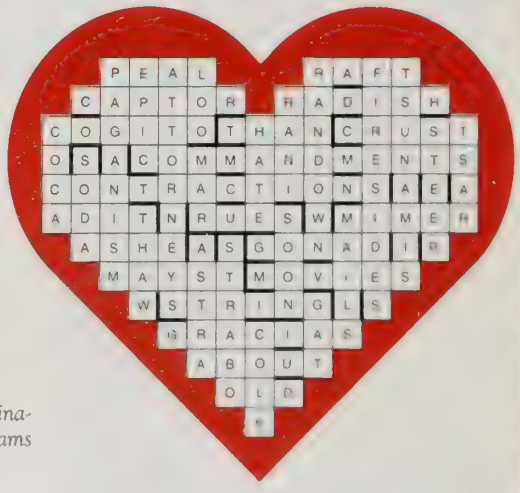


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Across numbers in parentheses indicate the destination, and/or the source, of the "heart." Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).

ACROSS: 1. p(erus)al, rev. (13A); 5. r.-ot, rev. (35A, 31A); 8. c(apacito*)r (33A); 9. ra(s.)h (19A); 10. cog-nit-O (28A); 11. ten, hidden (37A, 13A); 13. c.-hat (11A, 1A); 17. comm(a)(ents*); 19. Contra(diction)s (9A); 20. admit, hidden (24A); 22. (b)rushes (25A); 24. miler, hidden in reverse (36A, 20A); 25. a-ye (29A, 22A); 28. G.O.(P.)-ad (10A); 29. mast. homonym (25A); 30. Moes* (36A); 31. st(RAF)ing (5A); 33. grandmas* (17A, 8A); 35. a-but (5A); 36. Ovid, hidden (30A, 24A). DOWN: 1. Ms.-in-a-gap (rev.); 2. hidden; 3. *; 4. loo(k); 5. two mngs.; 6. if(rev.)-resides, 7. *; 9. hidden; 10. two mngs.; 12. "a" in "the'"; 14. *; 15. hidden, 18. *; 21. *, 23. noos(e), rev.; 24. *; 26. (c)ast-Ra(y); 27. *; 32. reversal; 34. two mngs.

SOLUTION TO FEBRUARY DOUBLE ACROSTIC (NO. 193). (SUSAN) ISAACS: AFTER ALL THESE YEARS. It was a room that . . . In the house's Edwardian heyday . . . had been the mistress's dressing room. Now all it had was an old desk and chair and a crimson couch that was more suitable for a weary lover than a proper lady.

CONTEST RULES: Send the quotation, the name of the author, and the title of the work, together with your name and address, to Double Acrostic No. 194, *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by March 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive seven-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. The solution will be printed in the April issue. Winners of the January Double Acrostic (No. 192) are Konchok Thalkhas, Marysvale, Utah; Francis J. Brady Jr., Los Angeles, California; and Ricki Tarlow, New York City.

"Father." The noun rings hollowly when I say it, my head is empty of any meaning the word might have. I shout it in a dark cave but none of the expected bats come flapping out. Just weaker and weaker divisions of my call. "Father." It is my incantation to bring him back from the grave to the responsibility of his name. But how, when I only know his wife, my mother, and her sudden, moody silence whenever he crops up in conversation?

You ever have anyone sweet-talk you? Fill your ears with their kind of wax, rub that wax with their tongue all over your body with more promises than the promised land itself contains, fill your head with their sweet drone, their buzz that shuts out your parents, friends, your own mind from its own house? That's your father, the bumblebee, paying attention to me.

My sixteenth birthday was a month behind. He was nearly twenty. A big man in my eyes. What did he want with me? A smooth tongue in my ears. Mostly, though, he watched me, my house, my backside when he followed me home from school. His eyes gleamed in the early evening, the whites of his eyes. He stood so still by the side of the road outside my house that he might have been a lamppost, planted there, shining just for me.

My father cursed him, my mother joined in, my sisters laughed at his silence, his stillness. They all said he had to be the most stupid man in Georgetown, a dunce, a bat in need of a perch, out in the sun too long, sun fry his brain, cat take his tongue, his head empty like a calabash, his tongue cut out, he look like a beggar. They felt sorry for him standing there like a paling, his face a yard long, his tongue a slab of useless plywood in his mouth. "Look what Ingrid gone and bring to the house, shame, dumbness, blackness follow she here to we house to paint shame all over it and us. Go away, black boy, take your dumb misery somewhere else, crawl back to your pen in the country, leave we sister alone, she got more beauty than sense to listen to a fool like you, to let you follow her, to encourage you by not cursing the day you was born and the two people who got together to born you and your people and the whole sorry village you crawl out of to come and plant yourself here in front of we house on William Street, a decent street, in Kitty, in we capital."

I should have thanked my sisters; instead I begged them to leave him alone. Ignore him and he'll go away. My father left the house to get hold of the boy by the scruff of his neck and boot his backside out of Kitty, but he ran off when my father appeared in the door frame. With the light of the house behind him and casting a long, dark shadow, he must have looked twice his size and in no mood to bargain. Your father sprinted away, melting into the darkness. I watched for his return by checking that the windows I'd bolted earlier really were bolted, convincing myself that I had overlooked one of them, using my hands to feel the latch as I searched the street for him. But he was gone for the night. My knight. Shining eyes for armor.

My mother cursed him from the living room window, flung it open and pointed at him and with her tongue reduced him to a pile of rubble and scattered that rubble over a wide area then picked her way through the strewn wreckage to make sure her destruction was complete: "Country boy, what you want with my daughter? What make you think you man enough for her? What you got between your legs that give you the right to plant yourself in front of my house? What kind of blight you is? You fungus!"

As she cursed him and he retreated from the house sheepishly, she watched her husband for approval. These were mild curses for her, dutiful curses, a warm-up. When she really got going her face reddened and her left arm carved up the air in front of her as if it were the meat of her opponent being dissected into bite-size bits. That's how I knew she was searching for a way to help me but hadn't yet found it. Not as long as my father was at home. Soon he would be at sea, away for weeks, and things would be different.

That is, if my onlooker, my remote watcher, my far-off admirer wasn't scared off forever. And what if he was? Then he didn't deserve me in the first place. If he couldn't take a few curses he wasn't good for anything. If I wasn't worth taking a few curses for . . . we
I didn't want a man who didn't thir
I was worth taking a few curses for!
loved him for coming back night aft
night when all he got from me was
glance at the window. Sometimes le
than a glance. Just me passing acro
the window frame as I dashed fro
chore to chore under four baleful eye

It seemed like he was saving all h
breath and words for when he could l
alone with me. Then he turned
the bumblebee of himself and I w
the hapless flower of his attention
He told me about my skin that it w
silk, that all the colors of the rainbo
put together still didn't come close t
my beautiful skin. That my face, m
eyes, my mouth, my nose, the tip of m
nose, my ears, my fingertips, each w
a precious jewel, precious stone. H
likened the rest of me to things I ha
read about but had never seen, ha
dreamed about but had never dreame
I would see: dandelions, apples, snov
spring in England's shires, the whit
cliffs of Dover. In his eyes my bod
me, was everything I dreamed
becoming.

That was your father before any
you were a twinkle in his eye. More ac
curately, that was my lover and the
my husband. Your father was a diffe
ent man altogether. Suddenly
stranger occupied my bed. His tongu
now turned to wood. All the laughte
of my sisters, the half-hearted curses
my mother, my father's promise of blu
misery, all came true in this strang
man, this father, this latter-day hus
band and lover.

I saw the change in him. My hand
were full with you children. He wer
out of reach. He cradled you as if h
didn't know which side was up, whic
down. He held you at arm's length t
avoid the tar and feathers of you ba
bies. Soon I earned the same treat
ment, but if you children were tar an
feathers I was refuse. His face crease
when he came near me. What had be
come of my silk skin? My precious fea
tures disappeared into my face, earn
ing neither praise nor blame—just hi
silence, his wooden tongue, and tha
bad-smell look of his. I kept quiet fo
as long as I could. I watched him re
treat from all of us, hoping he'd ree
himself back in since the line betwee
us was strong and I thought unbreak

ble; but no. I had to shout to get him
hear me. I shouted like my mother
anding at the upstairs window to
me rude stranger in the street twen-
-five yards away. I sounded like my
ther filling the door frame. My jeer-
ig sisters insinuated their way into
y voice. And your father simply kept
alking away.

Believe me, I pulled my hair and
eat the ground with my hands and
et to get at him in my head and in
ie ground he walked on that I wor-
iiped. Hadn't he delivered England to
ie and all the seasons of England, all
ngland's shires and the fog he'd left
ut of his serenades, no doubt just to
eep some surprise in store for me?
he first morning I opened the door
iat autumn and shouted, "Fire!" when
saw all that smoke, thinking the
hole street on fire, all the streets,
ondon burning, and slammed the
oor and ran into his arms and his
iughter, and he took me out into it in
iy nightdress, he in his pajamas, and
ll the time I followed him, not
shamed to be seen outside in my thin,
limsy nylon (if anyone could see
hrough that blanket) because he was
n his pajamas, the blue, striped ones,
nd his voice, his sweet drone, told
ne it was fine, this smoke without fire
vas fine, "This is fog."

He walked away and everything
tarted to be erased by that fog. That
moke without fire crossed the ocean
nto my past and obliterated Kitty,
Georgetown, the house on William
Street, everything he had touched,
very place I had known him in. I swal-
owed that fog. It poured into my ears,
iose, eyes, mouth. He was gone. I got
i chest pain and breathlessness that
nade me panic. There wasn't just me.
There were you children. I had to
breathe for you children. The pain in
iy chest that was your father had to be
blucked out, otherwise I too would
be lost to you all, and to
myself.

The first time I see him is the last
time I see him. I can't wait to get to
the front of the queue to have him all
to myself. When I get there my eyes
travel up and down his body. From
those few gray hairs that decorate his
temples and his forehead and his nose
to the cuffs at his ankles and sparkling
black shoes. He wears a black suit, a
double-breasted number with three brass
buttons on the cuff of each sleeve. He
lies on his back with his hands clasped
over his flat stomach. There is too much
powder on his face. Let's get out of this
mournful place, Dad. We have a lot of
catching up to do. He has the rare
look—of holding his breath, of not
breathing, in between inhaling and ex-
haling—that exquisitely beautiful
corpses capture. For a moment after I in-
vite him to leave with me, I expect his
chest to inflate, his lids to open, and
those clasped hands to unfold and pull
him upright into a sitting position as if
he really were just napping because he
has dressed way too early
for the ball.

There are myths about this sort of
thing. Father enslaves son. Son hates
father, bides his time, waits for the
strong father to weaken. Son pounces
one day, pounces hard and definite,
and the father is overwhelmed, bro-
ken, destroyed with hardly any resis-
tance, except that of surprise and then
resignation. Son washes his hands but
finds he is washing hands that are not
bloodstained, not marked or blemished
in any way. He is simply scrubbing
hands that no longer belong to him—
they are his father's hands, attached
to his arms, his shoulders, his body.
He has removed a shadow all the more
to see unencumbered the father in
himself. There is the widow he has
made of his mother. He cannot love
her as his father might. While his fa-
ther lived he thought he could. The
moment his father expired he knew
his mother would remain
unloved.

I alight too soon from a number 53
bus on Blackheath Hill, disembark
while the bus is moving, and stumble,
trip from two legs onto all fours, hands
like feet, transforming, sprouting more
limbs, becoming a spider and break-
ing my fall. That same fall is now a
tumble, a dozen somersaults that end
with me standing upright and quite
still on two legs with the other limbs
dangling. Onlookers, who fully ex-
pected disaster, applaud. I walk back up
the hill to the block of council flats as
a man might, upright, on two legs. My
other limbs dangle, swing as if they
are two hands. Some days I will be out
of breath, I will gasp and exhale, and
the cloud before me will not be my
winter's breath but the silken strands
of a web, or worse, fire. Other days I
might look at a bed of geraniums plant-
ed on the council estate and turn all
their numberless petals into stone. A
diamond held between my thumb and
index finger crumbles in this mood, in
this light, like the powdery wings of a
butterfly.

I stare out of an apartment on the
twenty-fourth floor of a tower block
overlooking the nut-brown Thames.
That wasp on the windowpane nib-
bling up and down the glass for a pore
to exit through, back into the air and
heat, tries to sting what it can feel but
cannot see. My father is the window.
I am the wasp. Sometimes a helping
hand comes along and lifts the win-
dow, and the wasp slides out. Other
times a shadow descends, there is a
displacement of air, and it is the last
thing the wasp knows. Which of those
times is this? I want to know. I don't
want to know. I am not nibbling nor
trying to sting. I am kissing, repeatedly,
rapidly, the featureless face of my fa-
ther. It feels like summer light. It re-
flects a garden. Whose is that inter-
fering hand? Why that interrupting
shadow? My child's hand. My child's
shadow. My son or my father? My son
and my father. Two sons, two fathers.
Yet three people. We walk behind a fa-
ther's name, shoulder a father's mem-
ory. Wear another's walk, another's
gait. Wait for what has happened to
their bodies, the same scars, maladies,
aches, to surface in ours.

I want to shed my skin. Walk away
from my shadow. Leave my name in a
place I cannot return to. To be name-
less, bodiless. To swim to Wallace
Stevens's Key West, which is shoreless,
horizonless. Blackheath Hill becomes
Auden's Bristol Street, an occasion
for wonder and lament. Blackheath
at 5:45 A.M. on a foggy winter morn-
ing becomes Peckham Rye. There are
no trees on Blackheath, but angels
hang in the air if only Blake were there
to see them. On the twenty-fourth
floor towering above the Thames, wa-
ter, not land, surrounds me. Every-
thing seems to rise out of that water.
Look up at ambling clouds and the
tower betrays its drift out to sea. ■

THE CRIMINAL WITHIN

A genre of how-to manuals indulges our darkest fantasies

By Albert Mobilio

Among the books discussed in this essay:
Be Your Own Undertaker: How to Dispose of a Dead Body, by A. R. Bowman. Paladin Press. 56 pages. $10.
Hit Man: A Technical Manual for Independent Contractors, by Rex Feral. Paladin Press. 144 pages. $10.
Rolling Thunder: Turning Junk into Automobile Weaponry, by Ryan K. Kephart. Paladin Press. 72 pages. $12.
Fugitive: How to Run, Hide and Survive, by Kenn Abaygo. Paladin Press. 96 pages. $12.
101 Sucker Punches, by Kurt Craven. Paladin Press. 101 pages. Currently out of print.
The Heavy Duty New Identity, by John Q. Newman. Loompanics Unlimited. 110 pages. $12.95.
How to Disappear Completely and Never Be Found, by Doug Richmond. Loompanics Unlimited. 107 pages. $12.95.
Silent Death, by Uncle Fester. Loompanics Unlimited. 144 pages. $16.95.
Snitch: A Handbook for Informers, by Jack Luger. Loompanics Unlimited. 149 pages. $16.95.
Getaway: Driving Techniques for Escape and Evasion, by Ronald George Eriksen 2. Loompanics Unlimited. 48 pages. $8.95.
Gaslighting: How to Drive Your Enemies Crazy, by Victor Santoro. Loompanics Unlimited. 116 pages. $14.95.

At the information desk of a downtown Manhattan Barnes & Noble, I ask about a title—*Be Your Own Undertaker: How to Dispose of a Dead Body*. The young man behind the desk doesn't miss a beat. "Has it begun to smell?" he asks, with a perfunctory grin that acknowledges yet undercuts the small joke between us. He knows there's no corpse in need of disposal; my inquiring openly about such a book in a Barnes & Noble is proof enough. And I know he knows this; indeed, any slight self-consciousness on my part stems from my awareness that buying this book is akin to purchasing one of those tourist T-shirts depicting a revolver above the tired tag line "Welcome to New York." But this book is a hipper jest, something truly arch. That doesn't mean it lacks gruesome details on how to rid yourself of an inconvenient body: Before you sink the stiff in the river, author A. R. Bowman advises, don't forget to "take a long, sharp object, like a tire iron or a very, very large screwdriver, and drive it through the corpse numerous times" to allow for the release of buoyant gases during decomposition. And if you've got to remove incriminating ballistic evidence from a head wound, you can "cut the skin off the forehead, break up the skull bone behind it, and reach in with long tweezers, chopsticks, or something similar . . ." Bowman's earnest, intimate tone—"if you find yourself gripped by a constant urge to visit or look over the site . . . resist it"—is both eerie and hilarious, but the true capper to the joke is my purchase: I, a mild-mannered work-a-daddy, seek out, among the gardening books and cappuccinos of a corporate superstore whose cheery employees are only too happy to help, a book whose predicated reader is a recent murderer.

Be Your Own Undertaker is published by Paladin Press, of Boulder, Colorado. A descendant of the underground presses of the 1960s, Paladin, along with another quirky publisher, Loompanics Unlimited, of Washington State, evinces an antigovernment, antisocial tilt with its numerous title devoted to drug production, bom building, and anarchism (despite th fact that the company got its star reprinting Army manuals). Paladi and Loompanics have updated th marginal mimeograph-and-stapler ap proach of the ad hoc Sixties press an now pump out hundreds of title apiece. Both publishers report sales more than 300,000 books each yea with roughly 90 percent ending up i American hands, and this over whelmingly native popularity, togeth er with the lower-middle-class min set ostensibly being catered to, implie that these books are no longer blue prints for the revolution but rather th literary equivalent of pink flaming lawn ornaments.

For the most part, retail sales fo both companies are catalogue-base but the Virgin Megastore in Time Square carries more than two doze Loompanics and Paladin books groupe together, genre-style, on their ow shelf. The books shrewdly ride the cu rent mainstream trend toward how-t and self-improvement manuals, wit

Albert Mobilio is the author of The Geographics, *a book of poems. His last review for* Harper's Magazine, *"Made Men of Letters," appeared in the October 1997 issue.*

ıe difference being that their readers ıd instruction in knife fighting, sur- valism, methamphetamine manu- cture, sniping, lock picking, wiretap- ng, shoplifting, and smuggling. The ıladin catalogue lists fourteen differ- ıt titles on gun silencers alone; Loom- ınics lists over a dozen guides to psy- ıedelic drugs. Together, the offerings ınstitute a riotously intensive and ex- nsive encyclopedia of un- ɛrground arcana.

Loompanics claims to of- r "The Best Book Catalog the World," and, unlike ıainstream catalogues, hose listed books must be ɛad in order to inspire or to ntertain, the Loompanics ıtalogue is itself an object f literary delight. My guess that most readers don't or- er either of these publish- rs' catalogues to find just ıe right book on street ghting but rather for the ımp thrill. They have a ıugh over the choice jux- ıposition of *Close Shaves: The Complete Book of Razor ighting* and *Breath of the Dragon: Homebuilt Flame- rowers*, or they savor a pre- ımed cause-and-effect rela- onship between *Threesome: low to Fulfill Your Favorite antasy* and its adjacent title, *low to Dump Your Wife*. With hun- reds of carnivalesque pages, these cat- logues score high on what television rogrammers term the "Hey Mabel" ffect—"Hey Mabel, you can use Liq- id-Plumr and Tylenol to build a omb!" Although the offerings appear o give voice to a chorus of libertarians, is difficult to believe that the whole ıing isn't a put-on, an elaborate media rank offering a satiric tour of our omegrown lunacies.

If Loompanics and Paladin editors re winking at their readers (does Loompanics" recombine "lampoon" "comics" + "panic" + "loom"?), it is mpossible to say so for sure. The same thos governs many of the nation's ver-the-top sideshows—the *National nquirer*, *Jerry Springer*, *Melrose Place* — nd, like them, Loompanics and Pal- din books appear to be self-parodies. ll of these books state that they are "sold for informational purposes only," but this legal handwashing acknowledges potential danger with what seems to be another big wink. The guidelines for prospective Loompanics authors may call for "stuff that rattles the cage of consensus reality," but the cage-rattling fellow with a dead body on the kitchen floor isn't going to dash out and buy a book about getting rid of it; that book will be bought only by someone whose very distance—social, psychological, and economic—from such a likelihood makes it both legally safe and emotionally tolerable for him to own it.



To say that how-to manuals on knife fighting and blowguns are but clever party favors for the smirking cognoscenti is not to dismiss the practicality of the information conveyed. If your bar-brawling skills are in need of polishing, look no further than Kurt Craven's *101 Sucker Punches*. He analyzes "seriously effective moves used by the FBI, bouncers, and security guards for Elvis Presley" to school you in such strategies of the sweet science as the "Kiss-My-Ass Kick" and the "Grab-Hair/Smash-Face-Against-Table Attack." While arguing over a parking space, you can give the Modified Hair Lift a try: "Take a pinch of hair between fingertips and thumb at each of his temples and lift sharply a few inches. . . . [O]nce the victim grimaces and comes to his toes, spin his head in either direction by pushing with one hand and pulling with the other. Pain and momentum will turn his head and shoulders into the proper position for the application of a Choke Hold." Such is the fate of the hapless sucker who trucks with a Paladin reader. Unless, of course, your sucker is another fan of the press and has read Peyton Quinn's *A Bouncer's Guide to Barroom Brawling: Dealing with the Sucker Puncher, Streetfighter, and Ambusher*. Then you may be pitting your chapter against his verse.

As if readying to serve as a satisfied "straight" customer in a Paladin advertisement, James Edward Perry, a onetime convict and street preacher, seemingly set out to prove the value and utility of the book *Hit Man: A Technical Manual for Independent Contractors* in 1993. According to Maryland prosecutors, Perry employed twenty-two of the book's pointers when he performed contract murders on a mother, her son, and the boy's nurse; the book was found in his home after the arrest. An attentive reader, he had followed the instructions of author Rex Feral, a purported professional killer, to run a file down the gun barrel in order to foil ballistics tests and to shoot out the eyes of his victims so as to insure death. Rex Feral, it turns out, was a divorced mother of two (as of this writing, Paladin refuses to divulge her real name) who had originally submitted the manuscript as a novel. In a letter to the publisher at the time of her submission, she wrote that her ideas came "from books, television, movies, newspapers . . . my karate instructor." She teaches business ethics that could be cribbed from the Kiwanis Club: "Expenses generally run between $500 and $5000. . . . The money will cover travel, lodging, food, accessories such

ustration by Russell O. Jones

as disguises and equipment. . . . Any amount left over belongs to you. But don't cut any corners trying to make an extra buck. Give the man the most professional job his money can buy."

That Rex Feral did not, as the author confessed in the letter to Paladin, "even own a gun" probably wouldn't have dampened Perry's appreciation of her fourteen-point shopping list for making a disposable silencer. No doubt he checked off such tasty kill-tech items as "drill rod, 7/32 inch" and "80 grit sandpaper." And it is precisely these kinds of details—with their shop-talk snap and crackle—that the ironist finds exquisite; they occupy the camp juncture where methodical and serious intent meets flippancy and disbelief. The survivors of Perry's victims are suing Paladin for aiding and abetting the murders, and the Supreme Court has refused to hear the publisher's appeal to dismiss the case on First Amendment grounds. Howard Siegel, the survivors' attorney, doesn't buy the free-speech argument, and last summer described Paladin in the *Washington Post* as "a correspondence school for crime" and *Hit Man* as "a recipe for murder." By the time this case goes to trial—with a pro-Paladin brief submitted by other, more mainstream companies, including the *New York Times*, the *Baltimore Sun*, and ABC—this paperback, with its comic-book cover (a shiny-suited gunman, replete with fedora, holds a gun outside a half-opened door), may supersede its camp niche and end up being sold in gift shops everywhere, right next to Dilbert calendars and magnetic poetry kits. Until then such publicity only sharpens its kitsch cachet and lends to the aura of danger a thin undercoating of actual blood. Oklahoma bomber Timothy McVeigh was another proud Paladin reader; he owned a copy of *Homemade C-4: A Recipe for Survival*. No doubt the whiff of carnage informs other Paladin and Loompanics titles, thus twisting their ironic reception into a double reverse: it's a joke, but the book is very real, which makes it even more of a joke, because you wouldn't use it, though you could, if it weren't really a joke.

This duplicity draws an audience whose attraction beyond the apparent authenticity. We can claim to keep a skeptical, if not dismissive, eye; we can say that we enjoy these books solely as "cultural artifacts"; yet central to this pleasure is the belief that someone, somewhere, takes them seriously. This is the "real reader" of these "real books," and against the foreground of presumed unself-consciousness (at least on the part of the publishers) and credulous reception by a not-so-great unwashed, the ironic reader can fancy himself interested in criminal how-to books only insofar as they are tokens of trailer-park Americana. Held aloft by sociological distance, he can imagine himself skimming the surface of a turgid pool of pathological defectives who buy *101 Sucker Punches* because they truly want the answer to Craven's opening query: "What is a Sucker Punch? And why should we use it?" But just as it hardly matters whether the editorial intent is straightforward or not, it is equally irrelevant whether such readers exist; it is enough that they *should* exist.

If the appearance of authenticity gets someone to buy a Loompanics or a Paladin book, what gets him to keep it? Could it be that very same faith in authenticity? If honest-to-God criminals and miscreants might use these books, the purchaser might reason, then maybe there's some information within worth having around. This is the same reason I held on to my *Boy Scout Handbook:* it was full of detailed instructions on how to track deer, or tie a knot, or rig a sail, or hoist an injured buddy. Loompanics and Paladin how-to books are the *Boy Scout Handbook*'s dark cousins; they can help you out if you ever need to rig a bomb or hoist a buddy's corpse.

Just as pipe-smoking dads of the Fifties maintained a shelf of woodworking, car-repair, and fly-fishing manuals, the *Popular Mechanics* male still prides himself on his fix-up chops. But nowadays you can't remedy the glitch in your software with a ratchet wrench, or restore the cruise control in your car with a mallet. Grittier than the rarefied guides that accompany Windows 98, Loompanics and Paladin books serve as objects of nostalgia for a more hands-on epoch. Ryan K. Kephart's *Rolling Thunder: Turning Junk into Automobile Weaponry* has that resistible bang and clang of hard-c know-how. With it you can trick your Honda to bristle with options li a timed detonator, a gasoline mine, a directional projectile launch Kephart's schematic diagrams a peremptory, numbered instructions "1. Obtain a 20-ounce cola bot (minimum) and hollow out the ne end"—percolate with the reassuri rhythm of American manhood's U language. The countdown rhetoric p pels the reader toward accomplis ment—in twelve easy steps your could be ready to electrocute a me acing hitchhiker: "[F]lick the switc wait for a reaction to the impulse . then get out and run. Leave the swit on while running and don't look bac

The can-do ethos of such dark-si handbooks not only links them rugged individualism but bolsters th appeal as *objets trouvés*, relics of a l gone era when problems were solva on the kitchen table or at the wo bench. In *Silent Death*, a treatise "poisons and the art of killing wi stealth," the author, Uncle Fester, w es melancholic about the decline technical smarts: "It is a sad comme tary on the brutish times we live that the use of deadly substances a means of homicide is virtually unhe of. Instead of the quiet dignity of an fective poison, those with homici intent seem to impulsively reach fo gun, knife or club." The deliberate p on factor may sound high, but a doubt as to the practicality of the i formation he provides is quickly d pelled by a meticulous, citation-hea account of poison manufacture. "I those unable or unwilling to tackle t more technically demanding tasks nerve gas manufacture or botulin c ture," one chapter begins, "Motl Nature's bounty has provided a c siderably more low-tech alternati Ricin." Ricin, we learn, "is an ceedingly toxic protein found in cas oil bean," good for both "assassi tion" and "mass-attack situations." C big advantage is the "delay in the set of symptoms," which means t "a target most likely will not realiz is under attack." As exhilarating a is disquieting, this kind of thing ca be read without a thought to who has read it, and in this way the book

uires a certain potential energy in our hands. Are these the same sen-ences, you wonder, that a terrorist or cheming husband has underlined?

For an audience weaned on action novies, the obvious appeal of this ter-ain of sucker punches and armored ars is obvious. More than a few screen-riters, no doubt, keep Loompanics nd Paladin titles handy for those enes when someone has to explain, or instance, why the head won't sink. ut not all the vicarious thrills involve nives and detonations. Identity hanging, Loompanics reports, is the ot trend now. There's brisk trade be-ng done in titles about disappearing nd ID switching, and no wonder, ince books such as *How to Disappear Completely and Never Be Found* by Doug Richmond, *Fugitive: How to Run, Hide and Survive* by Kenn Abaygo, and *The Heavy Duty New Identity* by John Q. Newman surface at the conver-ence of two American traditions—he how-to book and the escape nar-ative. The potent allures of isappearing have been evident ever ince Huck and Jim took to their raft. The day you burn your driver's license night be the day you skip merrily free f an avalanche of debt, or a madden-ng spouse, or unsavory revelations bout those photos you've been down-oading from the Internet. "To a man f a certain age," writes Richmond, there's a bit of magic in the very hought of cutting all ties . . ." This owboy romance, long comprising qual parts fear of being fenced in and lesire for frontier expanses, has slid narkedly toward paranoia. The cra-ies who rant about bar-code IDs being randed on our arms merely register he extreme end of a broader Ameri-an suspicion of credentials and lossiers. There's something un-Amer-can about identity papers, after all; in novies the voice asking for them is lways a foreign one.

Much of the language describing he physical side of identity change nd disappearance could just as easily e recounting religious conversion. Like a country preacher baptizing a inner, Newman warns, "You must eave far, far behind your old lifestyle nd city. . . . You must break these old nabits 100%." If you're thirty pounds verweight, lose it; short hair, grow it longer; dress dumpy, start dressing bet-ter; speak with an accent, suppress it; "swing your arms about yourself" when you walk, stop it. Now no one will "think twice about the 'new' you being connected to the 'old' you." Best of all, no one who knows that you cleaned out the family bank account, sold your brother-in-law's car, and knocked up his wife will know the new you either. An abiding faith in self-invention as self-redemption undergirds these makeover plans. As an immigrant people we are, in fact, a nation of run-aways, and this heritage bequeaths a promise of not merely the pursuit of happiness but the pursuit of a "perma-nent new identity [under which] you will be able to live the rest of your life, or at least until the statute of limita-tions has run its course. . . ."

Leafing through scram manuals in a lawn chair behind the split-level is as far afield as most purchasers will ever get. Yet imaginations will surely tingle at the tale, retold by Richmond, of a hassled dad who couldn't earn enough as a schoolteacher and was forced to pump gas on the weekends: "'Can you imagine the humiliation of a forty-year-old man pumping gas, or the anger that grew inside him every time a neighbor or colleague pulled in for a fill-up?'" To avoid crushing alimony and child support, he split. He "'found a job more interesting than he ever imagined he could get. And he's with a wonderful woman now who earns her own keep, to boot.'" Stowing an es-cape manual around the house is like having a boat in the back yard: every so often you take a look at it and dream.

If Loompanics and Paladin how-to books satisfy our inner Boy Scout's craving for practical know-how, they also tap into that desire's underlying creed: Be Prepared. We have to be ready, and readiness means knowing how to do things—whether that's fling-ing Minuteman missiles across the ocean or wiring your passenger seat to electrocute a carjacker. You don't have to be a survivalist to feel the fear; even ordinary Americans are proactive para-noids: we build bomb shelters, stash pistols in the nightstand, rig our homes with alarms, and videotape our baby-sitters. In *Getaway Driving Techniques*

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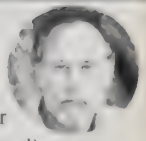
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for Escape and Evasion, Ronald George Eriksen 2 draws on the code system of awareness used by the 82nd Airborne: "In Condition Green, you are completely relaxed and unalert. If you are violently attacked while in the condition, you will most likely be destroyed. In today's violent times one should never be in this condition." Eriksen recommends that you "vary the times and routes to and from work. . . . Always park so you have a fast exit from your parking space, . . . [c]heck rear-view mirrors frequently." Condition Orange, when "your mind is focused on the danger," is the place to be.

In the radiant light of Condition Orange, Loompanics and Paladin books glow with the promise of preemptive solutions. This is the knowledge "they" don't want you to have; hence the samizdat appearance of the books. In *Gravity's Rainbow*, Thomas Pynchon describes "creative paranoia" as "developing at least as thorough a We-system as a They-system." Books filled with the rough science of criminal mayhem are passports to an alluring, homegrown We-system, one that allows the reader to recast himself as a rebel against government and conventional morality even as he seeks a salve for his anxiety.

"If you're a typical American," Jack Luger writes in *Snitch: A Handbook for Informers*, "someone has probably already informed or snitched on you." His guide to ratting for sheer spite or cold cash (a bald man on the cover whispers into a pay phone as it spews coins) conjures cartoon-paranoiac scenarios in which you report your plumber to the Internal Revenue Service because he signs over your payment check to someone else, indicating that he may be avoiding taxes. "At home," Luger instructs, "observe your neighbors carefully, and note how they live. You may notice that one neighbor has a car that's apparently beyond his means, or that his wife wears a mink coat that makes you wonder how he can afford it on his salary." What may tempt you to accept this view of society as a nest of predatory spiders is the way it charges day-to-day living with the luminous heat of the hunter and the hunted: the new administrative assistant is a company spy; you can carry on with the apple-squealing about the marijuana plants next door; somebody's asking how you vacationed in Hawaii. *Snitch* grants you a peep-show look at an underworld of dirty deals and betrayals just beneath the surface of your glad-handing, please-and-thank-you life. It's a world you fret over yet somehow long to wade into, prepped with savvy, and master. According to Luger, "The fundamental principle of security is information control."

A candidate for flagship of the Loompanic and Paladin lines could be Victor Santoro's *Gaslighting: How to Drive Your Enemies Crazy*. Santoro, the author of several other titles on revenge, gets right to the matter: "The purpose of gaslighting isn't pure physical destruction, but destruction of your target's intangible assets: his confidence, self-esteem, and reputation. . . . With just a little bit of luck, you can eventually reduce your target to a shapeless mass of shivering, quivering jelly."

The trickery Santoro outlines may range from fiendish—telling a male friend who has been sleeping with your wife that you are HIV-positive—to farcical—slipping an anti-abortion bumper sticker on a co-worker's car when his supervisor is a pro-choice advocate—but most of it falls within the familiar precincts of backstabbing. For instance, "Exposing a minority target's incompetence on the job," Santoro notes, "will have several healthy effects: It will justify the feeling that your target is holding his job only because of 'quota hiring.' . . . He'll be frozen out socially, and fellow employees won't offer him the help they might provide to others having a difficult time at work. . . . Incompetence, if properly documented, can stand up as grounds for termination." Glaring bigotry aside, *Gaslighting* is quite funny in places—consider the effort involved in thinking through what could be done with an enemy's unattended camera: "use it to take a close-up picture of an accomplice's genitals"—but the reader is ultimately creeped out by the instructions. People do write poison-pen letters, tape colleagues, make harassing phone calls, and get co-workers fired, and the book's utilitarian aspect therefore hits so close to home that there is something almost distasteful about buying it. I didn't bat an eye picking up my corpse-disposal book at the neighborhood bookstore, but *Gaslighting* I preferred to receive through the mail.

Although often posed as "How can I hurt them?" the underlying question asked by Paladin and Loompanics titles is "How will they hurt me?" And perhaps this explains why Loompanics and Paladin books seem to *require* an ironic response; anything else would be an admission that you are really afraid of someone disappearing on you, of being sucker-punched, of being poisoned, of being sent unprepared to federal prison camp. Could it be that their popularity, rather than proving the vitality of an antigovernment, survivalist movement, attests instead to a growing We-system of bed wetters, whose night terrors may be faced only between book covers?

In his 1964 essay "The Paranoid Style in American Politics," Richard Hofstadter notes that our various national anxiety attacks are marked by "this appearance of the most careful, conscientious, and seemingly coherent . . . evidence for the most fantastic conclusions." The Loompanics-style how-to guides muster up just such a facade for suspicions both public and private. Their meticulous preparations against everything from nosy neighbors to nuclear war justify, indeed amplify, the very fears they seek to allay so that, at best, holding on to Uncle Fester's rules of "good poisoning" becomes an act of bravado, announcing (to guests, to yourself) that you worry so little about a nerve-gas attack on the subway that you keep its recipe on your bookshelf.

Be Your Own Undertaker opens with this commonplace assessment: "In today's world, any person may, at any time, suddenly be subjected to a violent and probably senseless attack with no provocation. Given this sad fact, it is clear that self-defense must be taken seriously and may someday mean the difference between surviving such an attack and becoming a faceless, lifeless statistic." Regardless of whether there is "careful, conscientious, seemingly coherent evidence" for this view we hear it all the time. Many people reject this worldview as too corrosive, a kind of self-poisoning, but others are

wn to its stark, Hobbesian candor. e these the people who buy a Loom- nics or Paladin book and then keep round because it satisfies some need a legible, navigable world? "Think ore you act," advises Abaygo in *gitive*, "but trust your instincts. . . . rn the ways of nature. She will pro- e for he who takes what she of- —and strike down the man who itates." Trust your instincts—the es that tell you to run, to hide, to h out. You would never really do se things, of course—I mean, who uld?—but if, after it has outlived its fulness as a coffee-table conversa- n piece, you hold on to that book out performing a contract murder, or ting rid of a corpse, or changing ir identity, or ruining a colleague, or eating automobile weaponry, can u ever really be sure why? ■

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THE NEXT LIFE

By Peter Ho Davies

The mourners were playing poker around the rosewood table the night before his father's funeral, and Lim was winning.

They had begun the game to help themselves stay awake during the vigil. Pang had produced the new deck from a pocket of his white mourning suit and asked Lim's permission earlier in the evening. "It'll amuse the ghost," he said, indicating the casket. "Being able to see all our cards."

Now it was almost dawn, and Lim had been winning for an hour or more. It was uncomfortable. Where before they had talked softly among themselves, now they played in silence. Lim wished he could get up and leave, but it seemed improper to end the game ahead. Every time he told himself to fold he would look at his cards and find a pair of aces, a wild card, four cards to a flush, something too good to turn down. He bet heavily on mediocre hands, hoping to have his bluff called, but the others were afraid of his good fortune now. When one of them did stay in, Lim made a hand with his last card and still took the pot.

He fanned his cards to study them and thought of the coffin over his shoulder.

Lim had been determined to give his father the finest possible funeral. Old Lim had been the proprietor of the longest established Chinese newspaper on the West Coast. The day after his death of a second stroke, Lim had driven his father's prized Cadillac gingerly into Chinatown, to the corner of Jackson and Powell and the shop of Mr. Pang, the maker of grave goods.

The shop was on the second floor of a brick warehouse opposite the old Kong Chow Temple. At the top of the stairs a lighted glass cabinet was bright with spirit money, bricks of red-and-gold notes in neat, squat stacks. Beside them, through the narrow open door, Lim could see white paper furniture and, farther back, life-size paper suits hanging on the wall. He would need to buy all these items to burn at the funeral. Their smoke and ash would rise to heaven, where his father would be well provided for—as wealthy in the next life as in this.

Inside, he found Pang himself, seated at a long work table fitting thin canes together to make the frame of a model house. Behind him a bundle of bamboo rested in a pan of boiling water, softening until it could be bent and shaped. Sheets of rice paper hung on wire racks above, fluttering gently in the breeze from the door. It was warm in the shop. Pang himself wore only shorts and a singlet, and his shaved head, above his half-moon glasses, shone under the bright silver work lights. He stood as Lim came forward and dried his hands on a rag, apologizing for the heat. "Air-conditioning dries the paper." He rubbed his thumb against his fingertips. "Makes it hard to work."

He led Lim into the back room o the shop, which doubled as a show room and storage space. It was fille with paper houses and cars and, fa ther back, whole rooms of ghost fu niture. Everything was white, but tl different items were to mismatche scales: the furniture would not fit i the houses; the cars reached as hig as the rooftops. There was somethin toylike about the displays that re minded Lim of childhood, and yet h walked among them like a giant. S this, he thought, is what the afterli looks like.

With Pang's help he chose the be house in stock, with a balcony ar verandah, and an almost life-size p per sedan, with the three-pointe Mercedes star fashioned in straw o its hood. Pang nodded his approv and went to the stairs and called h assistant to come and move th pieces to the back of the shop. A do opened, the sound of a television- the stuttered blows and grunts of martial-arts movie—floated down t them, and a stocky, muscular you man appeared. Pang gestured to hi impatiently, pointing out with h chin the pieces Lim had chosen ar whistling angrily when the yout stooped over the wrong item. Li watched as he lifted the house ar then the car high overhead and ca ried them away. At the door a bree filled the paper shells with a sna and the boy had to steady himself steer them through the opening whi Pang hissed with displeasure.

They moved on to the furnitur and Lim chose the best tables ar

Peter Ho Davies is working on The Ugliest House in the World *(Houghton Mifflin). He teaches fiction at the University of Michigan.*

airs, even a paper TV and VCR. the time Pang left him to write up e order, he had bought up almost lf the stock. Alone in the show- om, Lim paced back and forth be- een the houses of the dead. Over e rooftops he saw the youth—a ung man really, he decided—light- g a cigarette. He held the match in hand, watched it burn wn slowly till the yel- v flame touched his fin- rtips, let it fall. When noticed Lim watching, stared back blankly d pantomimed the offer a cigarette, but Lim ook his head. He heard ng's footsteps returning d went to meet him.

"You make all the eces yourself?" he asked, oking down the list the d man presented to m. "Or does your assis- nt build some?"

"They're all my own ork," Pang told him. fy son runs the press. print the hell notes." m had bought several llion dollars in the best ld-leaf spirit money.

He complimented the rkmanship, while Pang culated the bill on an acus. In the whiteness the shop, the dark ads clacked back and th. There was some- ing soothing to Lim out the transaction and e other man's quiet siness manner. "Isn't it hard to see ur work burn?" he asked, and Pang dded without looking up. He ecked his figures twice and then med a price. It was a large sum, t Lim reached for his wallet and unted the bills out, one by one, th no word of bargaining. Pang nked as each note was laid down, en shuffled them into a neat pile d put them in his pocket. "My ndolences," he said. "Your father s a great man."

Lim gave instructions for delivery the cemetery and thanked Pang his time. He made to leave, but used and turned back. "Tell me," he said, "do you know where I might hire professional mourners?"

Pang looked doubtful. "It is the old custom."

Lim watched him tip the abacus slightly, the beads sliding silently to one side, erasing the last calculation.

"I would be very grateful," he began.



"My own family, in fact, were once mourners," Pang said slowly. "I could perhaps find some to attend you."

Lim thanked him for his kindness.

The day before the funeral, with the casket lying behind screens in the house on Diamond Hill, friends and family members came to pay their respects. The casket was closed, but Lim's mother placed a gold-framed photograph of the deceased on the lid. It was an old studio pose of an intense young man in a dark suit and narrow tie, his hair shining like a movie star's. The photograph had been taken before Lim was born, and he hardly recognized his father. He complained to his mother. "He looks like a stranger."

"Such talk!" she cried. "How can he be a stranger? He looks like you in this picture."

Mr. Pang arrived early with three others. Two were old men: one a retired grocer, the other a former butcher, cousins of Pang's. The third was his brawny son. He helped move the deceased's favorite chair beside the casket while the old men laid out a table with old Lim's glasses; Luckies, his preferred brand of cigarettes; and a bottle of Courvoisier. Pang poured a glass of brandy, lit a cigarette, and set it in a jade ashtray for the spirit to enjoy. Lim showed them where the bottles of liquor and the cartons of cigarettes his father used to bring back from his business trips to Taiwan were kept. "Duty-free," he told Pang's son, who whistled softly when he saw the hoard. The mourners would ensure that fresh cigarettes were lit every half hour or so.

Dishes of Old Lim's favorite foods had already been prepared by the cook, and these were brought out now and set beside the coffin. The ginger bass, Lim saw, was a fish his father had caught himself and frozen. Fishing had become the old man's passion at the end of his life. Lim remembered one afternoon off Duxbury Reef. They were out for striped bass, but his father could reel in nothing but rockfish. He kept throwing them back and hooking another. The weather had begun to worsen and the fog roll in, but he refused to turn back without a bass. And all the time he kept hooking rockfish. Finally, in frustration, he had started to use his pocket knife to blind the fish, gouging their eyes, be-

stration by James Yamasaki

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fore tossing them, still thrashing, back into the water. "Teach them to take my bait." Lim had turned away but said nothing. He hung over the side staring into the dark water and feigned seasickness all the way in. Even as a grown man, he found, he had been afraid of his father.

Pang sniffed appreciatively over the dish. "The spirit will smell the delicious aroma and come closer." Lim thought of the blind fish swimming in the darkness.

As the first guests came up the drive Pang's son began to wail and the older men bent their heads. When they looked up they had tears in their eyes. Lim was impressed. He had begun to worry about the extravagance of hiring mourners, but now, as he went to greet his visitors, he felt a deep satisfaction. These men would help the family shoulder the burden of grief.

He was gratified when his father's business partners and his older relatives complimented him on finding such skillful mourners. He noticed a change in the way these people treated him now. Some of the journalists and editors were of his own age, but previously at his father's office or the golf club they had merely nodded to him or smiled politely while they addressed his father. Now they caught his eye and drew him aside to express their sympathy. His father had been a giant. He was a dutiful son. They were sure the newspaper would prosper. They had always known how proud his father was of him. Lim nodded. The old man had made a point of bringing his partners past his son's desk, testing him on figures, or summoning him with a snap of his fingers to bring new copy to his office while they sat and sipped tea. His father liked to boast about Lim's education—Berkeley, his M.B.A.—but also to joke about what they didn't teach you in college: greed, luck, how to cut throats. Lim supposed he had resented it, but abstractly. Whatever he felt toward his father had always come second to what his father thought of him.

Every so often Lim excused himself to see that the flow of refreshments from the kitchen was running smoothly. The faces of Mr. Pang a the older mourners, he noticed, w still wet with tears. He could n imagine how the dried-up old m could cry so long. Pang's son did n cry, but he was still wailing lusti and Lim thought it had been a wi choice on Pang's part to bring a you man with such strong lungs. Some his guests had told him that the wa ing could be heard from the stre Even his mother, who had been co cerned about the expense, was mov She had scolded him that his fath who had always been careful wi money, would not have appreciat such excess. But she took one look the mourners and her own tears beg to flow so swiftly that she was su prised and tried to c them in her hands.

In the evening, as the last gue departed, there was a small comm tion. The wails of Pang's son sudde ly ceased, and at the door, sayi good-bye, Lim and his guests f silent momentarily. When he h seen them off he came back into t house, and Pang's son approach him with a carton of cigarettes, a most crushed, gripped in his hand.

He held them out to Lim witho a word.

"He means to apologize," Pa said in a pinched voice. "He was ta ing these." Lim took the small b and stared at it dumbly. It felt light in his hands. The young m stood before him, his head bow shoulders raised, hands behind h back, as if expecting a blow. Pa was waiting for him, he knew, but his confusion Lim could only tha the youth.

"It's nothing," Lim said. "It's n important." He almost pressed t box back into the boy's hands, but could see the flush on Pang's face a bald head, and he could not meet h eyes. He felt as if the old man w angry with him, but he did not kn what to say, and he excused hims to lead his mother to bed.

She leaned heavily on the arm offered her. "If you had done an thing like that your father wou have whipped you," she whispered the stairs. Lim nodded. He wonder if he had done the right thing, but

s glad he had stayed calm. He ln't want to be angry at the funer- It would be unseemly. At her or, his mother turned. "You have nored Bar-Bar today," she said. le was always such a superstitious an. You remember? When you re a small boy he used to call you mes. Little pig. Ugly dog. He made u cry." She smiled ruefully. "You ln't understand. He was so proud you. He thought if he praised you, mons would know how valuable u were and take you."

"I know," Lim told her. "I do un- rstand. It's the custom."

"All this," she said, squeezing his nd. "I never knew you loved him much."

Afterward, he stood in the door to s own room, turning the idea over his mind like a bright coin. Per- ps he had loved his father, he told nself. Next to respect and obedi- ce, love had always been excess to eir relationship. But the more he ought it the more he believed it, til it seemed to him like a sharp int of truth.

He stared at his bed, but for the st time that day he felt relaxed, t tired. He decided to go down ain to where the mourners were ting up beside the casket to keep e spirit company.

Lim found them playing cards. He d wondered briefly if it was proper, t he trusted Pang not to suggest y impropriety. He was a profes- nal, after all. He had even asked their fee in advance so that they uld divide it up and have some- ing to gamble with. Now he for- lly complimented Lim on the suc- ss of the day and, after a moment awkwardness, invited him to join em and make a fifth.

"I haven't played since I was a stu- nt," Lim told them, but he pulled a stool and Pang dealt him in. He d thought himself a skillful player college, betting quarters, but he t out of his depth with stakes of n or twenty dollars. He watched e other players carefully, but they trayed little. Pang's son never oked up from his cards, and the es of the older mourners were per- tly still, resting. Lim lost hand af r hand.

"Your luck is lousy," Pang told him, less with sympathy than approval. "Only natural."

Lim played on, but his concentration was poor. He was restless, thinking about reopening his father's office, the huge rolls of white paper waiting for ink. He didn't mind that he was losing. He had taken a kind of pride in spending money on the funeral arrangements. The mourners had done a good job, and he told himself he would think of his losses as a tip, but after a while he grew bored. He had such bad cards that the game held no interest. He folded again and got up to stretch his legs. The others played on—Pang was betting hard and winning, mostly at his son's expense—while he walked slowly over to his father's casket. He ran his finger along the rich teak and sat for a moment in the chair, listening to the bets being called from the table. The ginger fish was cold and congealed. He picked up his father's spectacles from the table beside him and slipped them over his own ears, as he had as a child. He blinked, dizzied by the blurred images through the thick glass. Over the lenses, he saw that the cigarette in its jade ashtray was out, and he tapped another from the pack and put it between his lips and lit it. His father had smoked to the end, but Lim had not had a cigarette for years. He took the smoke into his lungs and held it for a long moment before exhaling. He rested the cigarette on the ashtray. The smell reminded him of his father. He watched the smoke swim upward and thought of Old Lim inhaling in heaven. He picked up the glass and watched the brandy cling to its sides as he swirled it around. The rich sweet smell filled his nostrils as he held it close to his nose. He took a deep breath, as if for a dive, and before he knew it he'd put the glass to his lips. He held the brandy in his mouth for a second and swallowed. It was good. He set the glass down and refilled it carefully from the bottle and went back to the game.

They were playing five-card draw now and Lim threw in his ante. His cards were poor, but out of decency he stayed in, made a flush on his last card, and won his first hand of the night. The others seemed surprised. They looked at the cards he had laid down, and he waited a moment before pulling the pot toward him.

"Luck," he said, shrugging.

After that he began to play with more care and found himself drawing better cards. He played out a few more hands and won two or three in a row. The pile of notes in front of him began to grow. He felt pleased but a little embarrassed. These men were gambling with money he had paid them and he was taking it back. The grocer and the butcher looked away now when he won and would not meet his eyes. After a while he noticed the silence, and to break it he asked the mourners about their work.

"It must be hard," he said. "Mourning someone you never knew."

"My father taught me a little," Pang said. "When I was young he never let me cry. He used to threaten me with a cane. When a pet died or when a toy broke, he told me to laugh. That way mourners saved up their tears for when they needed them."

"And does it work?" Lim asked. He found it hard to imagine Pang as a child with a father. He took two cards. He was working, skeptically, on a low straight, thinking if he made it he would win; if he didn't he could give back some of the money he'd taken.

"For me," Pang said. He drew one card. "I've known others taught to wail and scream as children to build their strength." He shrugged, and Lim decided, almost with relief, that he had made a flush or a full house.

"Your bet."

Lim threw in money, and the bet was seen until it came round to Pang, who raised it with a small flourish. The light glinted off his glasses as he dipped his head to study his hand. His son looked at the crumpled notes still in front of him—he had lost almost all his earnings from the mourning—and scattered them over the center of the table. But at the next raise, he folded out of turn.

Continued on page 78

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THE USES OF MARIJUANA. For a book on the many ways people find marijuana helpful (enhancement, therapeutic, recreational, etc.), co-author William Novak and I would like to hear from potential contributors. For details please contact Dr. Lester Grinspoon, Harvard Medical School, 74 Fenwood Road, Boston, MA 02115. (Or GrinspL@warren.med.harvard.edu)

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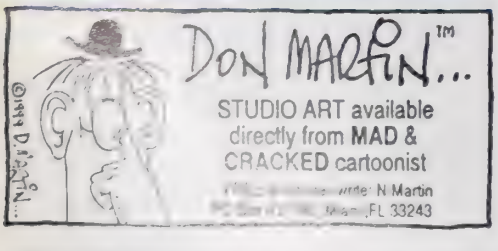
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STORY

Continued from page 75

Pang gave a little snort and lay down a fifty.

Lim saw the bet and, after a moment, raised. What did it matter? he thought. His father was dead. Losing was nothing. He welcomed it. Dawn was breaking over the curving palms, and the gulls, clustered on the telegraph lines, were waking.

The bet revolved until Pang raised it once more. He looked around the table confidently, and the old men folded, wearily, one after the other until only Lim remained. He could have called—should have—but instead he raised again. Pang studied him closely, and Lim looked back at his own cards fanned in his hand, suddenly ashamed of his recklessness, embarrassed by his play.

"You're wasting your money, I think," Pang said. He raised again.

Lim looked back at his cards, looked at the pile of notes by his elbow, but all he could think of was the trace of emphasis Pang had placed on the word "your." He felt something pressing him on, and he slid the cash into the center of the table. He regretted it immediately, hunched his shoulders and covered his cards, but when he glanced up, just for a moment, he saw a look of fear on Pang's face and felt a kind of thrill.

Pang gathered up his own stack of remaining notes, counted them slowly from one hand to the other, straightened them into a neat bundle.

"Call," he said at length. "With this," he pushed the money forward, "and I refund you for the grave goods, yes?"

Lim stared at him and Pang nodded fiercely.

"The funeral," he whispered. "For free."

Lim rested his cards on edge against the table for a second, tapped them once, finally let them fall open. He'd made his low straight, but the cards in their whiteness seemed so insubstantial to him. He stared at a small crease across the corner of one of them. Just paper after all, he thought. There must have been $900 on the table. Lim shuddered a lit in the morning chill. Opposite hi Pang's son sat very still. But Pa himself just shook his head and sta ed to laugh. "Take it," he said, sn ing crookedly at the money. "Ta it. It's yours." Lim looked at him a began to smile, too. He saw the fli er of distaste on the faces of the o er mourners, but that, too, seen funny. He was still smiling as drew the money into arms, like an embrace.

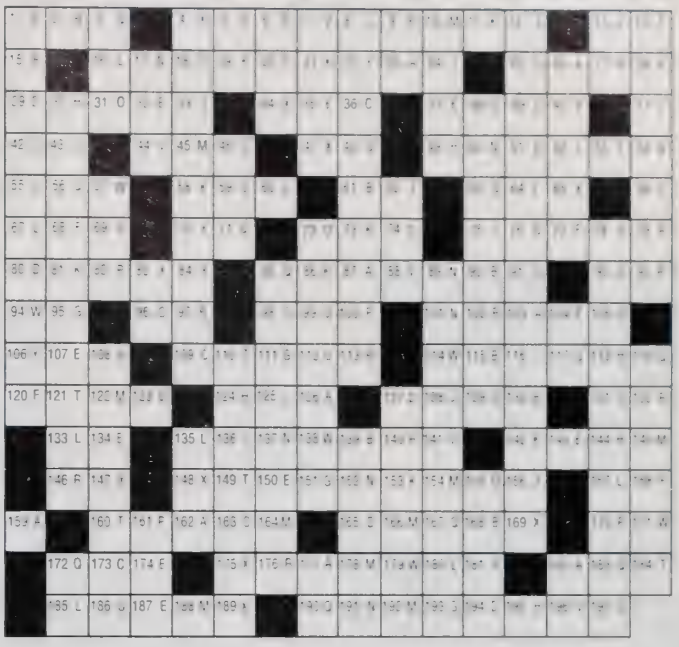
The funeral took place in the Chinese cemetery at Colma. L dimly recalled a festival day, ye earlier, white ash, like snow, risi from every part of the dark gra yard. Now he watched the pap Mercedes burn. He stared into t leaping, dancing fire, letting the h wash over him until he felt his e begin to smart and finally prick wi tears. Pang had told him that it to almost thirty hours to build such car; the house, another thirty hou and every piece of paper furnitu three or four hours each. Lim s the flames eat them, lighting th like festive lanterns before strippi the paper from the bamboo skel tons. He stepped forward to lay o of the empty paper suits on the sm dering coals, but it fluttered in t smoke, and he had to hold it until flared. He felt the hairs on h knuckles shrink and pull tight. T heat caused an updraft, and t smoke and ashes ascended almo vertically. With them went the wa of the mourners, their voices crac ing in the parched air, and Lim ma veled, with a new appreciation, their art.

He caught Pang's eye, and as t old man paused to fill his lungs, Li bent and threw another bundle spirit money into the brazier at t foot of the grave. He watched as t notes turned white and scattered the wind of the flames. The scorch breeze flickered over him, plucking his sleeve, his lapel, as if it mig swirl him away with the ashes falli softly into the sky above. And for moment he felt himself rise up wi them—light as paper, buoyant wi heat—until the cries of the mourne sounded only faintly below him.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 194

By Thomas H. Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: the first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken. The letter in the upper right-hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 63.



CLUES WORDS

A. Plant covered with soft, hoary pubescence — 177 162 79 23 103 87 182 / 26 159 126

B. Serve, smash, stitch, etc. — 139 54 168 90 2 61 115 15

C. Caught, entangled, interlocked — 92 20 109 173 74 36

D. Confused, muddled (2 wds.) — 127 80 51 165 39 123 29 194

E. Shorten — 107 104 37 150 32 143 187 35 / 134 174

F. Loose, flowing garment — 77 120 68 14

G. Disengagement, release — 38 117 95 56 76 25 193 63 / 111 151 69

H. Knocked — 30 124 118 195 144 49

I. "—— of their spears was like stars" (2 wds.; Byron, "Destruction of Sennacherib") — 62 24 116 33 42 75 55 136

J. Sheds — 12 128 41 156

K. Cuspids — 81 58 153 19 86 142 11 73

L. Ardent — 8 125 157 64 135 16 180 67 / 185 60 133 52

M. "At first the infant/ —— " (2 wds. followed by WORD N; Shakespeare, *As You Like It*) — 192 122 160 188 178 12 45 154 / 145 164

N. See WORD M (2 wds. followed by "the nurse's arms") — 152 89 137 50 27 121 17 191

O. Besotted — 31 155 98 96 18 5 129 163 / 72 105 197

P. Department, river, or wine of E central France — 161 158 170 82 102

Q. Adequate, valid, binding — 167 71 48 3 85 172 190 183 / 119

R. Wacko, screwy (3 wds.) — 93 132 97 146 130 9 142 176 / 113 102

S. Gets, brings back — 6 46 1 181 78 43 108

T. Hardy, sound — 121 53 160 149 184 110

U. Type of anti-knock fluid — 59 186 99 91 112

V. Accompanying, related — 44 28 7 196 141 66 13 40 / 88

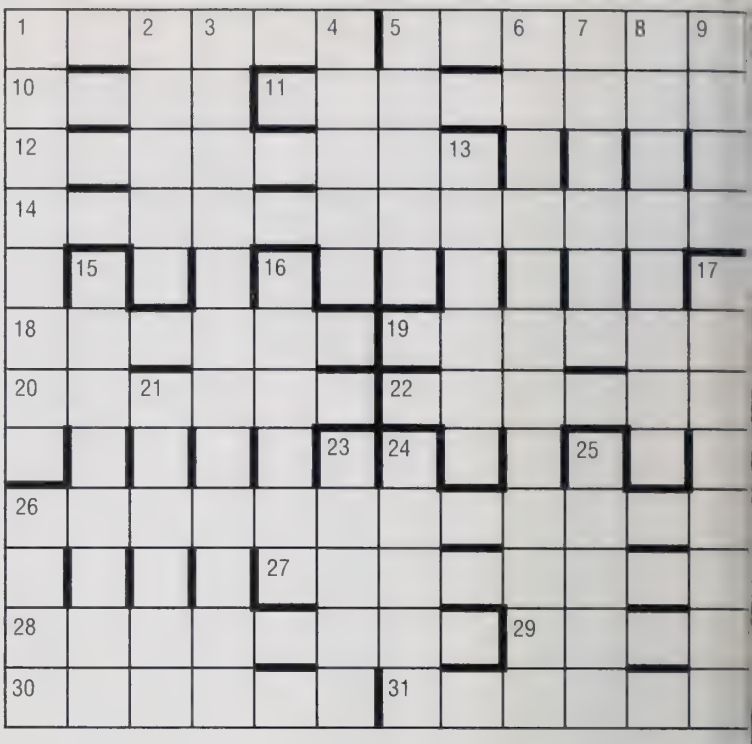
W. Easily displeased — 94 138 114 139 171 87

X. Charles I said, "I and the martyr ——" (3 wds.; Rushworth, *Historical Collections*) — 147 4 83 34 148 175 21 47 / 169 189 65

Y. Tweedledum says waterworks "weren't made to be looked at for nothing. ——!" — 22 181 84 20 126

Short Stories

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.



The Across "Short Story" is really all of the Across clues written consecutively, with no unnecessary connecting words. Similarly the Down "Short Story." (As with many modern short stories, the literary meaning may be a bit, well, obscure.) Disregard the titles.

Answers include two proper names. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 63.

ACROSS

1. (6); 5. (6); 10. (4); 11. (8); 12. (8); 14. (12); 18. (6); 19. (6); 20. (6); 22. (6); 26. (12); 27. (8); 28. (8); 29. (4); 30. (6); 31. (6)

THE WARP AND THE WOOF

It was a mess.

"Looms are taking in nothing *American Ruffle*-created—perversely!" Nancy initiated. "To illegally take back profit, put up money resident in Kate's weaving? It's a follow-up to second-rate Ginsberg and Kerouac!"

I objectively reflected. "Bee participants catching a few Zs? There's a kind of diversion concealed in it."

"Duos are characters that make room for artisans! An institution is not in place without effort. Yale is unfortunately one of the most famous five to be part of the mess. On being included, they won't shut up!"

"That can work out! To be exact, Rob's the kind of heel that debauches ('Let's to it!'), making love in a cute way and doling out a pill for the pregnant."

"Flip, and not me, was the author of *Shut Up! (For Musicians)*. Go back to the first sign in which delicate fabric is having a comeback. If we're stuck-up, they'll get the message!"

DOWN

1. (8); 2. (5); 3. (12); 4. (5); 6. (12); 7. (6); 8. (4,4); 9. (4); 13. (6); 15. (8); 16. (6); 17. (8); 21. (6); 23. (5); 24. (5); 25. (5); 26. (4)

THE SCRIPT-READER'S NIGHTMARE

"Sisters, little Elizabeth has gotten to Lincoln's heart, like taking in and raising band made out of kids living on the street. There's no allowance here, dig?"

Good speech! Looks articulated. Hold on to joint featured in thankless shot: "Cop, one to 10 A.M."

"Like, shush! Don't start Irons on the way to the cups."

Mentions movie star's main name. State quickly, rewrite or perhaps rip up revision of *Inquest* after slight abridgement.

"A sparkling circle—convertible phaetons, carriage drivers—Spoilt! Spoilt! Big hats! Keep it all the way it was written, boys!"

The actor of 8 goes around so mature.

"Gave a party honoring someone, I hear."

Rank, file smile down. In text:

"Rappers walk on actor in front of piano:

"THE MAJOR KEY
WITH YOU AND ME
THAT'S THE POINT OF ASTROLOGY!"

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Short Stories," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by March 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the May issue. Winners of the January puzzle, "Inner Circles," are Roberta Lathram, Fairfield, Ohio; G. L. Cherlin, Princeton, New Jersey; and Bernard W. Fuhr, Columbus, Ohio.



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Bill Samuels, Jr.
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THE GHOST OF SHAKESPEARE

Who, in Fact, Was the Bard?

Harold Bloom *Marjorie Garber* *Joseph Sobran*
Jonathan Bate *Richard Whalen* *Mark Anderson*
Tom Bethell *Gail Kern Paster* *Irvin Matus* *Daniel Wright*

◆

LISTENING FOR SILENCE

Notes on the Aural Life

By Mark Slouka

BURLINGAME
MAR 2 3 1999
LIBRARY

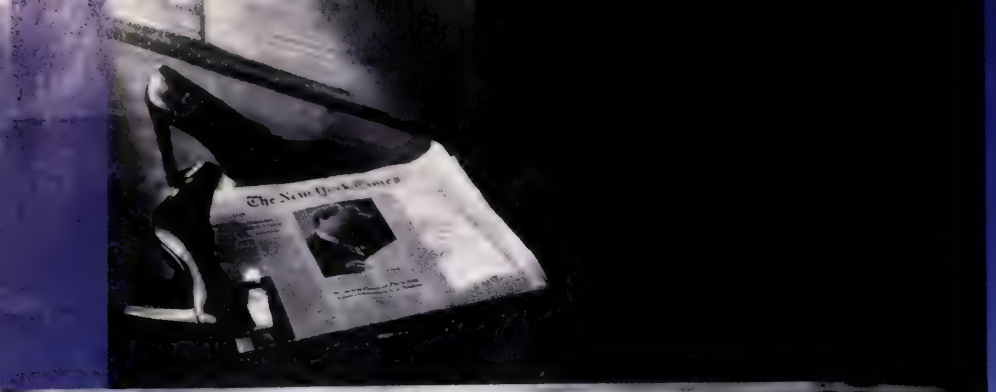
THE GREEN MACHINE

Is Monsanto Sowing the Seeds of Change, or Destruction?

By Jennifer Kahn

Also: David Lehman, Charles Baxter, and Ted Nugent

◆

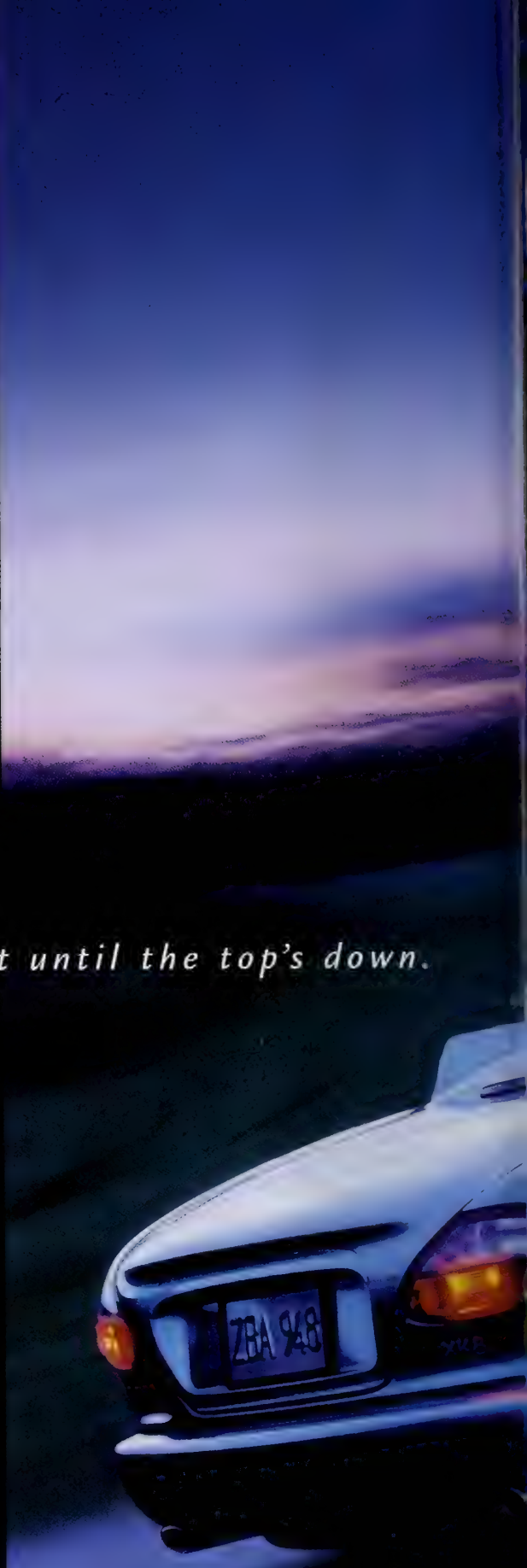




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e to draw attention. But then again, you're probably used to that.
JAGUAR XK8

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HARPER'S
M A G A Z I N E

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APRIL 1999

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LETTERS

How Much Is That Artist in the Window?

In his essay "But Is It Advertising?" [January], Jonathan Dee says that I am an example of a writer whose work "has no content—which is to say, no connection between the language you use and your actual conviction." Dee claims that because I wrote a poem for use in a Nike commercial, "millions" know me as "the poet from the Nike television commercial," thereby nullifying everything else I've done or will do. "As for what her work concerns, the question is moot," writes Dee, "since she has demonstrated that the content of that work is arbitrary; that is, it's for sale." This assertion is wrong on so many levels I hardly know where to begin responding.

The content of my writing is no more arbitrary than that of Dee or any other writer who may profit from his or her skill. Does he believe that in order to be valid, a thing has to be created into the void? Can I assume, then, that he donated his article to *Harper's Magazine*? Or that he would turn down a story assignment if the topic weren't his idea?

I considered the Nike ad no different from any other commission or freelance job. Along with about a hundred other poets, I was asked to submit poems in tribute to certain f male Olympic athletes. I approache this as a challenge or a contest. Th poetry was *not* written in the san spirit in which I usually wri poetry—that is, without expectatio of material gain, which is not to s that I didn't try to do a good jo even though I knew the work mig end up in a commercial. I found th stories of the female athletes inspi ing, and I tried to capture tha Michelangelo might not have car one way or the other whether a pa ticular pope was remembered we but he still did the best job he coul

Dee seems to think that doing commercial for Nike took me fro obscurity to a terrible fame. Wrong am just as obscure as ever, only I'm little less in debt and my graduat student husband and I own our fi car—an '86 Toyota Tercel. I got m B.A. as an adult, I work full-time, a I am paying back major college loa For me, that Nike ad was a godsen But it did not make me rich, it d not make me famous, and it does n mean that my work is up for sale.

What really bothers me, thoug is Dee's sanctimonious criticism other artists, such as the la William Burroughs, who also did Nike ad. Despite creating some the greatest American literature the twentieth century and being a claimed as one of the most influe tial writers ever, William Burroug had money problems all his life. A some point he got offered a chan at what we all want: a little securit

Harper's Magazine welcomes reader response. Please address all mailed correspondence to Letters Editor, or e-mail us at letters@harpers.org. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Volume precludes individual acknowledgment.

tle comfort. Should he have
ed it down so that people like
could have their hero? For what
d for his country, William Bur-
ns should have gotten a house
e sea and a pension for life.
t the United States has always
hard on its artists, and never
so than right now. Our cul-
is full of people who expect
ts to inspire them but who
t know what inspiration *is*.
think it's what happens when
put a bindhi on your forehead
ten to Celine Dion.
ll of which makes Dee's ire
nst artists and advertising even
superfluous than it might oth-
se be. It's like he's a witness to
allnacht but his big complaint is
ne broken glass in the street.
stead of worrying about the cul-
of advertising taking over, Dee
ld worry about our society's pro-
d ignorance of the arts and
s. It is the end result of bigotry
rd and contempt for those who
e art. Artists in America today
caught between a right-wing
and a hard marketplace. At
t with the marketplace, you
d a chance of paying your bills.

y XYZ
ceton, N.J.

nathan Dee's criticism of compa-
such as Apple Computers or Sat-
or their sometimes shameless ap-
riation of figures and movements
elp sell commodities illustrates a
liar asceticism common among
ts, especially those who are less
successful. Joni Mitchell re-
ed to this phenomenon as the
o Dance"; i.e., the self-congratu-
y dance of the bohemian artists
make a virtue of failure, rebap-
g it as the renunciation of Mam-
and worldly success.
ll artists who succeed in being
d or seen in their lifetime are
ually without exception relent-
self-promoters. They are masters
lling themselves to editors, crit-
talent agents, and, of course, the
ic. Dee is much mistaken in be-
ng that fame is not a principle
alue; it is often the highest value
uccessful artists. Andy Warhol
was famous as a salesman of his can-
vases; Dali was a shameless self-pro-
moter, as were Leonardo da Vinci
and Jean-Paul Sartre.

Dee gives credence to the artists'
carefully constructed myth that they
are "not of this world." They most
certainly are. They are filled with
the same greed, the same ambition,
the same desires as advertising exec-
utives and lawyers. Artists simply
sublimate (and disguise) their drives
for the sake of their own mythology.
What Dee actually finds most objec-
tionable about art in advertising is
that concept that he so firmly be-
lieves; namely, that artists create for
disinterested reasons.

A. Clifford Allen
San Francisco

Jonathan Dee argues that because
advertising has a didactic or "capital-
ist" purpose, it somehow degrades the
use of language and art in the rest of
our culture, and that this undermin-
ing of the "real" language of "real" art
becomes even more egregious when
the ads in question are most creative;
i.e., the kind of ads that are honored
every year by the Clio Awards.

To that I would say, horse feathers.
Dee's reasoning recalls the old canard
that Andy Warhol's super-realistic
paintings of Campbell soup cans
threatened to diminish the rest of
modern art. I just don't buy it. If
someone wants to present a clip of
Picasso painting a picture and marry
that vignette with the end line
"Think different," what does it mat-
ter whether the "artist" who made
that connection is selling Apple
computers, using the clip as part of a
movie or play, or creating a TV doc-
umentary about the painter's life?
That isn't to say that a lot of modern
advertising isn't banal, overreaching,
and downright irritating. But it's just
because so many practitioners have
taken the powerful tools our lan-
guage and art offer to create dumb
ads that thirty of the world's leading
agency creative directors donate a
week of their time every year to help
us judge the Clios, the advertising in-
dustry's annual awards competition.
They're keeping them honest by showcasing
the good work and the bad.

"The best of the music is
the most successful crossover
music written in our time,
at once compositionally
sophisicated and primal
in its impact."
Boston Globe



JOHN ADAMS



I WAS LOOKING AT
THE CEILING AND
THEN I SAW THE SKY



Libretto by June Jordan

The 1984 Los Angeles
earthquake is the setting of this
song cycle -- part love comedy, part
social satire -- whose far-ranging
score embraces minimalism,
rock, gospel, and jazz, with a cast
featuring some of the brightest
voices in musical theater today,
including Audra McDonald
and Marin Mazzie.

N

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We appreciate the consideration Dee gave last year's Clio ceremonies, attending both the print and poster and the TV and radio awards shows, and we hope he will come back again next year. But he should sit closer to the stage. He described me as "curly-haired." My mother tells me I haven't had curls for fifty-nine years.

Andrew Jaffe
Executive Director, Clio Awards
New York City

Jonathan Dee would have us believe that modern artists have no avenue other than advertising in which to express themselves, because modern art is currently in a stagnant state of redundant irony. Yet look at the art of past masters. Great art itself has become a product to be bought and sold. Ridiculous prices are paid for these works, the driving force not a love for art but a love for the privilege of saying one "owns" them. They have become postmortem works-for-hire, no longer belonging to a medium of expression. Hardly anyone outside of scholarly circles discusses their artistic merit. The question for discussion is, "What is it worth?" So how can we expect new artists to see beyond the dollar signs? Art is another product to push, which is why it makes perfect sense for Apple to use Picasso to sell the iMac. The ultimate irony is in the fact that the iMac is also selling Picasso.

Mark Hodges
Augusta, Ga.

Jonathan Dee asks, "[I]s an archival photograph of Martin Luther King in any way more appropriate to the sale of computers than to any other product?" The answer is yes. The product is positioned, truthfully, as a computer for creative thinkers. The "Think Different" campaign is meant to connect Apple and those archival photographs to a place where you, the consumer, already live. Are you creative? Like these folks? Have we got a computer for you!

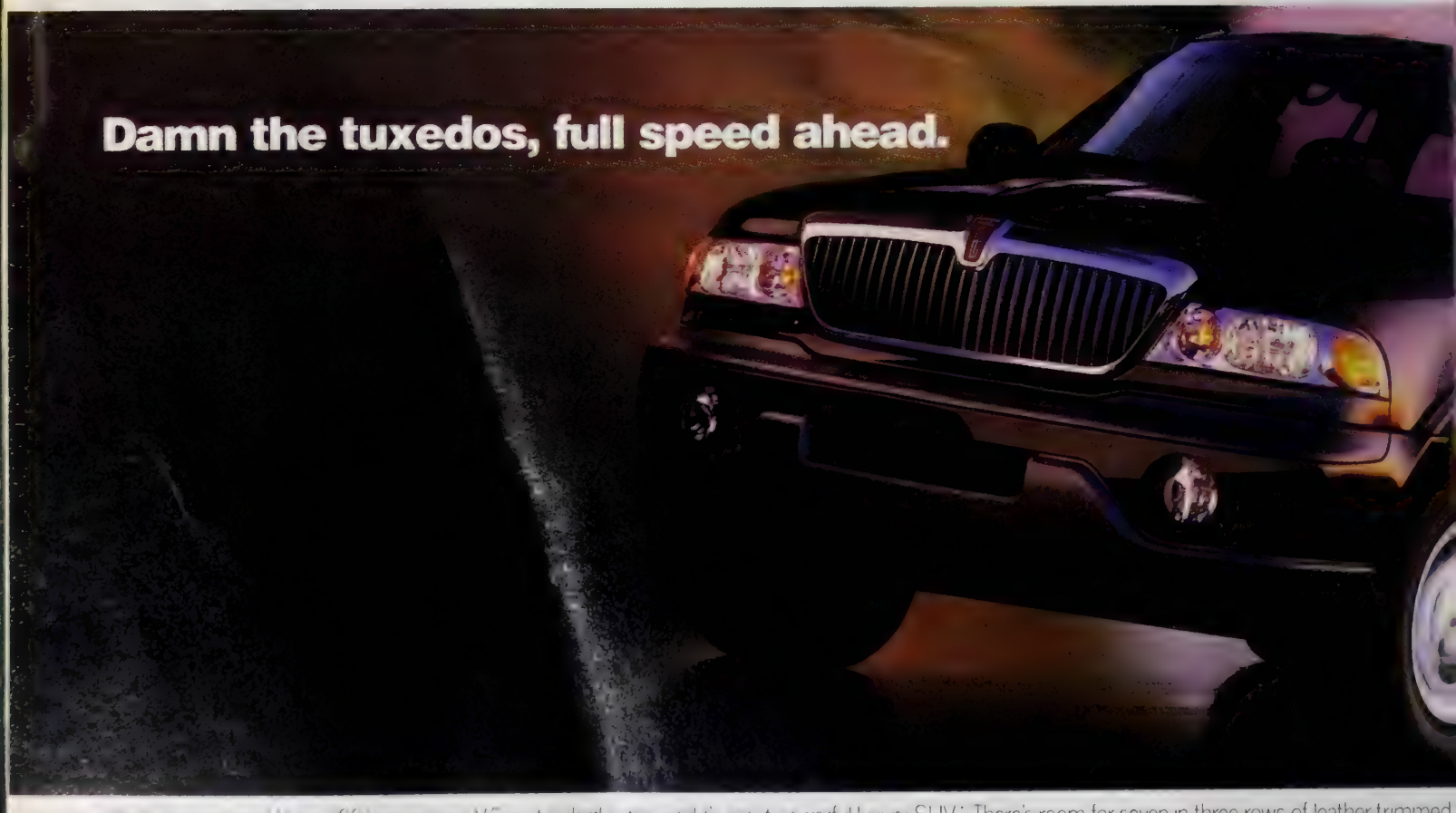
The message is in the function, not the form. The medium is only the messenger. Shoot him if you like. He'll be back.

Tom Lunt
Chicago

The reason so much creative ingenuity and passion are "wasted" on selling commodities is that the producers of commodities are moneyed and powerful, which makes them today's patrons of the arts. Even classical music relies on its fans to buy tickets and CDs. Some people consider *that* selling out. Any art that hasn't enough popular appeal to be subsidized by the buying public has to be subsidized by somebody else, whether it's an advertiser or the National Endowment for the Arts (ultimately, the taxpayers). With or without ulterior motives, somebody's got to foot the bill.

Lynn Herrick
Austin, Tex.

"Words can be made to mean anything," writes Jonathan Dee, "which is hard to distinguish from the idea that words mean nothing." In this, the advertising industry has had no



mentor than Lewis Carroll's
pty Dumpty:

"When *I* use a word," Humpty
mpty said in rather a scornful tone,
means just what I choose it to
an—neither more nor less."
"The question is," said Alice,
hether you *can* make words mean so
ny different things."
"The question is," said Humpty
mpty, "which is to be master—
t's all."

deed.

Gilman
and, Oreg.

vnward Nobility

lthough Barbara Ehrenreich's
and reporting on the struggle to
on the minimum wage is laud-
["Nickel-and-Dimed," January],
closing hope that "these people
come to know what they're
h, and take appropriate action"
illustrates her comfortable dis-
e from the problem and the so-
n. Believe me (because I'm one
hem), we know what we're
h. It is the corporations that maintain these armies of low-wage earners who need to recognize all employees' worth, and pay them a living wage, or, more likely, be forced by Congress to do so.

It's doubtful that the working poor—with no access to lawyers, credit, decent medical care, stable housing, even the freedom of movement enjoyed by anyone who owns a car—can do much to grapple with the morally repugnant policy of those corporations and the legislators who gladly keep them within the law. The current minimum wage is the clearest evidence of Congress's contempt and disregard for this bottom one third of Americans.

Dennis H. Lopez
Vineyard Haven, Mass.

Barbara Ehrenreich's parting thought chillingly recalls intellectualizations leveled at post-Holocaust Jews, rape victims, and the abused. Is it possible that Ehrenreich, like others who are comfortable but conscious, deeply resents "these people" because she too feels powerless, like they, to devise solutions? Is it possible poverty persists just to serve power? It takes wealth to sustain such a costly institution as poverty. The poor cannot afford it.

I wish Ehrenreich's essay were required "Leadership Training" reading. I also wish that she had laid the burden of "appropriate action" at the feet of those with the financial and political power to impose greed ceilings and raise real wages.

Leslie Mulligan
Atlanta

What does Barbara Ehrenreich consider to be "appropriate action"? Come back in a next life born to middle-class white American parents?

Norma Walker
Ellicott City, Md.

Surely, in the tonier reaches of Florida, Barbara Ehrenreich could have found many lawyers' and doctors' wives or female doctors, lawyers, and executives who would

Continued on page 94



NOTEBOOK

Full fathom five

By Lewis H. Lapham

I find the matter as in a labyrinth: easier to enter into than to go out.

—Lord Burghley

See you now;
Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth;
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,
With windlasses and with assays of bias,
By indirections find directions out.

—William Shakespeare

The speculation about the authorship of Shakespeare's plays has been going forward for nearly 200 years, and to the reader who asks why *Harper's Magazine* comes so late to the proceedings, I can offer little else by way of answer except my own interest in the question. Much of what I know and think about the world I've gathered from my reading of the plays, and I'd like to know to whom I owe the debt.

The academic theorists say that it doesn't matter who supplies the texts to the laboratories of critical deconstruction, and Harold Bloom, by all odds the most appreciative of our Shakespearean scholars, suggests that too full a knowledge of the playwright's life might cast a pall on the prodigy of his genius. It is enough that the plays exist, "spells of light" or falls of gentle rain, and, because undefaced by the graffiti of scribbling biography, an always undiscover'd country from whose bourn no reader returns without having been changed, like John-a-Dreams, into a previously unknown self. "An art so infinite," said Bloom last year in *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*, "that it contains us," giving point to our experience, form to our consciousness, voice to our perception.

Bloom seconds the motion proposed in 1753 by Dr. Samuel Johnson, who said of the plays that they "may be considered as a Map of Life, a faithful Miniature of human Transactions, and he that has read *Shakespear* with Attention will perhaps find little new in the crouded world." The statement stands as proven—in the fabric of almost everything written in English over the last three centuries, by the anthology of wise saws and modern instances that constitute our secular scripture, by the numberless occasions on which, with Shakespeare in the prompter's box, we remind ourselves of what, in such a place and on such a night as this, Romeo might have said to Juliet or Macbeth to Banquo's ghost. As Homer was to the ancients, so Shakespeare is to the moderns, always in mind and properly approached, as Bloom would have it, with "wonder, gratitude, shock, amazement."

Never would it occur to me to quarrel with the notion of Shakespeare as the progenitor of the intelligence that I happily mistake for my own, but I'm reluctant to attribute the inheritance to an unknown parent, as if I had been spawned in a drift of sea foam or sprung from the seed of an apricot. For many years I asked no questions of the standard mythography. At college I accepted as certain truth the story about the "upstart Crow" in *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit* transformed into Ben Jonson's Sweet Swan of Avon—the young poet from Warwickshire who in the summer of 1587 goes off to London to seek his fortune, finds his way to the Globe Theatre and there joins a company of actors, writes a sequence of immortal plays, performs on occasion at the court of Elizabeth I, roisters in taverns with Will Kempe, returns to Stratford in 1610 at the age of forty-six, acquires a fine house and a coat of arms, writes *The Tempest*, and walks softly among willow trees until his death and transfiguration in 1616.

Like everybody else in the class, I memorized the dates and passed the quiz, but in the winter of 1972 I met Charlton Ogburn Jr., a writer then in his late fifties, who had made a thorough study of what was known and not known about the life of William Shakespeare. During the course of my editing an article that Ogburn published in *Harper's Magazine* in June of that year, he introduced me to the dubious nature of the standard scholarship and raised most of the doubts—about the signatures, the alternate spellings of the name, the lack of documents connecting the Stratford grain merchant to the London plays, the difficulty with dates, the banality of the will—assembled in the present issue (page 35 and following) under the heading "The Ghost of Shakespeare." Ogburn also proposed the name of Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, as the probable author of the plays, and he

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was at a loss for the retorts courteous, quips modest, and replies churlish advanced by subsequent subscribers to the same opinion.

Ogburn's hypothesis I found congenial, in part because I could more easily imagine the plays written by a courtier familiar with the gilded treacheries of Elizabethan politics than by an actor peeping through the drop curtains at the decorative company celebrating Twelfth Night at Whitehall, in part because 1972 was not a year conducive to belief in the masterpieces of official doctrine. Richard Nixon was busy telling lies about the war in Vietnam; the unanswered questions about the assassination of John F. Kennedy had been declared inadmissible by the custodians of the country's respectable opinion; the Central Intelligence Agency was papering the walls of Berlin and Panama City with the posters of disinformation. Encouraged to read the news from academia as carefully as the news from Washington, I noticed that every new edition of Shakespeare's plays blithely asserted as immutable truth and settled dogma what Ogburn had persuaded me to see as fanciful conjecture or complacent supposition.

Having neither the time nor the knowledge to chase the subject into a library, I was content to follow the dispute at a distance. Ogburn in 1984 published *The Mysterious William Shakespeare: The Myth and the Reality*; at American University in Washington in 1987, three Supreme Court justices entertained arguments about the authorship of the plays and ruled in favor of the heroic *arriviste* from Stratford; the Public Broadcasting System in 1989 produced a documentary entitled *The Shakespeare Mystery*; *The Atlantic Monthly* published a discussion in 1991; and over the last eight years, as the debate has continued to enlarge its audience and frames of reference, I've discovered a Web site maintained by the Shakespeare Oxford Society, come across reports of sudden resignations at the University of Oregon, the rumor of a duel somewhere in the south of England.

The publication of Joseph Sobran's *Alias Shakespeare* in April 1997 prompted me to begin thinking about how to present the argument in *Harper's Magazine*. Like Ogburn, Sobran submitted a brief favoring Edward de Vere as the author of the plays, but he did so with a narrative force that I hadn't before encountered, and I thought his arrangement of the facts and non-facts sufficiently plausible to at least warrant the courtesy of a reproof valiant, if not the counter-check quarrelsome or the lie with circumstance. But the *New York Times* ignored the book, as did *The New York Review of Books*. The few notices that appeared in the neo-conservative propaganda sheets, among them *National Review* and *The Weekly Standard*, were uniformly shrill in tone, their complacent witticisms not unlike the smirks and whisperings of Rosencrantz or Guildenstern.

Believing Sobran's book deserving of a better fate, I thought at first to write an essay in its defense, and for the next several months I took the time to read at random in the history and literature of the English Renaissance, most memorably Caroline Spurgeon's *Shakespeare's Imagery*, G. B. Harrison's *Elizabethan Journals*, Bloom's appreciation of the plays, Charles Nicholl's *The Reckoning*, Lytton Strachey's *Elizabeth and Essex*. Had I been trained as a scholar I might have known what facts were relevant, which sources trustworthy, when to turn the page, but too often I fell afoul of simple curiosity, occupied for an afternoon with the wreck of the Spanish Armada, delayed for a week by the subtleties of the Babington plot, lost for a month in the intrigues of Sir Francis Walsingham. The mercurial character of the age I found most wonderfully expressed in Strachey's sketch of the royal Elizabeth, a monarch noble in reason and infinite in faculty, and thus matched, in the images of movement and light, to the splendor of the plays:

> Her response to every stimulus was immediate and rich: to the folly of the moment, to the clash and horror of great events, her soul leapt out with a vivacity, an abandonment, a complete awareness of the situation, which made her, which makes her still, a fascinating spectacle. She could play with life as with an equal, wrestling with it, making fun of it, admiring it, watching its drama, intimately relishing the strangeness of circumstance, the sudden freaks of fortune, the perpetual unexpectedness of things.

Apparently it never was easy in late-sixteenth-century London to know who was standing behind an arras, which friends were false and which ones true, how many double meanings balanced on the point of a rapier or a joke. Elizabeth reached her fifty-sixth year in 1589, and a courtier who guessed wrong on the question of the succession, making the mistake of not knowing who was in and who was out, suffered the forfeit of his ears. The old aristocratic order was thawing in the sun of new enterprise, an abolished world resolving itself, in Strachey's phrase, into "a new class of persons, neither chivalrous nor holy." Sir Walter Raleigh and the Earl of Essex perished under the headsman's ax; Lord Strange succumbed to poison; and Ruy Lopez, the Queen's physician, was castrated and disemboweled on the scaffold at Tyburn—a public stage even more popular with the groundlings than the ones at the Swan and the Rose.

The first quotation at the head of this essay refers to the murder of Christopher Marlowe in Deptford in June of 1593. Lord Burghley was Elizabeth's principal minister, and in his capacity as the director of the government intelligence service he had sent Marlowe on one of the crown's duplicitous errands against either A) the Catholic interest at Rheims, B) Cambridge University, or C) "The Tamburlaine Pamphlet." The matter was never clarified. Burghley was Oxford's father-in-law and by all contemporary accounts a man bearing a close resemblance (in manner, age, and trembling platitude) to the character of *Hamlet*'s Polonius, from whom I've borrowed the second epigraph. Sending his spy to Paris to search out with the "bait of falsehood" the truth about his son, Laertes, Polonius elsewhere in the speech suggests placing on Laertes "what forgeries you please."

Reynaldo: As gaming, my lord?
Polonius: Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing,/Quarreling, drabbing,—you may go so far.

The voices of Burghley and Polonius, possibly one and the same, speak to the ambiguity of an age in which the truest poetry was the most feigning and nothing was ever exactly as it seemed. Conspiracy was everywhere afoot, the changes of fortune as sudden as the uncertain glories of an April day, the bridge across the Thames festooned with the severed heads of luckless counterfeiters and clumsy thieves. I don't find it surprising that a poet should choose to wear the costume of a pseudonym; nor do I think it odd that over the last 200 years so many names have been assigned to the author of Shakespeare's plays, not only Edward de Vere's but also those of Marlowe, Bacon, and the Countess of Pembroke.

Like the dramas on the Elizabethan stage, the shifting alliances at court often turned on the device of mistaken identity. The Queen was famous for her dissembling, extravagant with gorgeous gestures bestowed on the Spanish ambassador or the Duke of Anjou but sparing with the crumbs of policy. Her native caution and indecision concealed behind the jeweled facade of the radiant Gloriana, the Queen placed on her suitors what forgeries she pleased, playing with them like wanton boys with flies, fishing for the carp of truth. "Under the serried complexities of her raiment," says Strachey "—the huge hoop, the stiff ruff, the swollen sleeves, the powdered pearls, the spreading, gilded gauzes—the form of the woman vanished." So also with whoever it was who wrote *Hamlet*, the Sonnets, and *As You Like It*—the form of the poet vanished beneath the powdered pearls and spreading, gilded gauzes of unrivaled language.

Together with Charles Dickens and Mark Twain, most of the writers—writers as opposed to scholars—who have wondered about the provenience of the plays cannot find, either in the portrait bust at Stratford-upon-Avon or the sentimental tale of the upwardly mobile actor possessed of "small Latin and les Greek," a convincing likeness of the man who conceived Falstaff and Cleopatra. Neither can I. The proposition that wisdom springs full-blown from the head of Zeus seemed to me far-fetched as long ago as grammar school, and I cannot help but think that even works of genius owe something to the life that gave them breath. Which isn't to say that Edward de Vere wrote *King Lear* but merely that I can imagine him dancing, in the high Florentine manner, with Queen Elizabeth at Hampton Court.

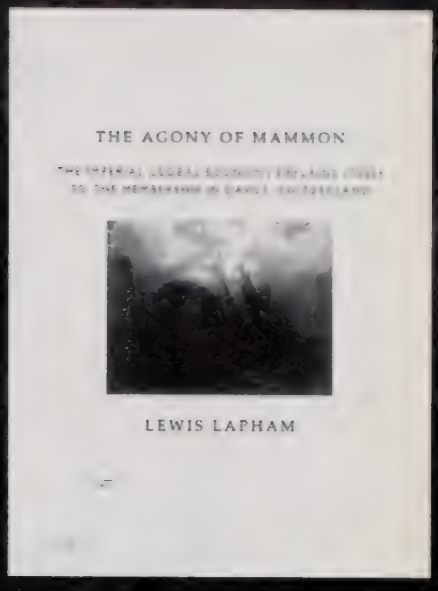
The passing of centuries hasn't made it any easier to know who is standing behind the arras. Prospero broke his staff and drowned his book, and the matchless spirit of a great but unknown playwright apparently has melted into thin air. We have a voice but not a man, a name but not a face.

I like to think that time eventually will prove a more gracious host. James Boswell's *London Journal* for the years 1762–63 wasn't found until the winter of 1930 (in a bean sack in Scotland), and maybe two months or twenty years from now something unambiguously Shakespeare's—a letter, a manuscript, a tailor's bill—will turn up in a desk in Antwerp.

But in the meantime, in this month's issue of *Harper's Magazine*, we have the depositions of scholars both amateur and professional who bring with them the best of the evidence (historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, pastoral-comical) presently in hand. We have the promise of the comedies, wherein all the masks fall off at the end of Act V and a riddling fool restores the lost identity of Rosalind or the Duke; also six lines of verse, in Sonnet 72, that read as prologue to a story not yet told.

> After my death—dear love, forget me quite,
> For you in me can nothing worthy prove;
> Unless you would devise some virtuous lie,
> To do more for me than mine own desert,
> And hang more praise upon deceased I
> Than niggard truth would willingly impart . . .

■



THE AGONY OF MAMMON
The Imperial Global Economy Explains itself to the Membership in Davos, Switzerland
LEWIS H. LAPHAM

With keen observations and sardonic wit, Lewis Lapham exposes the World Economic Forum for what it really is: a group of finance ministers and professors of economics who gaze into the future and see little else but their own reflections.

Recounting his experiences at the 1998 conference in Davos, Switzerland, Lapham describes briefings on the outlook for Thailand and the subtleties of corporate espionage, as well as speeches by eminencies as grave and diverse as Newt Gingrich and the Vice Premier of China.

After five days in Davos, Lapham surmises that the captains of the commercial empire know as little about the likely movements of the global economy as the waiters supplying them with plum brandy and cheese fondue.

"Lapham offers the reader his trenchant observations of the goings-on at Davos without condemning them. He doesn't have to. After all, only a fool or a rich person could miss the point."
Stephen DiLauro, Miami Herald

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HARPER'S INDEX

Amount the Pentagon will spend this year on its Balistic Missile Defense or "star wars" program : $4,166,000,000
Amount the world has spent since 1977 on licensed *Star Wars* merchandise : $4,500,000,000
Number of the Pentagon's 9 Stealth bombers that have ever been deployed in combat : 0
Additional number of bombers that are being built : 12
Expenditures for which the Pentagon could not account last year : $22,000,000,000
Number of federally maintained bridges of which the Department of Transportation has no record : 4,770
Chance that the annual median flow of an unfettered U.S. stream is greater than it was 50 years ago : 1 in 3
Estimated percentage of coral reefs in the Indian Ocean killed by rising sea temperatures last year : 85
Chance that an American believes a manmade disaster will destroy civilization in the next century : 1 in 2
Estimated percentage of all AIDS deaths since 1980 that took place in Africa : 83
Number of people who died in police custody in South Africa last year : 758
Maximum number reported to have died in custody during any year under apartheid : 200
Settlement paid 3 female federal inmates last year after guards sold them as sex slaves to male prisoners : $500,000
Number of the 9 prison employees named in the women's lawsuit who were charged with a crime : 0
Chance that an American born today will spend time in jail : 1 in 20
Chance that a Mexican gray wolf released into the Arizona wilderness last spring has been shot : 1 in 2
Estimated change since 1997 in attendance at America's top 50 theme parks : –2,000,000
Estimated attendance at a rally for debt relief for poor countries held outside Britain's 1998 G-7 summit : 60,000
Percentage of Chile's spending on its privatized pension system that goes toward administration : 13
Percentage of spending last year on the U.S. Social Security system that did : 1
Factor by which U.S. stock market growth must exceed GDP growth for Social Security stock investment to work : 5
Number of years since 1900 in which this has occurred : 13
Change in the value of Ross Perot's portfolio on the day one of his companies went public last February : +$882,112,600
Number of U.S. companies and groups licensed to sell merchandise bearing the Vatican's Jubilee 2000 logo : 31
Chance that a U.S. abortion clinic suffered a severely violent attack from protesters last year : 1 in 4
Number of Ivy League egg "donors" that Options Fertility Registry's school newspaper ads have found since 1997 : 18
Percentage of Iceland's gene pool to which Decode Genetics plans to acquire exclusive commercial rights this year : 100
Number of farmers that Monsanto has investigated for "seed piracy" since 1997 : 500 (see page 72)
Number of times a Florida Fox-TV station asked 2 reporters to rewrite a news story on Monsanto in 1997 : 83
Amount the station offered the reporters to quit their jobs and keep silent after the news story was killed : $151,250
Ratio of Americans who say they trust TV news magazines to those who say they trust print news magazines : 2:1
Ratio of those who say they trust local TV news to those who say they trust C-Span : 2:1
Miles per hour at which a New York TV station clocked a police van driving Mayor Rudolph Giuliani to lunch last year : 75
Portion of Yankee Stadium tickets for last year's World Series games that were available to the public : 1/6
Portion of Senate gallery seats during the impeachment trial last winter that were : 1/8
Distance in miles between the Stanford dorm room of Chelsea Clinton and that of Carolyn Starr, daughter of Kenneth : 0.7
Length, in pages, of the letter Linda Tripp distributed last winter soliciting donations to her legal defense fund : 12
Number of Americans who have made a donation : 20,000
Maximum number of pages of tax forms an American was required to fill out in 1913 : 3
Number of pages of instructions provided : 1

Figures cited have been adjusted for inflation and are the latest available as of February 1999. Sources are listed on page 91.
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READINGS

[Essay]

WHERE CLINTON'S THIRD WAY WENT WRONG

From "We Are All Third Wayers Now," by Robert B. Reich, in the March/April issue of The American Prospect. *Reich, the former secretary of labor in the Clinton Administration, is currently University Professor of Economics and Social Policy at Brandeis University.*

Is the "Third Way" the new public philosophy likely to reshape capitalism in a postcommunist twenty-first century? Or is it nothing more than a pragmatic, if not cynical, means of keeping liberals mollified while continuing the long-term shift rightward?

Years ago, the "Third Way" referred to Sweden's social democratic middle ground between capitalism and Communism, but in recent years, with the fall of Communism, the middle ground has moved right. When Britain's Tony Blair used the phrase in his successful bid to oust the Tories in 1997, he had in mind a set of public policies equidistant from Margaret Thatcher and Old Labour, redolent of Bill Clinton's winning New Democratic formula of 1992. Since then, most of the newly elected left-of-center leaders of Europe—including Germany's Gerhard Schröder and France's Lionel Jospin—have committed themselves to some variation of the Third Way, and Bill Clinton himself has been using the term with increasing frequency. (In a warm-up speech for the next presidential election, Al Gore recently substituted "practical idealism," but it's essentially the same idea.) The White House and 10 Downing Street have even discussed establishing a loose international group of Third Way leaders.

The Third Way has no formal statement of principles (and probably never will, even with the ministrations of Clinton and Blair). But several common ideas lie at its core: deregulation and privatization, free trade, flexible labor markets, smaller safety nets, and fiscal austerity. If this were all there was to it, though, the Third Way would simply be the Second Way, blazed by Reagan and Thatcher. But there's more, and here's the crucial difference.

The distinct theme uniting Blair, Clinton, Schröder, and Jospin is that the economically displaced must be brought along. Rather than redistribute income to them (as was the strategy of the First Way), the idea is to make it easier for them to obtain good jobs and thus become economic winners. The central faith of the Third Way—a faith based, admittedly, more on hope than experience—is that the economic growth spurred by its free-market policies can be widely shared if those who are initially hurt by them are given the means to adapt. Importantly, it is a moral precept as well as a policy idea: work is the core responsibility. If people are willing to work hard, they should have a job that pays enough for them to live on. In order to qualify for such a job, they should have access to adequate job skills. If that's not

enough, their wages should be subsidized.

It's a win-win catechism: Governments should not try to block change; they should not protect or subsidize old jobs in old industries or keep unemployed people on the dole. Instead, governments should embrace economic change, but they should do so in a way that enables everyone to change along with the economy. Government must be actively involved, helping people over the fence.

All of this makes good sense in theory (I am a biased observer, remember, having strongly believed in the principles that originally guided this administration). But after six years of Bill Clinton's Third Way, the wisdom of hindsight suggests that some skepticism may be in order. It is not that the goal is wrong or insincerely held. It has become clear that the politics of pursuing the Third Way are more perilous than anyone assumed. And this is not a uniquely American political problem. Any serious attempt to lead a nation toward a Third Way will encounter similar pitfalls.

When Bill Clinton came to office, traditional Democratic constituencies—the AFL-CIO, teachers, California liberals—were hardly enamored of his free-market leanings. The North American Free Trade Agreement, in particular, was roundly condemned. The constituents went along, ultimately, and they reluctantly acceded to deregulation, fiscal austerity, and welfare "reform." But they have never accepted the basic premise—that education, retraining, wage subsidies (like the earned income tax credit), and the rest of the mix would compensate for the larger insecurities of a freer market. "Retraining for *what*?" I used to be asked. And then, invariably, came the refrain: "Oh sure, America is creating millions of new jobs. And I've got three of them."

The American economy is surely much better now than it was several years ago, but the mistrust remains. Polls show continuing fear of job loss and widespread opposition to free trade. Such anxieties are especially evident among workers without college degrees, whose incomes have suffered the most. Elsewhere around the world is a growing backlash against open and deregulated markets.

It can be argued, of course, that it's possible to rally the support of people who might otherwise be hurt by economic change—if change is made sufficiently attractive to them. Give them a sense of real opportunity; show them that good jobs await them. But to do this credibly requires not just a philosophical commitment. It also requires money: schools have to be good enough, college has to be truly accessible, retraining has to be state-of-the-art, and public-service jobs have to be available in the event that no private job turns up. In addition, workers need the assurance of affordable health care and child care.

The usual bromide offered by economists is that all change requires some pain and that people will change only if they have to. This idea may be correct as a matter of economic theory, and it may even have some basis in behavioral psychology. But it ignores social and political reality. The social reality is that, for many people, change is exceedingly difficult. Even when an economy is speeding along on

[Litmus Test]

THE RIGHT STUFF

From a questionnaire given in February to potential Republican presidential candidates by the Committee to Restore American Values (CRAV), a coalition of conservative leaders whose members include Phyllis Schlafly and Randy Tate. The group is evaluating whom to endorse in the next election; Steve Forbes, Dan Quayle, and Gary Bauer were among those who answered the questionnaire.

Do you believe that taxes should not be raised under any circumstances?

What commitments relative to abortion would you require from appointees to the Supreme Court or lower federal judicial positions?

Should a constitutional amendment guaranteeing the right to life be enacted?

Would you place a crèche on the White House lawn if ordered to refrain from doing so by the Supreme Court?

Would you support a removal of "In God We Trust" from U.S. currency?

Do you normally call games of chance "gambling" or "gaming"?

Would you veto any bill that places any federal restrictions on private or home education?

Do you believe gun control reduces crime?

Do you believe there should be *any* new form of federal gun control?

Do you believe stricter immigration laws are needed to protect the economic and political rights of U.S. citizens?

Please itemize as many major federal programs or agencies as possible that you believe are beyond the constitutional power of the federal government and that you would work to eliminate.



This photograph, by Thomas Michael Alleman, was taken in May 1997 at the end of a Cinco de Mayo parade in South Central Los Angeles. Alleman's work is currently on display at Cerro Coso Community College in Ridgecrest, California.

all cylinders, many people still can't find and keep a job that pays enough to live on. The political reality is that citizens who rationally fear they'll bear most of the burden of economic change and enjoy few of its benefits will resist it. In a democracy, their resistance will take the form of support for (and support of candidates who promise) job security, trade protection, subsidies for old industries, and cushy safety nets. And such determined resistance will assuredly hobble the Third Way.

Here's the brick wall into which Clinton crashed headlong (and so eventually might Blair, Jospin, and Schröder): There are only two ways to raise the money that's needed to make economic change politically palatable. The government can borrow the money, but that makes the bond markets nervous. Left-of-center governments carry a higher burden of proof in this regard than conservative ones, because their traditional constituents have wanted their governments to spend more money on them, and the bond markets know that. This was part of Clinton's dilemma. The deficit had swelled under his Republican predecessors, but he was even more constrained than they were, because he had to prove that he could be trusted to control it. Clinton had to slash the budget deficit before interest rates would come down. Even now, with budget surpluses, he feels compelled to use most of the money to pay down the public debt. All Third Way governments will have to demonstrate similar fiscal prudence.

This leaves only one other alternative: the better-off members of society have to pony up. Their taxes must be raised. In theory, at least, the better-off should have no problem with this. After all, they're the ones who will gain the most from the move to an unfettered market, because they already have the education, skills, and social connections to virtually guarantee themselves (and their progeny) the best jobs. They should be willing to commit some of this gain to help across the great divide those who are less well situated.

But political reality is messier. Before they part with any of their burgeoning income, the wealthy will resist. And they have an ever-expanding arsenal at their disposal—campaign contributions, lobbyists, issue advertisements, and a plethora of conservative magazines and think tanks. In 1993, Bill Clinton narrowly passed a budget through a Democrat-controlled

Congress that raised income taxes on the wealthiest 1.5 percent of citizens. But that was the last of it. Since then, their taxes have been steadily lowered.

This puts Third Way governments in a quandary. It means that the overarching agenda—to liberate market forces while easing the transition for those who would otherwise fall behind—has no natural core of strong support among the electorate. Support won't be found among the traditional left, many of whom would rather protect and preserve the old economy. Nor will it be found among the conservative right, many of whom are flourishing in the new economy and don't want an activist government taking their money away.

The Clinton Administration's record offers a case in point. Some of the President's proposals have been enacted, to be sure, but few of them on the scale necessary to make significant progress toward a Third Way. Most education and training initiatives have been meager in relation to the overall demand. The expanded earned income tax credit is significant but has no sustained public support (most of the public doesn't even know it exists) and thus is vulnerable to budget cuts. Tax incentives for industry to create jobs in poor inner cities have hardly been up to the task, and the micro-enterprise banks have barely gotten off the ground. Proposals to expand health care and child care have resulted in marginal gains, but the need has grown even faster. As a result, a larger portion of the American public lacks health care and child care today—or pays more for them—than was the case before Bill Clinton came to office.

The real lesson for the new center-left governments now gaining power around the world, and the lesson for a future Democratic administration, is that there is a legitimate Third Way to deal with the stresses of a rapidly globalizing economy. But the political reality is that our populations are becoming ever more divided between the two old ways, which either preserve and protect jobs or let the free market rip. Bill Clinton is still talking about a Third Way, but he has had to settle mostly for the Second. That's okay as long as the current expansion lasts. Yet for the Third Way to succeed over the long term—and to triumph elsewhere—it will need to be turned into a political movement all its own. And that is not easy politically.

In order to muster the resources needed to make change attractive to those who fear it and to get them over the fence and into the new economy, Third Way leaders will have to broker a new social contract between those who have been winning and those who have been losing. In return for giving the winners what they need in order to do even better—further moves toward deregulation, privatization, free trade, and flexible labor markets—the winners must agree to apply a portion of their added booty to equipping the losers. The deal has got to be explicit and must be framed as a choice: either most of our citizens will move into the fast-moving global economy together or else only a privileged few will adapt, and those who cannot adapt will need to be supported by safety nets and job protections. We would all do significantly better if we chose the former and did so soon. The good times aren't likely to last forever. A deal like this is easier to accomplish when the economy is strong.

Thus could the Third Way become something of a crusade—and at its base a moral one. The issue confronting advanced nations involves the very meaning of patriotism in the new global economy. The Third Way, properly conceived, has an answer, I believe, but its new crop of leaders must articulate it clearly: a nation is more than a flag and an anthem; it is a collection of people who, because they are linked by culture and belief, are willing to pool certain of their resources so that all of their members have a fair chance of succeeding. Only out of such an ideal can a new political movement emerge; only out of such a movement does the Third Way have half a chance of success. Bill Clinton attempted a Third Way, but he failed to turn it into a moral crusade. It is now up to Blair, Schröder, Jospin, and a future American president to try.

[Newsroom Letter]

AND THE BEATS GO ON

From a December 20, 1998, memo regarding "The Week That Was," sent to the newsroom staff of the Washington Post *by the paper's managing editor, Steve Coll.*

Last Wednesday night in Amman, Howard Schneider climbed into a Baghdad-bound sport utility vehicle and embarked on the ride of his professional life. He had an Iraqi visa and a sense of foreboding. On the phone to the foreign desk that day, he had learned that Washington was awash in rumors that U.S. air strikes over Iraq were imminent. With extraordinary

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bravery—it sounds like a bloated word, I suppose, but really there's no other way to describe it—Schneider drove off anyway, into the night.

It was that kind of week. While Howard was on the Amman-Baghdad highway, some forty *Post* reporters from five different newsroom staffs—reporters drafted only forty-eight hours earlier to help make our impeachment coverage the most authoritative and distinctive in the business—zigzagged across the United States, each one assigned to lock in on a single undecided member of the House. The "undecideds" scramble seemed at times a cross between *It's a Mad, Mad World* and *Planes, Trains, and Automobiles*.

Sharon Walsh climbed into a car with wavering Democrat Paul McHale and drove through Pennsylvania with him. In Little Rock, Lois Romano dug so far into the decision-making of undecided Jay Dickey that she was able to report memorably on the contents of his fortune cookie. The *Post* was everywhere on the Hill this week. Accomplished, confident veterans like Dan Morgan and Bill Claiborne as well as brand-new hires like Christina Samuels and Stephanie Stoughton stirred together some of the *Post*'s glorious variety into one strange, spontaneous cauldron of old-fashioned fedora-evoking street reporting.

Our frontline guard of the impeachment story was benevolently led by the human ledeall, Peter Baker. As one of his editors remarked, you would be astonished by his stamina and his ability to write sixty-element seamless inches in sixty minutes night after night if he were not, in fact, bionic. This is a room that contains a number of very high-level practitioners of the deadline ledeall art form, but what Baker has done this year exceeds any performance I've ever witnessed. A volatile story, unreliable sources, rampant confusion, multiple editors, multiple collaborators, mind-blowing Dunkirk document dumps, and a pressure-cooker atmosphere tougher than a war zone—and the guy just sits there knocking it out with a sly sort of energy and maturity, able to draw the burlesque and the solemnly historic into the same file, the same paragraph, the same sentence.

Style scrambled its own jets and went live Saturday for Sunday, even though the holidays were draining its staffing. All week Style was at its very best, right on the news but tilting at an angle no other newspaper feature section would ever attempt. Shales wrote of hemorrhaging turnips and flying pigs and our Congress and just shined. Howie Kurtz owned the Flynt-Livingston media story. Henry Allen stepped in and wrote the sentence, "We have a crisis crisis." Kevin Merida, Michael Powell, and Joel Achenbach just walked out into the streets each day and found an angle and a voice. Powell messaged me at one point to say that it was like playing in the Count Basie Orchestra, and that was the way Style felt each day—full of deep composition and inspired soloing.

I could go on—on to the desks, over to Photo, back to News Art, around to the News Desk, and there would be much more to say. I have been privileged during my years at the paper, as many of you have, to stand on a number of balconies overlooking entertaining and thrilling spectacles, but rarely have I known a week as exhilarating as the one that just ended. I hope you had time to enjoy it too.

[Memo]

DOMESTIC POLITICS

From a memo sent last December to the staff of Woman's Day *by the magazine's editor, Jane Chesnutt.*

To: *Woman's Day* Staff
From: Jane Chesnutt
Re: *Family Circle*'s January Cover

I heard through the grapevine that some of you were upset with *Family Circle*'s January cover line promising "2000 Great Ideas." I want you to know that I was too.

That issue does not contain 2,000 ideas. Counting the same way we count ideas in *Woman's Day* (which is fairly liberal, as you might expect), we found around 900, and our counter felt it could be stretched—if you tried very hard—to 1,000. That's a lot of ideas, but it's still nowhere near 2,000. In fact, it's almost physically impossible to put 2,000 ideas in an issue of that size.

January is traditionally a tough month for newsstand sales. Our response was to load the January issue with top-rated cover lines. *Family Circle*'s response was to resort to deception. I don't think they'd call it that: I suspect they'd say that they were just playing off the Year 2000 theme that runs through the issue. Well, I know how readers read cover lines, and I call it decep-

I want to reassure you that just as we've

go this route in the past, we don't plan

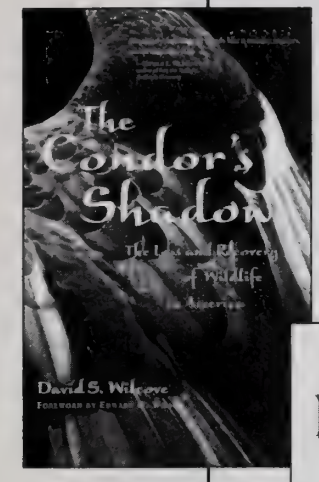
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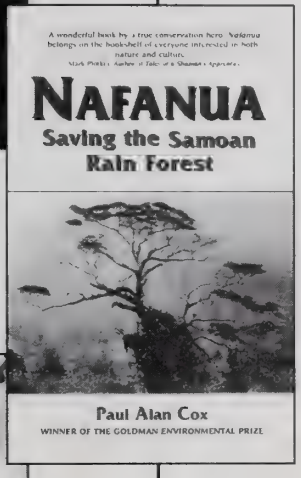
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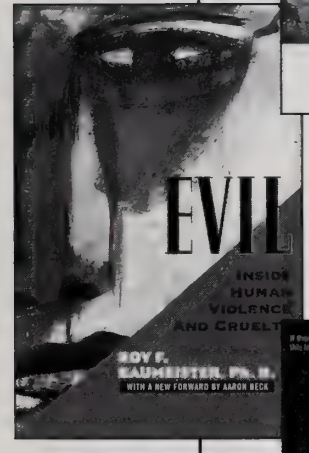
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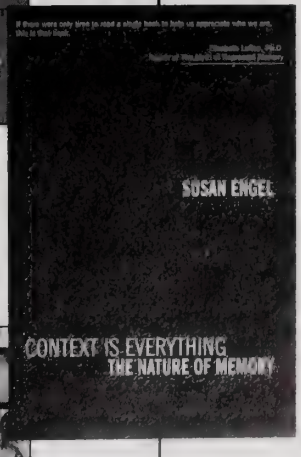
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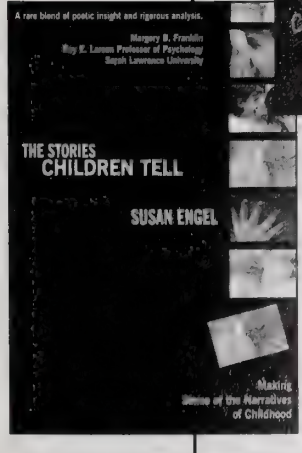
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[Corrections]

MISTAKES WERE MADE

From "Corrections," by David Lehman, in the tenth anniversary issue of the literary journal American Letters & Commentary, *published last August. Lehman is the author, most recently, of* The Last Avant-Garde.

An article on February 25 about President Kim Young Sam of South Korea erred in identifying him as an ex-playboy who was known as the Falstaff of Seoul because of his girth, his jollity, and his appetite for vast quantities of imported beer. The article should have described him as a well-respected man about town doing the best things so conservatively. Mr. Kim's speech, in which he apologized for his "youthful indiscretions," was not, as reported, preceded by the playing of the opening bars of Wagner's *Walküre*. Mr. Kim has a preference for Rossini's "Thieving Magpie Overture" for state occasions. In addition, the article mistranslated one of Mr. Kim's remarks in some editions. The president said, "I guess all young men have oats to sow," not, "I was a young buck with *cojones*."

A related article on February 27 misstated the opinion of Sam Young Park, a professor of English at Martha Washington University who specializes in Shakespeare's history plays. Mr. Sam was reported to have said that Mr. Kim's remark, as originally mistranslated, alluded to "the macho ideal as Henry V practiced it and Hemingway codified it." He said no such thing. Mr. Sam, who, contrary to published reports, has seven nephews and is bald, said Mr. Kim's speech did not propose concrete measures for dealing with Korea's problems; he did not say that it did propose such measures.

The Personal Health Column last Wednesday, about the hazards associated with the amino acid homocysteine, gave an imprecise figure for the amount of folic acid supplement prescribed for people with elevated levels of homocysteine in their blood. The correct amount is one milligram of folic acid *daily*, not one milligram.

A chart on Sunday listing people who had stayed overnight in the White House during the Clinton Administration incorrectly described Sam Young Park as an illegitimate son of former baseball great Slammin' Sammy Young. According to the chart, the young man changed his name to Sam Young Park in order to trick his Korean in-laws into bestowing their parental consent when he was wooing their daughter, Sue, an exchange student studying the amino acid homocysteine at Martha Washington University in Bethesda, Maryland. There is no evidence at all for this hysterical flight of fancy.

Because of an editing error, an obituary for the playwright Kim Chadwick appeared in yesterday's paper. Ms. Chadwick did not die in her home last Thursday. Ms. Chadwick's daughter Esther did not discover the body. Ms. Chadwick had written eleven plays, not eight. She had dropped out of Bryn Mawr, not Smith, taken up with a musician named Pablo, not a shipping tycoon named Tom, and favored quiet meditation and sewing rather than boisterous games of Trivial Pursuit. Her first marriage, to the financier Maxwell Park, did not end in divorce. Mr. Park and the couple's three daughters are not properly to be considered survivors, since Ms. Chadwick (who retained her maiden name) is still alive, though we did not know this when we published her obituary, which had to be written in advance, like all our obituaries. Nevertheless, that is no excuse, and we know it.

In Stanley Kowalski's review of Kim Chadwick's new play, *Wild Oats*, "Let us not hear that Ms. Chadwick has proved her critics wrong" should have read, "Let us note here that Ms. Chadwick has proved her critics wrong." *Mea culpa*.

[Report]

HEY! TEACHER! LEAVE THOSE KIDS ALONE!

From "Recurring Nightmares: An Investigation Into the Repeated Hiring of Substitute Teachers Unfit to Care for Children," a report released in January by the Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District. The report examined cases in which substitutes who behaved inappropriately were repeatedly rehired; the day after its publication, Schools Chancellor Rudy Crew announced plans to implement a centralized database for the hiring of substitute teachers. The city has not had a centralized system since 1990, when budget cuts forced it to be discontinued. On average, 3,000 New York City public-school teachers and support staff are absent each day.

On May 5, 1998, sixty-four-year-old substitute teacher Hermina Brunson was assigned to a fifth-grade class at PS 127 in Queens. When the class became boisterous, Brunson, as



The Teacher Caroline, *a painting by Freeport, Florida, artist Nancie B. Warner. Warner's painting* The Seven Vials *appeared in the September 1998 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

one pupil later described it, "pulled a Jerry Springer." Using a metal chair, Brunson struck one girl in the face and a boy in the knee. Brunson was arrested and charged with two counts of assault and endangering the welfare of a child.

Following her arrest, information quickly surfaced about Brunson's past. In 1983, while teaching science at IS 8 in Queens, she hit the students under her care with an electrical cord, causing, in one instance, welts to the body of a seventh-grade girl. The Board of Education placed her on its list of individuals who are ineligible to be hired in any capacity. However, nobody at PS 127 checked the list before hiring her as a substitute; indeed, no one even asked for references.

On June 4, 1997, Stacey Glassman was the substitute teacher for a special-education class at PS 45 in Brooklyn. After lunch, she told her students that she had a headache, and then laid her head on the desk and fell asleep. The nine-year-olds took this opportunity to use the camera belonging to their regular teacher to photograph one of their female classmates with her pants down.

Principals who had employed Glassman described her teaching abilities as "barely adequate." Most of the schools explained that Glassman was hired on the recommendation of her mother, a former full-time teacher who was then working as a substitute, and that the two often worked in the same schools on the same days.

The allegation that Glassman had fallen asleep in class was widely reported in the local press, and the Board of Education placed her on the ineligible list. Nevertheless, Glassman was employed as a substitute at least four more times before the end of the 1996–97 school year.

On January 8, 1997, Joseph Starace was assigned to a third-grade class at PS 149 in Queens. During the course of the day, Starace tried to hypnotize a girl and performed a trick in which he put a string through his neck. He showed the students photographs of a child with a pig's head, a woman with her head in cement, and a man with his guts coming out of his body. Starace told the class that he made movies with the people in the photos.

Less than three months later, Starace was hired as a substitute science teacher at PS 122

in Queens. There Starace gave students an 800 number to call if they wanted to be in "blood and gore" movies. He told them they would have to say they were sixteen years old but that those chosen could earn $1,000 a day. Starace was also caught entering students' home address and telephone information into his laptop computer. "If I have trouble with a kid, I have to call his parents," he explained.

Starace was not placed on the Board of Education's ineligible list after his bizarre behavior at PS 149 nor after his equally strange stint at PS 122. In fact, he was hired at various schools in Queens during the 1997–98 school year—including a two-day assignment at PS 149 in October 1997, where only ten months earlier the school secretary had written "Not to be hired" next to Starace's name on a card kept on file.

[Riposte]

CANADA'S BEAR MARKET

From a January 18 letter sent by Ted Nugent to John Snobelen, Ontario's minister of natural resources, who three days earlier had canceled the province's spring bear hunt after pressure from animal-rights groups. Nugent is a rock musician and the editor and publisher of Ted Nugent Adventure Outdoors Magazine. *He lives near Jackson, Michigan.*

Mr. Snobelen:

Ending Ontario's spring 1999 bear harvest is an insult to anyone who truly cares about a healthy, balanced wild. There is no excuse for this nonsense. Giving credence to the rantings of a lunatic fringe of animal terrorists is nothing short of a sin.

Let it be known that as the president, director, chairman, or lifetime member of nearly every sporting/conservation organization in North America, my family and these organizations, forthwith, will dedicate our every waking hour to boycotting Canada. We will rally all sporters and all citizens to avoid Canada like the plague. After this gesture of buffoonery, we refuse to tolerate any more indecency. No walleye fishermen, no pike, no trout, no salmon, no waterfowl, no deer, moose, bear, caribou, topless bars, casinos. It's over.

Keeping the Spirit of the Wild Strong and Free,
Ted Nugent

[Essay]

THE SHAME OF FORGETTING

From "Shame and Forgetting in the Information Age," by Charles Baxter, in The Business of Memory, *a collection of essays edited by Baxter to be published next month by Graywolf Press. His essay "Literature's Great Divide" appeared in the January 1997 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

In April 1998, my brother Tom died, at the age of fifty-nine. He died in his sleep, of a heart attack, one day after his fifty-ninth birthday. He had been afflicted with bad health for some time, including congestive heart failure, renal failure, diabetes, cancer, and narcolepsy. He once fell asleep at the wheel and had to crawl out of his wrecked car and a drainage ditch to the nearest house. His financial affairs were a calamity. Faced with these problems, he was almost perversely upbeat. Every week over the phone I'd ask him how he was, and he'd say, "Not too bad for an old man!"

Tom was an outcast of the information age. Perhaps every family has one; he was ours. He had trouble in school (and he went to a lot of schools) because he could not learn printed information easily. Reading and writing often defeated him, and they did so before the culture had begun to employ the phrase "learning disability" and before this society had become dependent on computers. He had a computer and claimed he didn't know how to use it. For years, long after I had begged him to stop, he would introduce himself exuberantly as "the dumb brother." I was stricken by this phrase, made heartsick by it, and by his efforts to turn this source of shame into an identifying badge.

Forgetting was shameful to him, and he felt it marked him for life.

Much of my writing made very little sense to him, except for the stories that he recognized and in which he figured, and there were many. He never forgot anyone he ever met, and he never forgot a story, witnessed or heard. He was amused that I often forgot people's names but remembered what I had read. He thought it was a telling commentary on the sort of person I was, and am, that I had such difficulties. While he was still able to function in the



These photographs by Toronto artist Bill Burns are from his series "How to Help Animals Escape from Natural History." The pictures appear in the exhibit "Little Worlds," organized by the Dunlop Art Gallery at the Regina Public Library in Regina, Saskatchewan, and currently on display at the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

world, he worked as a salesman, a manufacturer's rep, a job in which he could put his story-telling capacities to use. He didn't—almost everyone said this about him—have a mean bone in his body.

His father—his and mine—died in 1948, when Tom was nine years old, and at the funeral some man, some friend of the family, told Tom, "You're not going to cry, are you." It wasn't a question; it was an order. "He told me to stuff it," Tom said later. And stuff it he did, with food.

What do you do if you can't manage the printed information that we, as an information society, churn out? What becomes of you? Melville's Bartleby starved in the Tombs. My brother took the opposite tack. He ate. He took it, the food, all in. He became large and unseemly; he became so big that when he came into the room—any room anywhere—people helplessly stared at this huge tottering man. He fought his shame (he always ate in secret, out of sight, preferably in the dark) by eventually calling attention to it: he began wearing pink sport shirts and kelly-green trousers and rainbow suspenders. By his mid-to-late forties, he was unemployable, defeated by his exasperated difficulties with his appearance and with the printed word.

He was among the ranks of those who cannot easily process written information, the data-disabled. There's a large number of these people around, and no one likes to talk about them because they are a great scandal to our sensibilities. We have a myth that education will help them get on their feet. For some of them, yes. But for many, many others, education is the wall they can't get over, or through.

Ann Arbor, Michigan, where I happen to live, is a small and rather tightly wound city where information-processing is a major industry. Surrounded by farmland, the area is nevertheless dominated by the University of Michigan and by its intellectual, artistic, and athletic productions. People here often take considerable pride in their minds and more particularly in their memories. The town is full of know-it-alls. It has to be. Standing in front of others, sporting their expensive ties and slightly askew accessories in classrooms or outside of them, my colleagues rattle off facts and figures and concepts and patterns while their students take notes. The virtuosi of knowledge, they're presumed to have—they do have—some authority because of what they know and what they remember. Their lives and their authority depend upon their ability to remember, and to remember their subjects in public. Having a



"1st Year, 6th Division, 1967," from "Buena memoria," a photographic essay by Marcelo Brodsky, currently on display at the B'nai Jeshurun synagogue in New York City. This image, which has been blown up to a size of 69" x 46", depicts Brodsky's eighth-grade class at the Colegio Nacional in Buenos Aires. For their twenty-fifth reunion, Brodsky invited his classmates to pose for portraits in front of the giant photograph, on which he made notes about their lives; his pictures were later displayed at a memorial organized by the Colegio Nacional to honor alumni who had been murdered or disappeared during Argentina's "Dirty War." In the top row, second from the left, is Claudio, who "used to say that the ends determined the means. . . . One day, when the fascists came to the door of the school . . . they split his head open"; one below Claudio and two to the right is Eduardo, who "was a political prisoner of the military regime for a few years. . . . Today he is a psychologist and has his own Internet page"; one below Eduardo and two to the right is Martín, who "was the best friend I have ever had. . . . We met at Alessio's, Alessio who smoked non-stop. . . . I still dream of him often, and it has been twenty years since they took him."

private memory in a place like this might be pleasant, but it is certainly beside the point, at least professionally. Private memories stay at home or end up in a therapist's office.

Some months ago, as I was sitting in a local restaurant, I heard two women in the next booth talking about memory.

"How much memory have you got?" one of them asked the other.

"I don't know."

"You don't know?" the first one asked. "You don't know how much memory you have? Didn't you ask the salesman?"

Of course they were not talking about their own minds. "Your memory" can now refer to your computer's memory rather than your own: a confusion in the way that we think about the data we remember, as opposed to what we would call "our memories." "Our memories" are memories of our experiences in narrative form. They are probably not in a computer unless we are keeping a journal or writing a memoir, in which case only the words are there.

It is a noteworthy separation of mental processes. Remembering data and remembering an experience are two very different activities. It is possible that the quantity of data we are supposed to remember has reduced our capacity to remember or even to have experiences. What meaning does forgetfulness possess in an information age?

> IS IT FORGETFULNESS OR IS IT ALZHEIMER'S?
> —advertisement in the *New York Times*
> for a prescription drug to aid memory

The signs of anxiety over forgetfulness have been turning up everywhere lately but most prominently, for me, in television commercials and newspaper ads. One recent commercial be-

gins with footage of a young woman in a stadium singing the Canadian national anthem. After about ten seconds, she begins to flub her lines. A pause, while she looks embarrassed and shamefaced. Then a voice-over, an announcer saying, "Everybody needs a good night's sleep to perform well." On the screen, we see a shot of the product: a mattress. Memory-anxiety makes for good business.

The phobia about forgetting has entered the run of daily conversation. A colleague in my department, forgetting my name as we meet in the hallway, turns beet-red from embarrassment and says that it must be the onset of Alzheimer's. Another friend, having forgotten her keys in her office, says that she is in fact worried not so much about the keys but about her memory slips. These slips are commonplace, she says, but they are causing her depressive spells. She can't stop talking about it. Clearly she is obsessing about her mental competence. Time and again, I have seen friends and colleagues lose their trains of thought in meetings and then blush and stammer and apologize, as if their professional standing had suddenly been endangered. Many people seem to believe that remembering is simply a matter of will power.

In an information age, forgetfulness is a sign of debility and incompetence. It is taken as weakness, an emblem of losing one's grip. For anyone who works with quantities of data, a single note of forgetfulness can sound like a death knell. To remember is to triumph over loss and death; to forget is to form a partnership with oblivion.

A few years ago Tom was officially put on the rolls of the disabled. He had been disabled almost from the start, and his various ambitions (to be ordained, to host a radio program) were frustrated by quizzes, tests, exams. All this terrible writing! It was inescapable. He even flunked out of radio school. Toward the end of his life—I can still hardly believe it—he became a freelance writer on the subjects of boating and outdoor recreation. It was a brave choice. It was like pitching your tent in the camp of the enemy. I don't know if he ever earned any money from it—I don't think he did—but it kept him busy.

He wanted to be remembered. To this end, he was horribly, shockingly, punitively generous to everyone. He was always giving something away. It was in his nature to do so, but it was also a request: Please remember me; after all, I remember you. Every gift from him was a remembrance. He went bankrupt twice.

When we went into his apartment after his death, the papers—all the documents and letters and magazines and bank statements and computer printouts and postcards and newspapers and ranks of unread how-to manuals and directories and reference books—were stacked and stashed everywhere. They rose, in great piles, almost to the ceiling. The air was bad. The papers had absorbed all the oxygen, and there was a rank smell of paper oxidizing, turning brown, like the smell of food cooking. He lived amid these documents. They surrounded him, like the fetid documentary accumulations in *Bleak House*. The apartment was stuffed with written material, all the paperwork of a lifetime. It had befriended him. Because he couldn't hold it in his head, he kept it around and had learned to live with it. Besides, he couldn't bend over to pick it up.

We searched through it all. He hadn't written a will. As they say, All he had left behind were our memories of him. That, and the papers.

When I see him now, he is sitting at a table, telling an amazing story, a story that may or may not be true. He didn't always care if a story was literally true, but it had to be narratively useful and explain something that needed explaining.

The one story my brother Tom could not tell was the continuing story of why he ate in the way he did. Against a shame that you cannot bear, your mind detaches itself from its own memory. All the computers in the world cannot remedy it.

[Lyrics]

THE SOUND OF SCIENCE

From a collection of songs on the Web site of Les Horribles Cernettes, a doo-wop band at CERN, a high-energy particle physics laboratory near Geneva, Switzerland. The songs were composed by the band's guitarist and keyboardist Silvano De Gennaro, a computer scientist at CERN. The laboratory was the birthplace of the World Wide Web, which was originally developed as a communications network for physicists.

"Collider"

You say you love me but you never beep me
You always promise but you never date me
I try to fax but it's busy, always
I try the network but you crash the gateways
You never spend your nights with me
You only love your collider

I gave you a golden ring to show you my love
You went to stick it in a printed circuit

To fix a voltage leak in your collector
You plug my feelings into your detector
You never spend your nights with me
You prefer your collider.

"Liquid Nitrogen"

You poured liquid nitrogen down my spine
As you told me you didn't love me anymore
And ran off with the girl next door
You poured liquid nitrogen in my heart
And you told me it wouldn't hurt, what a liar
You promised you'd always be true
You said you'd be mine forever and ever, 5,040 minutes a week
Except Christmas Day 'cause you go see your mother
That's 2,800 less divided by 2
You said I'd be yours 30,240,000 seconds a year
Including leap years, which means 86,400 extra every 4
You said you'd be mine 3,600 seconds an hour every day
In milliseconds that's 43,200 times 10 to the 3rd
You said I'd be yours 24 hours a day,
Integrating until the end of time.
Now in nanoseconds that's just the square root
Of 2,670 billion times 10 to 90 divided by 2.

[Parenting Idea]

THIS *IS* YOUR FATHER'S OLDSMOBILE

From a product description on the Web site of EASE Simulation, Inc., an engineering and software-design company in New Milford, Pennsylvania.

So you have teenagers behind the wheel? In the past, you could only wonder how they were driving. Now, thanks to AutoWatch, you have the unprecedented opportunity to watch them at every turn. AutoWatch is there when you're not, letting you play the backseat driver from the comfort of your home or office.

AutoWatch is a little black box that monitors a vehicle's on-board computers. The vehicle's speed (MPH), engine speed (RPM), throttle position (gas pedal), and engine load are recorded. AutoWatch even tracks how long a vehicle has been running and how many times it has been turned on and off. A battery backup ensures that no data will be lost if AutoWatch is disconnected from the vehicle, and security seals let you know if someone tries to tamper with the unit.

Was your child speeding when he had your car last night? Did she really go to her friend's house and stay there all evening? Was he driving too fast, doing burn-outs, over-revving the engine, flooring the car, or doing hole-shots? Now you can have the answers. Order AutoWatch today. Think about it: when you were a teenager, would you have driven the same way if you knew you were being monitored?

[Profiles]

SHE GOT GAME

From profiles of members of Femme Fatale, an all-female "Quake clan" competing in the AMD Professional Gamers' League, the first professional league for computer-game players. Quake, a 3-D, action-oriented computer game, allows multiple players to compete against one another over the Internet. The profiles are posted on the PGL's Web site.

Screen Name:	Kornelia
Preferred Weapon:	Lightning Gun
Age:	21
Connection:	ISDN
CPU Speed:	Pentium 200 MHz

When Budapest native Kornelia Takacs says she feels right at home in Quake, she really means it. The most decorated woman in competitive gaming, Takacs sees similarities between many of the dark, medieval Quake levels and the castles of her Hungarian childhood.

Kornelia, who's also a member of the Cyberathletes, thinks that professional computer gaming is an idea whose time has come. "There's a huge amount of interest in the PGL, not just from the great players but from those who want to be great. And let's face it: for most people, this is the only 'pro sport' they have a chance of competing in!"

Screen Name:	Pookie
Preferred Weapon:	Rocket Launcher
Age:	23
Connection:	ISDN and 28.8k
CPU Speed:	Pentium Pro 200

Majoring in cognitive science at one of the nation's leading universities, Christina Chan is more than familiar with the concept of homework. She uses a similar approach in her online gaming forays, studying her opponents' styles



An untitled photograph from the series "October 1998" by twenty-seven-year-old artist Hannah Starkey. Her work was on display last month as part of the exhibit "The New Neurotic Realism" at the Saatchi Gallery in London.

and strengths and turning them to her advantage. Pookie loves to "whoop on" male and female opponents alike, though she admits to a certain satisfaction from beating men at what was once "their own game."

"Right now, the general perception is that women just can't compete in a 'man's world' of online gaming," Pookie notes. "I really enjoy bursting that bubble."

Screen Name:	Mystique
Preferred Weapon:	Grenade Launcher
Age:	18
Connection:	T1
CPU Speed:	Pentium II 300 MHz

Shawna Brown spends a lot of time hunting and killing virtual foes on the Internet, and she and her clanmates are among the most feared "grrl gamers" around. So who's to blame for driving her to don armor in search of human, mostly male, prey? The men in her life, naturally.

"My dad can't complain about my computer gaming devotion, because he's the one who set me up with an original Nintendo 8-bit system when I was five," she says. "And my boyfriend turned me on to Quake when it came out two years ago, so I have him to thank for my current love of fast-action shooter games. Of course, now I kick his butt up and down DM3," she chuckles, referring to her favorite level of Quake.

Screen Name:	Jasp
Preferred Weapon:	Rocket Launcher
Age:	18
Connection:	T1 or 28.8k
CPU Speed:	Pentium Pro 180

Kristy Pallan doesn't just play Quake—she dreams it. Pallan often finds herself roaming the dimly-lit halls and subterranean realms of her favorite online game, doing bloody battle with nameless foes, while sleeping!

"They're not nightmares. I don't wake up screaming in a cold sweat. In fact, it's usually very [illegible] ep," she insists.

Jasp's parents still don't know what to make of her affinity for chasing human opponents through Quake's most popular "deathmatch" levels, vowing to ventilate them with nail guns and dismember them with explosive rockets. "Those folks are great," explains Pallan, "but like most forty somethings, they think 'multi-player gaming' means a two-player Pong match."

[Consideration]

THE BENCH

By Mary Ruefle, in the Winter issue of The Threepenny Review, *a quarterly published in Berkeley, California. Ruefle's most recent book of poetry is* Cold Pluto; *she is also the author of* The Adamant: Poems. *Ruefle lives in North Bennington, Vermont.*

My husband and I were arguing about a bench we wanted to buy and put in part of our backyard, a part that is actually a meadow of sorts, a half acre with tall grasses and weeds and the occasional wildflower because we do not mow it but leave it scrubby and unkempt. This bench would hardly ever be used and in the summer when the grasses were high would remain partially hidden from view. We both knew we wanted the bench to be made of teak so that it would last a long time in the harsh weather and so that we would never have to paint it. Teak weathers to a soft silver that might, in November or March, disappear into the gray hills that are the backdrop of our lives. My husband wanted a four-foot bench and I wanted a five-foot bench. This is what we argued about. My husband insisted that a four-foot bench was all we needed, since no more than two people (presumably ourselves) would ever sit on it at the same time. I felt his reasoning was not only beside the point but missed it entirely; I said what mattered most to me was the *idea* of the bench, the look of it there, to be gazed at with only the vaguest notion that it could hold more people than would ever actually sit down. The life of the bench in my imagination was more important than any practical function the bench might serve. After all, I argued, we wanted a bench so that we could look at it, so that we could imagine sitting on it, so that, unexpectedly, a bird might sit on it, or fallen leaves, or inches of snow, and the longer the bench, the greater the expanse of that plank, the more it matched its true function, which was imaginary. My husband mentioned money and I said that I was happier to have no bench at all, which would cost nothing, than to have a four-foot bench, which would be expensive. I said that having no bench at all was closer to the five-foot bench than the four-foot bench, because having no bench at all served the [illegible] in similar ways, and so not having [illegible] became an option in our argument [illegible] a third bench. We grew very [illegible] the three benches, and for a day [illegible] our argument. During this day I had many things to do and many of them involved my driving past other houses, none of which had benches—that is, they each had the third bench—and as I drove past the other houses I could see a bench here and a bench there; sometimes I saw the bench very close to the house, against the wall or on a porch, and sometimes I saw the bench under a tree or in the open grass, cut or uncut, and once I saw the bench at the end of the driveway, blocking the road. Always it was a five-foot bench that I saw, a long, sleek bench or a broken-down bench, a bench with a slatted back or a bench with a solid, carved back, and always the bench was empty. But I knew that for my husband the third bench was only four feet long and he saw always two people who were happy to be alive or two people tired from having worked hard enough to buy the bench they were sitting on. Or they were happy *and* tired, happy to have reached the end of some argument, tired from having had it. For these people, the bench was an emblem of their days, which were fruitful because their suffering had come to an end. On my bench, which was always empty, no one had sat down, though the bench was always long enough so that someone, if he desired to, could lie all the way down. The day passed. Another day followed it, and my husband and I began, once more, to discuss the bench. The sound of our voices revealed a renewed interest and vigor. I thought I sensed in him a coming around to my view of the bench and I know he sensed in me a coming around to his view of the bench, because at one point I said that a four-foot bench reminded me of rough notes toward a real bench while a five-foot bench was like a fragment of an even longer bench and I admitted it was at times hard to tell the difference. He said he didn't know anything about the difference between rough notes and fragments but he agreed that between the two benches there was, possibly, just perhaps—he could only imagine—very little difference. It was, after all, only a foot we were talking about. And I think it was then, in both of our minds, that a fourth bench came into being, a bench that was only a foot long, a miniature bench, a bench we could build ourselves, though of course we did not. This seemed to be, essentially, the bench we were talking about. Much later, when the birds came back, or the leaves drifted downward, or the snow fell, slowly and lightly at first, then heavier and faster, it was this bench that we both saw when we looked out the window at the bench we eventually placed in the meadow, which continued to grow as if there were no bench at all.

[Family Pictures]

HOMEYS









These portraits by Peter Monroe are from "Mama's Boy!" a series of interviews and photographs of adult men living with their mothers, on display in January at the OK Harris Gallery in New York City. Clockwise from top left are Alan and Pearl Kamlet, Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn ("Two weeks after taking this picture Pearl sold the couch and moved to Miami Beach"), Christina Izardy and Tony LeBoy, Myrtle Avenue, Brooklyn ("His mother just got out of the hospital for high cholesterol"), Charlie and Georgette de Young Shipper, the Main Line, Philadelphia ("The painting is of Georgette's daughter. She's forty-nine, and lives with them too"), and Debra and Bob Brahs, Baldwin, Long Island ("Technical note: This is a 'Daddy's Girl,' not a 'Mama's Boy'").



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THOSE WHO APPRECIATE QUALITY ENJOY IT RESPONSIBLY.

THE GHOST OF SHAKESPEARE

Who, in fact, was the bard: the usual suspect from Stratford, or Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford?

* *

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

FOR OXFORD

Tom Bethell is the Washington correspondent of the *American Spectator* and the author of *The Noblest Triumph: Property and Prosperity Through the Ages*.

Daniel Wright is Professor of English at Concordia University in Portland, Oreg. He is the director of the annual Edward de Vere Studies Conference, a trustee of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, and Co-Patron, with Sir Derek Jacobi, of the De Vere Society of Great Britain.

Mark K. Anderson is a writer living in Northampton, Mass. His book with the de Vere Bible scholar Roger Stritmatter, *Prospero's Bible: The Secret History and Spiritual Biography of the Man who was "Shake-speare,"* is currently in preparation.

Joseph Sobran is a syndicated columnist and a contributor to several national publications. He is the author of *Alias Shakespeare*.

Richard F. Whalen is a writer, lecturer, and former president of the Shakespeare Oxford Society. He is the author of *Shakespeare: Who Was He?*



FOR SHAKESPEARE

Gail Kern Paster is Professor of English at George Washington University and editor of *The Shakespeare Quarterly*. She is the author of *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England*.

Marjorie Garber is William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of English at Harvard University and director of the Center for Literary and Cultural Studies. She is the author of numerous books, including *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers* and, most recently, *Symptoms of Culture*.

Irvin Matus is an independent scholar and the author of *Shakespeare, in Fact*.

Harold Bloom is Sterling Professor of Humanities at Yale University and Berg Professor of English at New York University. He is the author of more than twenty books, including *The Western Canon* and, most recently, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*.

Jonathan Bate is King Alfred Professor of English at the University of Liverpool. He is the author of *The Genius of Shakespeare* and editor of the new Arden edition of *Titus Andronicus*.

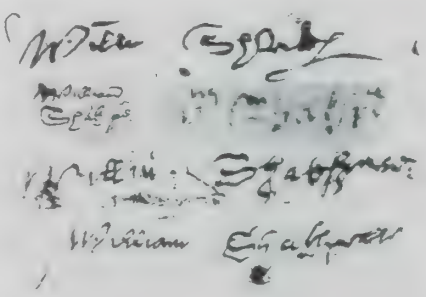
I. LIFE

i.

A NEVER WRITER

By Tom Bethell

The documentary record of William Shakspere of Stratford consists of little more than a few court records, one important book, the First Folio of 1623, and a bust in Stratford's Holy Trinity Church. The evidence does not establish that he was the author of anything, let alone the erudite works of "Shakespeare." We are left in all honesty wondering whether he could write his own name. The great problem with the conventional biography is that it conflates what we know about the man from Stratford (1564–1616) and the author of the works. Whether they are one and the same person is the very point at issue. The former I shall call Shakspere, as his name was usually spelled, especially in Stratford, and Shakespeare will be reserved for the author, whoever he was.



Thick biographies of the bard are written—but mostly in the conditional. (Shakespeare would have . . . must have . . . could hardly have avoided. . . .) In them, an uneasy, composite picture emerges, combining the taciturn Stratford grain-hoarder and the eloquent poet. We have no letter or manuscripts in Shakspere's hand, though we do have six signatures, quavering and ill-written, on legal documents. (One imagines a bailiff helpfully at his elbow: "Keep goin', Will, now an S. That's *good*. . . .") In Stratford, we have records of baptism, marriage, lawsuits, death, and taxes. Not one gives us a reason to think that Shakspere was an author. We don't know that he went to school, though he may have attended Stratford Grammar. His daughter Judith signed her name with an X. So did Anne Hathaway, his wife.

Shakspere did go to London, and in one account he first found work minding the horses of theatergoers. Certainly he became an actor, as did his young brother Edmund. Will joined the Chamberlain's Men and was paid for Christmas performances at court in 1594. The London tax collectors sought him twice in the 1590s, without success, speculating that he may be "dead, departed, and gone out of the said ward." One William Wayte, evidently threatened by our Will, "craves sureties of the peace against William Shakspere," whereupon the Sheriff of Surrey was ordered to arrest him. The next year Will bought New Place in Stratford. Toward the end of his stay in London, we know that he was renting a room in Cripplegate, a meager item that was discovered by Charles Wallace in 1909 and was later hailed by biographer S. Schoenbaum as "the Shakespearean discovery of the century." But Wallace was "disappointed," and reasonably so, as he saw that the Cripplegate lodger did nothing to strengthen the Stratford case. In fact, all research in the last 200 years has tended to reduce the older literary anecdotes to mythical status and to expose modern-day readers to this stark contradiction: the author of *King Lear* was a litigious businessman.

The indications are that Shakspere left London in 1604, at the age of forty. He must have been the only great writer in history to "retire" so young and in the midst of such triumph. He shows up almost immediately in Stratford, suing a neighbor for a malt debt of 35 shillings—this soon after the publication of *Hamlet*. J. O. Halliwell-Phillips, the nineteenth-century scholar, admitted that this was "one of the most curious documents connected with Shakespeare's personal history known to exist." At the height of his powers, we are led to suppose, England's greatest writer threw down his pen, perhaps in mid-play, and headed back to Warwickshire, preferring the milieu of Stratford's small-claims court and its conveyance office to literary London. A trader like his father, he engaged in several more property deals.

In his will he attends to the disposition of bowls, even his own clothes, and, notoriously, his second-best bed. He makes no mention of any literary remains. At that time, half of Shakespeare's plays had not been published anywhere. The contrast between the life of the Stratford trader and the exalted verse reaches the level of absurdity.

We must seek some explanation of these problems beyond "genius," the Stratfordians' one-word reply to all difficulties. Genius does not convey knowledge. Yet the author was sure-

ly one of the best-educated men in England. Ben Jonson's jibe that Shakespeare had "small Latin and less Greek" cannot be taken at face value. When *Othello* was published, its Italian source had not been translated into English, nor had the French source of *Hamlet* when that play first saw print (1603). The Latin source of *Comedy of Errors* was not yet translated when the play was first performed. *Love's Labour's Lost*, a parody of court manners dated by some scholars to the late 1580s, contains allusions to the 1580 visit of Marguerite de Valois and Catherine de Medici to the Court of Henry of Navarre at Nérac, the names of French courtiers remaining largely unchanged in the play.

In the nineteenth century, such considerations encouraged men of letters to believe that the real author had concealed his name. For many years the preferred candidate was Francis Bacon, but that hypothesis was not fruitful and became encrusted with absurdities: ciphers, buried manuscripts, excavations by moonlight. By the twentieth century the authorship question had become a target of ridicule. Scholars intoned, as though speaking to children: "Let's just say Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare!" At an unpropitious moment in 1920, an English schoolmaster named J. Thomas Looney published a book claiming that the real author was Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford. (Now comes the Looney theory! Oh, what fun!)

Oxford (1550–1604) grew up as a ward in the household of Elizabeth's minister Lord Burghley. He married Burghley's daughter, Anne, and they had three daughters. The oldest was engaged to Henry Wriothesley, the 3rd Earl of Southampton, to whom the long Shakespeare poems were dedicated. Two daughters were engaged and married, respectively, to the two dedicatees of the First Folio, the earls of Pembroke and Montgomery. Oxford's uncle, Henry Howard, introduced the sonnet form into English; another uncle, Arthur Golding, translated Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, an important Shakespeare source. Macaulay wrote that Oxford "won for himself an honorable place among the early masters of English poetry," and of all the courtier poets, Edmund Chambers wrote, "the most hopeful" was de Vere, but "he became mute in later life."

Oxford traveled to Italy in 1575. With stops in Paris and Strasbourg, he went to Padua, Genoa, Venice, and Florence. Shakespeare's detailed knowledge of these parts has long mystified conventional scholars. In his thirties, Oxford controlled the Earl of Warwick's acting company and employed playwright John Lyly. His company of boy actors went on tour (to Stratford, once) and performed at court. He leased the Blackfriars Theatre. Lord Burghley complained of his "lewd friends." Oxford, we would say, was slumming. In 1580, he had accused three courtiers of treason and was in turn accused by one of them of "buggering a boy that is his cook and many other boys." Three were named, including one whom Oxford had brought back with him from Italy. It seems that in court circles Oxford was known as a pederast and was in disgrace on that account. We read of his profligacy, his improvidence, his "decayed reputation." There are traces of homosexuality in the Sonnets addressed to the "fair youth," and Oxford may have had a homosexual affair with the young Earl of Southampton, whom he later urged to marry his daughter Elizabeth.



Venus and Adonis, Shakespeare's debut ("the first heir of my invention"), was probably intended to glorify the young earl, to whom it was dedicated. If so, "it was not enough to publish it anonymously," Joseph Sobran writes in *Alias Shakespeare;* "he needed a blind to divert suspicion about his relations with the younger earl." In 1609, *Shakespeare's Sonnets* were published without the author's cooperation, and in the same year the cryptic preface to *Troilus and Cressida* ("A Never Writer, to an Ever Reader. News") hinted that the manuscripts were held by unnamed "grand possessors," no doubt Oxford's son-in-law, the Earl of Montgomery, and his brother. These were the "incomparable pair of brethren" of the Folio's dedication.

Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens, an Oxfordian himself, has commented that the advocates of Oxford lack "a single, coherent theory of the case." Such a theory might go like this. In writing for publication, the public theater in particular, noblemen could not allow their names to be used. The Elizabethan author of *The Art of English*

Illustrations by Barry Blitt

Poesie (probably George Puttenham) knew "Noblemen and Gentlemen of Her Majesty's own servants, who have written excellently well, as it would appear if their doings could be found out and made public with the rest, of which number is first that noble gentleman Edward Earl of Oxford." Although they often wrote well, he added, they "suffered it to be published without their own names to it: as if it were a discredit for a gentleman to seem learned." In the book *Palladis Tamia* (1598), Francis Meres wrote that "the best for comedy among us be Edward Earl of Oxford."

No plays with Oxford's name on them have come down to us, but we are told that he was writing them and that he withheld his name. If so, why would the author go so far as to impute them to an actual person? The imputation is made in the prefatory material to the First Folio, and we should note that this is the *only* document that unambiguously unites Shakspere and Shakespeare. In the Folio, Ben Jonson refers to the author as "Sweet Swan of Avon," and Leonard Digges alludes to "thy Stratford Moniment." There is indeed a monument in the Stratford church. The references to "Shakespeare" in Jonson's private notebook, the alleged allusion to him in *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit*, as well as the other scanty references put forward by proponents of the standard view, do nothing to advance their case. They can easily be taken as references to the pen name, just as we usually refer to Mark Twain and George Orwell by their pseudonyms.

By 1623, if the foregoing is correct, we may be sure that Southampton, by then a powerful figure, wanted no further reminders of his misspent youth with Oxford. Pembroke and Montgomery must have felt the same way. All traces of Southampton, and of Shakespeare's poems either dedicated to him or associated with him, were removed from the Folio. For Stratfordians, the Folio (and everything else) is taken at face value. Perhaps that is reasonable. For both sides there's a trade-off, but Stratfordians must live with many baffling questions. Oxfordians, on the other hand, can answer these: Why was the author referred to in the past tense two or three times after 1604? Why did he "retire" so young? Why did he employ a collaborator in his maturity? Why were plays such as *The London Prodigal* (1605) and *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (1608) published with his name on the title page—but only after 1604? Why were the Sonnets published without his cooperation in 1609? Why was he referred to as "ever-living" if he were still alive? Why was there no tribute in London when Shakspere died in 1616? Why did the author say that his verse would live on but that his name would be "buried," and also say, in Sonnet 76: "That every word doth almost tell my name,/Showing their birth, and where they did proceed"?

ii.

The Sweet Swan

By Gail Kern Paster

Most Shakespeareans of my generation have spent little time thinking actively about William Shakespeare's biography or trying to fit that life into his works. Hypersensitive to the excesses of biographical critics of the past, we convince our students that imagined glimpses into the interior life of the poet are likely to be an exercise in self-reflection. Today, preoccupation with Shakespeare's life is mostly for others—those for whom Shakespeare the man is the object of cultlike devotion or equally cultlike denial. And so although popular interest in the life of the National Poet may serve as a fit subject for post-structuralist critique, the life itself remains strongly off-limits to most scholars. The works—suitably renamed "the texts" or even sometimes "the scripts"—command the central field of professional vision while responsibility for what they contain devolves from the author to his culture.

For well-schooled professionals, then, the authorship question ranks as bardolatry inverted, bardolatry for paranoids, with one object of false worship (Shakespeare) replaced by another (Marlowe, Bacon, Edward de Vere). To ask me about the authorship question, as I've remarked on more than one occasion, is like asking a paleontologist to debate a creationist's account of the fossil record. But the authorship question does have the merit of returning the scholarly mind, with sudden and surprising violence, to the real salience of biographical interpretation. For much worse than professional disclaimers of interest in Shakespeare's life is the ugly social denial at the heart of the Oxfordian pursuit. To deny the life of William Shakespeare its central accomplishment, to deny the man his standing as the necessary (if still not sufficient) cause of at least thirty-six plays, two long poems, and a substantial sequence of sonnets requires not only a massive conspiracy on the part of a generation of Elizabethan theater professionals, courtiers, and kings but a ferociously snobbish and ultimately anachronistic celebration of birthright privilege. It is almost always the case that proposed authors of the plays are scions of famous families, aristocrats. The anti-Stratfordian position is a summary judgment about the curse of provincial origins and barbarian rusticity, one that radically underestimates the classical rigors

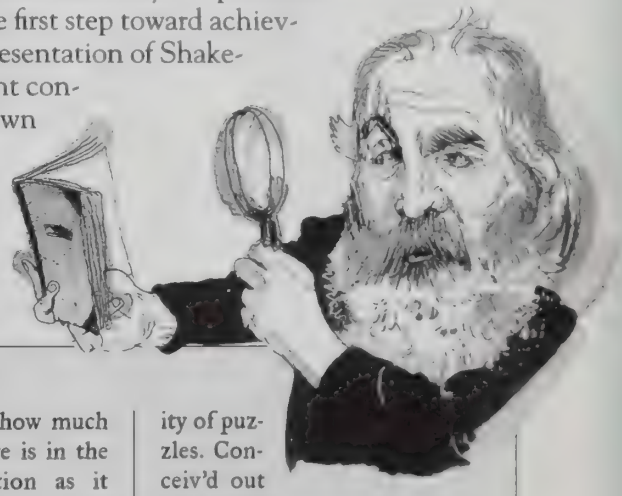
of Tudor public education and overestimates the scope of aristocratic learning. It is pernicious doctrine.

Shakespeare's biographers have always wrestled with the famous gaps in the biographical record. Nothing I have to say here will make those gaps disappear, though they are predictable enough given Shakespeare's unexceptional middle-class origins and the fragility and obscurity of the public records in which his biographical traces have been found. We know little more about the lives of Shakespeare's theatrical peers, even those, such as Ben Jonson, who carefully controlled the terms of their public self-presentation. We do know that the men who inhabited the Elizabethan theater world came from the middle ranks of Elizabethan life, whether they were lucky enough, like the shoemaker's son Christopher Marlowe, to win a scholarship to Cambridge or to become classical scholars on their own, as did Ben Jonson, the stepson of a bricklayer. As S. Schoenbaum put it in his definitive study, *Shakespeare's Lives*, "No formal life of Shakespeare laying claim to serious regard can limit itself to the facts and to logical deductions from the facts alone." But the problem with the facts that we have, as the editors of *The Norton Shakespeare* note in their prefatory account of the life, is "not that they are few but that they are a bit dull."

Yet Shakespeare's defenders, as opposed to his biographers, have a narrower obligation to historical truth. All we need to prove is that such a man from Stratford could have written the plays, not that he did so. And for such a task, even the dullest biographical facts, aided by the unblinkered historical imagination, prove suggestive indeed.

It is important for Shakespeare's defenders to emphasize the immense social distance traversed in only three generations of Shakespeares from Richard to John to William. Arguably John played the pivotal role, making the great leap from his farmer father's utter obscurity in the Warwickshire hamlet of Snitterfield to his own acquisition of a trade, possession of property, marriage to a well-born woman, and election to high civic office in Stratford-upon-Avon. These accomplishments, substantial but by no means unique in the annals of early modern English social history, made his sons eligible for grammar-school education and brought the Shakespeare family to the brink of gentry status. His son William's prudent acquisition of property in Stratford and London, presumably so central to his motive in becoming an actor in the first place, would finally give John Shakespeare the coat of arms he desired.

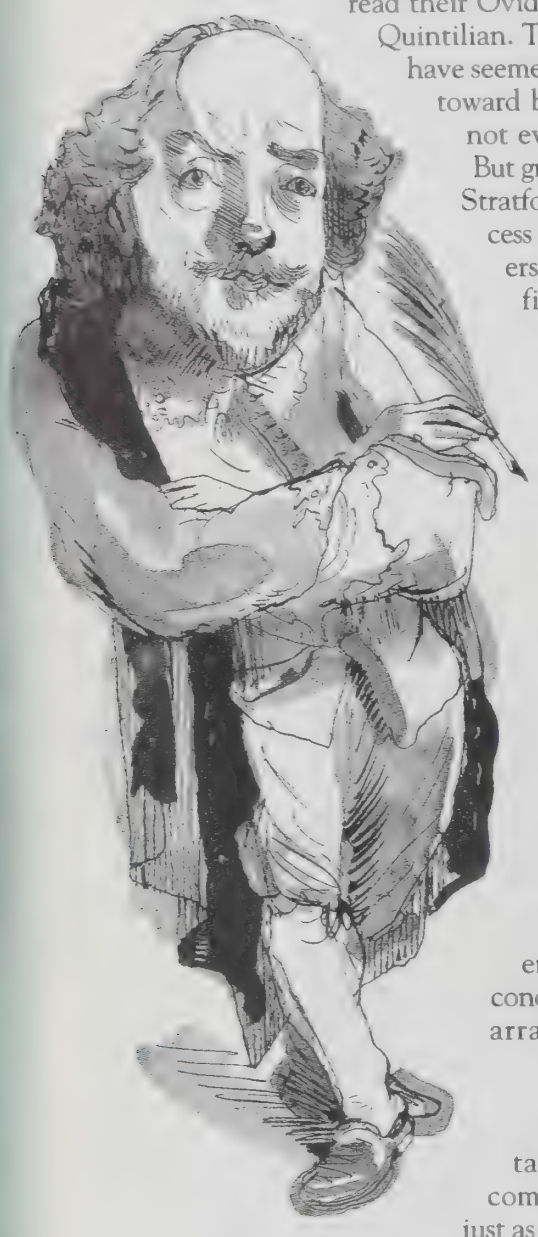
In assessing the importance of the Shakespeares' acquisition of prominence and status in Stratford, we would do well to remember that for men in early modern England (a period comprising roughly the years 1500–1700), personal identity was construed primarily in and through one's place in the social order and self constructed not from the inside out but from the outside in. That the upwardly mobile paths of the Shakespeares make them look like free-wheeling modern individualists should not be misunderstood. In the plays, those who proclaim themselves radical individuals, self-begotten and self-made (Iago, Edmund, Richard III) are the arch villains, who represent a modern and immoral sensibility that Shakespeare shows to be profoundly destabilizing. Rightly to see William Shakespeare in his social context is to render anachronistic any biographical understanding of him grounded in narratives of autonomous self-creation and romantic self-discovery. To put such narratives aside is the first step toward achieving an historical representation of Shakespeare's life that might conceivably match his own self-portrait.



William's professional choice itself is less than exceptional for several rea-

> We all know how much *mythus* there is in the Shakspere question as it stands to-day. Beneath a few foundations of proved facts are certainly engulf'd far more dim and elusive ones, of deepest importance—tantalizing and half suspected—suggesting explanations that one dare not put in plain statement. But coming at once to the point, the English historical plays are to me not only the most eminent as dramatic performances [my maturest judgment confirming the impressions of my early years, that the distinctiveness and glory of the Poet reside not in his vaunted dramas of the passions, but those founded on the contests of English dynasties, and the French wars,] but form, as we get it all, the chief in a complexity of puzzles. Conceiv'd out of the fullest heat and pulse of European feudalism—personifying in unparallel'd ways the medieval aristocracy, its towering spirit of ruthless and gigantic caste, with its own peculiar air and arrogance [no mere imitation]—only one of the "wolfish earls" so plenteous in the plays themselves, or some born descendant and knower, might seem to be the true author of those amazing works—works in some respects greater than anything else in recorded literature.
>
> —Walt Whitman, *"What Lurks Behind Shakspere's Historical Plays?"* [1889]

sons. One is the remarkably rich tradition of civic theatricals throughout late medieval England, a tradition that made the profession of public entertainer widely available to men of Shakespeare's class and gifts. Another is the rhetorical opportunities built into the Tudor grammar-school curriculum, which required boys in the several social ranks mingling there to learn Latin oratory as they read their Ovid and Cicero, their Virgil and Quintilian. To become an actor would not have seemed to Shakespeare the first step toward becoming the National Poet, not even the National Playwright. But granting in the young man from Stratford a desire to perform and access to a traveling company of players, imagining the rest is not difficult. For a young man from the provinces, performing plays held out the pragmatic attractions of the entertainer's craft and perhaps even the allure of entrepreneurship. It could not have meant the elevation of art.



Shakespeare could reasonably have anticipated hiring on with an established acting company lucky enough to receive the token protection of an aristocratic patron. This is, in fact, what happened. What quickly evolved, thanks to the historical accident of great literary talent emerging in precisely the right conditions for it to flourish, was an arrangement unique in Elizabethan theater. Shakespeare the player turned playwright and shareholder, taking commissions from the company to which he belonged just as they commissioned new plays from many others.

The swiftness of actor Shakespeare's ascent once in London is far more remarkable than the historical circumstances that brought him there during the late 1580s, the years when professional public theater became established. Here the testimony of others in and around the theater adds vivid personal detail to the documentary traces of the biographical record. By 1592 Shakespeare had already aroused the jealousy of university-educated playwright and pamphleteer Robert Greene. Greene warns against this "upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his tyger's heart wrapt in a player's hyde, supposes he is well able to bombast out a blank verse as well as the best of you: and . . . is in his own conceit the onely Shake scene in a countrey." The allusion is unmistakably to Shakespeare, not only as a player costumed in the words (the "feathers") of writers such as Greene but as an author presuming to write—"bombast out"—blank verse himself. Shakespeare apparently taking offense, Greene's friend Henry Chettle tried to make amends: "I am as sorry, as if the original fault had been my fault, because myself have seen his demeanour no less civil than he excellent in the quality he professes." The quality being professed was acting.

Tribute paid to the plays comes in 1598 from Francis Meres, a minor figure on the London literary scene fond of comparing living writers to the ancients. "The sweet, witty soul of Ovid lived in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare," writes Meres, mentioning the poems *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* as well as the Sonnets circulating privately in manuscript. Such evidence is sweet no less for biographers than it is for editors looking to date the plays: "As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for comedy and tragedy among the Latins, so Shakespeare among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for comedy, witness his Gentlemen of Verona, his Errours, his Love Labour's Lost, his Love Labour's Won, his Midsummer's Night Dream, and his Merchant of Venice; for tragedy, his Richard the Second, Richard the Third, Henry the Fourth, King John, Titus Andronicus, and his Romeo and Juliet." That no one has successfully identified *Love's Labour's Won* does little to compromise the truthfulness of Meres's list. Nor should we accuse Meres here, as the Oxfordians must, of special pleading on Shakespeare's behalf, since Meres reserves much more notice in his *Palladis Tamia* for the poet Drayton and mentions many writers besides Shakespeare, including Edward de Vere. One might ask why Meres would do so if they were one and the same writer.

The testimony of Ben Jonson is more valuable still, not only because it comes from Shakespeare's great rival and temperamental opposite but because it occurs in personal notebooks not published until after Jonson's death. This is testimony irrelevant to any conspiratorial intent. Jonson criticizes Shakespeare for writing with too great facility: "I remember, the players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare, that in his writing (whatsoever he penned) he never blotted out [a] line. My answer hath been, would he had

blotted a thousand." Jonson eulogizes his friend as "indeed honest, and of an open and free nature; had an excellent phantasy, brave notions, and gentle expressions. . . . His wit was in his own power; would the rule of it had been so too." The point of citing such remarks is not that they have the self-evident ring of truth about Shakespeare's habits of authorship or that they offer a reliable picture of the man. They are invaluable because they represent the common currency of everyday literary opinion, right or wrong, and can be yoked only with violence to an absurd authorial conspiracy designed to protect the identity of the plays' "real" author.

It does not dim the accomplishment of the plays nor take away from our high regard for their author if we imagine that Shakespeare remained a provincial man of Stratford, true to his origins, whose main purpose in undertaking the business of writing plays was personal and familial advancement in Stratford-upon-Avon. For Shakespeare, like most other playwrights in early modern England, immortality would not have been conceivable as a function either of print or of performance. Even the immortality imagined to be within the poet's gift was mentioned only in sonnets never meant for the printed page. The recognition of London's multitudes and the gratification of playing before monarchs on command—however important they must have been to Shakespeare—would not have helped to secure gentleman status on the terms and in the place where it mattered most to a man from Stratford. For us to comprehend the nature of Shakespeare's professional desire as centered in the most prosaic—hence the most meaningful—forms of social recognition is to comprehend something of the wide historical gap that separates our supreme valuation of Shakespeare's plays from his own more practical and happy self-regard.

II. MYSTERY

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i.
The Lie with Circumstance

By Daniel Wright

In the early 1780s, the Reverend Dr. James Wilmot, a friend of Dr. Johnson's and the rector of a small parish church near Stratford-upon-Avon in the county of Warwickshire, went searching for the legacy of that literary prodigy, William Shakespeare—an artist whose poetry and drama were renowned but about whom very little was known. He searched for years in Shakespeare's environs for information of any kind that might illuminate this prominent man—arguably the most celebrated resident in the history of the Cotswolds. For four years, Dr. Wilmot searched diligently for letters to or from the man; he sought records and anecdotes about his personal life in diaries and family histories; he combed the region for books and other artifacts. To his consternation, he found absolutely nothing that linked Tradition's candidate to the writing of those incomparable works that had appeared in England two centuries earlier under the name of "William Shake-speare."

What Dr. Wilmot found, instead, was the record of a simple, untutored wool and grain merchant, baptized Gulielmus Shakspere, who apparently began life as a butcher's apprentice and later excelled in various business ventures but who otherwise lived a fairly nondescript life. Dr. Wilmot discovered, in short, a rather ordinary man who had no connection to the literary world and who, at the conclusion of a relatively uneventful life, was buried without ceremony in a grave that failed even to identify its occupant by name. Dr. Wilmot's findings stunned him into dazed silence about the matter, and he confided nothing of his discovery for years. He eventually confessed to a friend that despite his arduous labors in Warwickshire, he had unearthed nothing in his expeditions to connect Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon to the works of the Elizabethan dramatic giant whom Ben Jonson had apostrophized as the "Soule of the Age."

Serious doubts about the authorship of the Shakespeare canon followed hard thereon—doubts that continue to bewilder and puzzle readers. The past two centuries of quixotic campaigns that so desperately have attempted to establish the man from Stratford as the author of the plays (or even to corroborate his reputation as a writer!) are now leading many scholars to conclude that these would-be discoverers of Shakespeare repeatedly fail—not due to their lack of zeal or skill but because they, like good Dr. Wilmot, are seeking a writer where no writer (or, more accurately, another writer) exists.

Such skeptics of orthodox claims about Shakespeare propose, therefore, that his poems and plays were not the throwaway work of an inexperienced and unpublished playwright who as his first foray into poetic and dramatic composition produced the Shakespeare canon. Instead, they argue, these works are the mature achievements of someone else—a worldly and urbane *littérateur*, a dexterous and experienced writer endowed with broad linguistic ability and an extraordinarily particularized knowledge of many arcane and specialized studies, an erudite, well-traveled man of prior achievement with something more than money as a motive for his art who could not tell the world his name.

If Oxford were this versatile and formidable talent, why did he deny himself acclaim and reputation? What possible reasons could he have had to cloak himself in obscurity? These questions can be answered only by considering the conventions that governed writing and publication in Elizabethan England. The invention of the printing press challenged absolutist regimes such as those of the Tudors. The ability to anonymously publish pamphlets, books, plays, essays, tracts, and other texts limited the ability of authorities to silence individuals for disseminating allegedly seditious ideas or unflattering satires. This revolutionary technology threatened to place writers beyond the effective control of the state and led the English to establish civil and ecclesiastical licensing measures and censorial offices to regulate and control the press with the goal of stifling the flow of unapproved ideas. Unlicensed presses were frequently destroyed; pamphlets were seized; writers were imprisoned; theaters were closed.

For playwrights, the need to dissemble was especially urgent, particularly as the public theater—already much mistrusted and often suppressed by authorities for its alleged traffic in corrupt material—was exiled in Shakespeare's day to the darker districts of London (such as Southwark), where the theater's supposed viciousness could be restricted to people who commonly were regarded as derelicts and scoundrels. Playwrights and their families were likely to be impugned by such bad association if they were discovered; some had reputations to protect. Those who disdained anonymity, moreover, often faced frightful consequences for their daring. Many writers were hauled before the Privy Council for interrogation (as was Samuel Daniel for his *Philotas*); others were imprisoned (as were George Chapman and Ben Jonson for *Eastward Ho*); others were savagely mutilated (as were John Stubbs, Alexander Leighton, and William Prynne); and some may even have been assassinated (as was, perhaps, Christopher Marlowe).

Many playwrights, therefore, published anonymously, shielding themselves and their families from persecution. In fact, as Princeton Professor Gerald E. Bentley attests, "the large majority of all English plays before the reign of Elizabeth are anonymous, and even from 1558 to 1590 the authors of most plays are unknown." The unattributable nature of these works bears directly on scholars' attempts to resolve the Shakespeare authorship controversy, for the playwriting career of Shakespeare also was maintained in total secrecy. Even when the plays of Shakespeare were published, they were published without attribution. In fact, for seven years after the Shakespeare plays began to be printed, they were published without any name at all affixed to them. Not until the end of the sixteenth century—well into the Shakespeare playwright's supposed career and bordering on his "retirement"—did any plays begin to appear in print under the name of "William Shake-speare." Even then, several of them (such as *The London Prodigal* and *A Yorkshire Tragedy*) were clearly misidentified by their publishers. Not even the publishers of his works knew who he was!

Moreover, if the writer behind the Shakespeare pseudonym were Edward de Vere, he would have been constrained, as the 17th Earl of Oxford, by more than ordinary apprehensions about publishing his poems and plays. Convention discouraged many noblemen from identifying themselves with any works they composed. Some disdained publishing their work at all (a nobleman's proper weapons, and his reputation, were to be won by sword and shield, not achieved by pen and ink). Accordingly, the works of several court writers, such as Sir Philip Sidney and the Earl of Surrey, were published under their names only after they had died. If Oxford were Shakespeare, he would have been prompted to shield his name from discovery because court practice and precedent urged it.

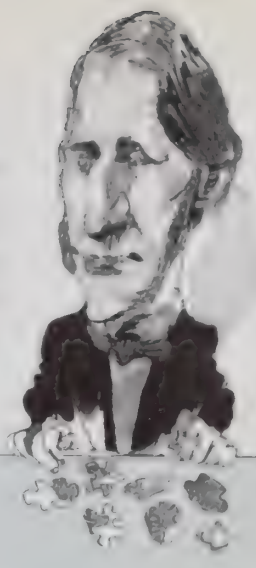
A writer for the public stage could ill afford to be linked to the court. The plays might be misinterpreted (or correctly interpreted!) as satirical commentary on the life, mores, and personages of the court, and no courtier, after all, was more prominent than Oxford's own father-in-law, the great Lord Treasurer, spymaster, and chief counselor to the Queen, William Cecil, Lord Burghley, to whom Oxford was personally as well as politically beholden (Burghley had been Oxford's guardian before he became his father-in-law).

By adopting the pseudonym William Shake-speare, Oxford would have provided himself, his family, and the crown with the means of preventing the public from looking to the court in search of the Shakespeare playwright. That the "secret" was something of an open one in certain literary circles seems confirmed by Oxford's receipt of more dedications by his fellow Elizabethans than any other contemporary contributor to the art of letters, even though he published nothing under his own name after 1576. By contrast, no one ever dedicated a thing to anyone named William Shake-speare.

But why Shake-speare? Why would Edward de Vere adopt that name? There is little mystery here. Like Martin Mar-Prelate, the well-known sobriquet of an anti-episcopal dissident in Shakespeare's day, Shakespeare was a pseudonym that addressed the chief realm of the writer's attention: in Mar-Prelate's case, his focal point was the prelacy of the Anglican Church; in Shakespeare's case, it was the theater.

"William Shake-speare" is a name that might have been adopted by almost any writer who desired to conceal his title, office, or baptismal name yet wished to assert his identity as a playwright. After all, Pallas Athena, the mythological patron of the theatrical arts, wore a helmet (crowned by a Sphinx) that, when its visor was drawn, made her invisible; in her hand she carried a great spear. She was known to all and sundry as "the spear shaker." For a writer to be a "spear-shaker" intimated that he was an *invisible* writer of plays. That Oxford should have resorted to this pseudonym makes eminent sense. Moreover, the merchant from Stratford-upon-Avon never *once* spelled his own name "Shakespeare," and the hyphenated (broken) spelling of the poet-playwright's name on many of the play texts may also have been adopted to allude, with a wink and a nudge, to the author's person. The crest of the Earl of Oxford as Viscount Bulbeck, after all, was that of an English lion shaking a broken lance. The allusion takes on additional significance when we read Ben Jonson's knowing commemoration of Shakespeare in the First Folio: "He seems to shake a Lance/As brandish't at the eyes of Ignorance."

Writers always have taken terrible risks by writing "offensive" works. Dante was exiled from his beloved Florence; Voltaire (the pseudonym of François Marie Arouet) was imprisoned in the Bastille and subsequently exiled; Emile Zola was driven from France following his publication of "J'accuse." Women, in particular, have required pseudonyms merely to get into print. Consider Mary Ann Evans (George Eliot) and the Brontë sisters (who published under the names of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell). Jane Austen wrote anonymously (her name was attached to her work only after her death).



> As long as the question is of talent and mental power, the world of men has not his equal to show. But when the question is to life, and its materials, and its auxiliaries, how does he profit me? What does it signify? It is but a Twelfth night, or a Midsummer's night's dream, or a Winter evening's tale: What signifies another picture more or less? The Egyptian verdict of the Shakspeare Societies comes to mind, that he was a jovial actor and manager. I cannot marry this fact to his verse: Other admirable men have led lives in some sort of keeping with their thought, but this man in wide contrast. Had he been less, had he reached only the common measure of great authors, of Bacon, Milton, Tasso, Cervantes, we might leave the fact in the twilight of human fate; but that this man of men, he who gave to the science of mind a new and larger subject than had ever existed, and planted the standard of humanity some furlongs forward into Chaos,—that he should not be wise for himself,—it must even go into the world's history, that the best poet led an obscure and profane life, using his genius for the public amusement.
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> —Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Representative Men* [1850]

Daniel Defoe used more than twenty pseudonyms; Salman Rushdie probably wishes he had used at least one.

English nobility who have employed pseudonyms since Elizabethan days include King George III, who published as Ralph Robinson, and Alfred, Lord Tennyson, who sometimes published as Merlin. Lord Hardinge of Penshurst, who wrote crime fiction in the 1940s, styled himself as George Milner. Edward de Vere might have been comforted to know that the tradition of adopting a disguise when venturing into publication continues even today among England's peers. That the chief courtier-poet-playwright of Elizabethan England, son-in-law of the Lord Treasurer, and cousin to the Queen should have chosen the devices of anonymity and pseudonymity to assure himself freedom of expression is hardly surprising. That he—rather than an unlettered wool and grain merchant from Warwickshire—should be Shake-speare is even less so.

ii.
As They Like It

By Marjorie Garber

The success of a film called *Shakespeare in Love* may owe a great deal to its witty script by playwright Tom Stoppard and screenwriter Marc Norman, as well as to its personable stars, but not a little of the film's appeal lies in its title. Who among us would not want a front-row seat or a voyeuristic peephole for the spectacle of Shakespeare in love, especially if that love is seen to be the "cause" of his genius? In Stoppard's film the aspiring young Will is presented as a playwright who hasn't yet hit his stride. He lacks the right muse. When the fictional Viola de Lesseps (Gwyneth Paltrow) auditions for a part in one of his plays—necessarily cross-dressed, since women were not permitted on the public stage in England—the result is *Romeo and Juliet*. Although love's labor is ultimately lost—Viola dutifully marries a nobleman who covets her family money, and is shipped off to the colony of Virginia—Will is left with a rejuvenated quill, the money to buy a share in a company of actors, and a royal fan in the person of Queen Elizabeth. *Shakespeare in Love*, in fact, presents the wishful audience with not one but two primal scenes: the scene of Will in bed with his muse, and the scene of his liberation from hired-player status. Each in its own sphere, the one aesthetic, the other economic, seems to mark the inception of a singular career. Both, it should be made clear, are entirely fictional.

No evidence connects Shakespeare with Lord Strange's Men, the company that played at the Rose. The correspondence of chief player Edward Alleyn never mentions Shakespeare, nor does Shakespeare appear in any cast list for Strange's Men. There has been much speculation about the playwright's early career—might he perhaps have freelanced as a dramatist, or acted with another company in these years?—but the first record we possess that firmly connects William Shakespeare with an acting company lists him in 1595 as a leading member of the Lord Chamberlain's Men (later taken under royal patronage as the King's Men), the company with which he was to be associated until he retired from the stage. In other words, the Shakespeare rescue-fantasy and the Shakespeare "star is born" scenario offered by Stoppard's film answer to a modern audience's desire to know the origin of literary culture's greatest hero.

As for the lovely Viola, she, too, is a figment of our wishful imagination. What could turn an ordinary playwright into the genius of the age? Nothing but love, and not even ordinary love, but love, needless to say, à la Romeo and Juliet. Hints of Shakespeare's famous bisexuality are very lightly traced (the playwright's impulsive kissing of the scant-bearded "Thomas Kent" is followed, only a beat later, by the discovery that "he" is a lady), and what is shown us is a classic Petrarchan structure, the unattainable woman replaced, and displaced, by an overactive pen.

The logic of a fully Shakespearized world is already at work, else we would not find the supposed original title, *Romeo and Ethel, the Pirate's Daughter*, any sillier than our familiar *Romeo and Juliet* or, indeed, than the title of Shakespeare's principal source, Arthur Brooke's *Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*. Romeus, Romeus, wherefore art thou Romeus?

Stoppard's play does not purport to be history, but its particular choices are highly symptomatic. For what we want—and what people have wanted over the years from Shakespeare's death to the present time—is the answer to the conundrum of "authorship" itself. Not just "Who wrote the plays?" but "How does great writing happen? Where does it come from? And why?" In a secular world, Shakespeare is our bible, a quotable and excerptable compendium of citations for every purpose. "Neither a borrower nor a lender be," intone American lawmakers, reading the tedious sententiae of Polonius, a puffed-up public man, into the Congressional Record. "Who steals my purse steals trash. . . . But he that filches from me my good name/Robs me of that which not enriches him,/And makes me poor indeed." The glozing words of Iago, baiting the trap for the gullible Othello, become disembodied "wisdom" and are quoted, without their attendant irony, not as the trickery of Iago but as the sagacity of "Shakespeare." This is the Shakespeare of *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*, the passages cited there without speech prefixes and thus contributing to the "Shakespeare effect," the idea that there is Someone—call him "Shakespeare"—who knows the timeless truth of the human heart and mind.

What biography could stand up to this test of greatness?

Shakespeare is an effect. To go against the effect is to set up an argument against a myth. In a sense, whatever the outcome of historical investigations, "Shakespeare" is whoever wrote the plays. As a result, the famous "Shakespeare authorship controversy" is "overdetermined"—that is to say, it is both the result of several different causes and related to a multiplicity of underlying elements, each of which is coherent and meaningful even though they may seem to be at odds with one another. Thus, for example, it is contended by some anti-Stratfordians that

William Shakespeare was of the wrong socio-economic class to have been the author of the plays. Since the plays exhibit such a thorough knowledge of the court, the author must have been an aristocrat (Oxford); since the plays display such learning about the law, the author must have been a lawyer (Bacon). On the other hand, there are those who are deeply convinced, following the Miltonic and Romantic ideology of the poet "warbling his native woodnotes wild," that this greatest of all playwrights must have been a child of nature, unsullied by excessive book-learning, unconstrained by courtly manners. Both groups are left unsatisfied by an account of the curriculum of the Stratford grammar school, which suggests that Shakespeare's "small Latin and less Greek" in fact involved a detailed study of classical literature, mythology, rhetoric, and moral philosophy. Likewise, the information that Shakespeare's father was not just a glover but also the highest elected official in Stratford, who presided at the Court of Record and at council meetings and served the borough as justice of the peace, will satisfy neither those who want the playwright to be very lowborn or those who insist that he is a closet nobleman.

A number of investments motivate the controversy on both sides. Let me quickly summarize them:

Institutional investments. The Shakespeare Birthplace in Stratford-upon-Avon; the reconstructed Globe Theatre on the Bankside in London; the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C.; numerous "Stratfords" from Ontario to Connecticut, with their annual Shakespeare-festival seasons; the collected works of Shakespeare as merchandised by publishers from Norton to Riverside to Bantam and Arden—these are institutions that depend upon the Shakespeare logo, and the man from Stratford, for their existence. But Oxfordians—and again, before them, Baconians—have likewise banded together. The Bacon Society was founded in England in 1885, and its American counterpart was organized in 1922; the Shakespeare Authorship Society (originally the Shakespeare Fellowship) has been promoting the claims of Oxford since 1922, and an American version was started up in 1939. All these groups have newsletters, T-shirts, and itinerant spokesmen. An Oxford descendant currently makes numerous personal appearances on the campus lecture circuit.

Psychological investments. Noting that Sigmund Freud himself became a proponent of the Oxford candidacy, Shakespeare biographer S. Schoenbaum suggested that Freud was motivated by his own theory of the family romance, replacing a known (human) father figure with an unknown, greater one, in this case an aristocrat. There are also those who want there to be no Shakespeare, no idealized poet-father. The group-authorship theory is one response to this impulse, fragmenting Shakespeare into many hands and voices.

Territorial investments. It is striking that Americans have been by far the most zealous group of combatants on both sides of the authorship question. Turn-of-the-century critic Georg Brandes, noting this trend, fulminated that literary criticism had fallen into the hands of "raw Americans and fanatical women." From John Greenleaf Whittier to Mark Twain and Henry James, American writers have professed their doubts about the Stratford man. "Is Shakespeare Dead?" asked Twain in an essay that faulted Stratfordians for conjuring their man's life story out of little or no evidence. Why should the authorship controversy be an "American" preoccupation? For one thing, it reverses any lingering sense of colonial inferiority by rendering the true identity of Shakespeare an American discovery, despite the fact that he may have been born an Englishman. At the same time, it speaks to Americans' fascination with and ambivalence about aristocracy, something simultaneously admired and despised. Henry James's story "The Birthplace," without ever using the words "Shakespeare" or "Stratford," superbly evokes the dilemma of the tour guide who shows visitors around "The Holy of Holies of the Birthplace," the "Chamber of Birth," where "He" (the unnamed author of the capitalized "Works") is said to have been born. Should he allow his doubts to show? "What we can say is that things have been said; that's all we have to do with. 'And is this really'—when they jam their umbrellas into the floor—'the very spot where He was born?' 'So it has, from a long time back, been described as being.'" Ultimately the guide goes in the other direction, becoming a tourist attraction himself as he convincingly retells the story. The idea that "[p]ractically. . . there is no author" paradoxically frees him to become one himself—and at a handsome profit.

In fact, although the authorship question seems to be desperate for an answer, the absence of an answer is often more satisfying. "Others abide our question. Thou art free," wrote Matthew Arnold in his sonnet on Shakespeare. "We ask and ask—Thou smilest and art still,/Out-topping knowledge." It begins to become clear that Shakespeare is the towering figure he is for us not despite but rather because of the authorship controversy. Were he more completely known, he would not be the Shakespeare we know.

It is therefore far from surprising that two of the stage roles we think that Shakespeare the

actor may have taken in his own plays—that of Old Adam in *As You Like It* and, most famously, the Ghost in *Hamlet*—are both spectral father-figures, who advise their "sons" and protégés, then disappear from the stage. They become, as I have argued in a book of that title, Shakespeare's ghostwriters. In fact, the uncanny appearances of ghosts in the plays, often juxtaposed, as in *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Richard II*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The Merchant of Venice*, with scenes of writing and reading, and with the dead hand of the father, stage the authorship controversy within the plays as a textual effect.

The plays are full of ghostwriting: questions raised about who wrote a document and in what hand, suspicions voiced that a document may be a forgery or a "double" or a copy or a substitution (think of Hamlet's "dozen or sixteen lines" added to the "Mouse-trap" play, or the death sentence on Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that he forges, in his father's hand and with his father's seal, to replace Claudius's "commission" for his own death), encounters with spectral doubles, other selves, whether they are witches, gravediggers, apothecaries, or magicians. Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* is gulled by a forged letter. So is Gloucester in *King Lear*. Even the vexed question of the signature—could Shakespeare write? could his parents? could his daughters?—and the paucity of handwritten evidence (only six signatures of Shakespeare survive, all of them on legal documents, none of them affixed to the plays) seem uncannily thematized within the plays.

The authorship controversy, in short, is itself a cultural symptom. For what we desire is the answer to the genesis of "genius." But there are those—most of them, significantly, poets and writers themselves—who cherish the question rather than the answer, who prefer not to know: "Is it not strange," writes Emerson, "that the transcendent men, Homer, Plato, Shakespeare, confessedly unrivalled, should have questions of identity and genuineness raised respecting their writings?" Yet it is that kind of question that certifies their transcendence. They are not mortals but myths. "Shakespeare led a life of Allegory; his works are the comments on it," claimed Keats. And Charles Dickens, a novelist often characterized by that all-purpose adjective of praise, "Shakespearean," remarked with satisfaction, "The life of Shakespeare is a fine mystery and I tremble every day lest something should turn up."

III. DRAMA

* *

i

Thy Countenance Shakes Spears

By Mark K. Anderson

For a host of persuasive but commonly disregarded reasons, the Earl of Oxford has quietly become by far the most compelling man to be found behind the mask of "Shake-speare." As Orson Welles put it in 1954, "I think Oxford wrote Shakespeare. If you don't agree, there are some awful funny coincidences to explain away." Some of these coincidences are obscure, others are hard to overlook. A 1578 Latin encomium to Oxford, for example, contains some highly suggestive praise: "Pallas lies concealed in thy right hand," it says. "Thine eyes flash fire; Thy countenance shakes spears." Elizabethans knew that Pallas Athena was known by the sobriquet "the spear-shaker." The hyphen in Shake-speare's name also was a tip-off: other Elizabethan pseudonyms include "Cutbert Curry-knave," "Simon Smell-knave," and "Adam Fouleweather (student in asse-tronomy)." *

The case for Oxford's authorship hardly rests on hidden clues and allusions, however. One of the most important new pieces of Oxfordian evidence centers around a 1570 English Bible, in the "Geneva translation," once owned and annotated by the Earl of Oxford, Edward de Vere. In an eight-year study of the de Vere Bible, a University of Massachusetts doctoral student named Roger Stritmatter has found that the 430-year-old book is essentially, as he puts it, "Shake-speare's Bible with the Earl of Oxford's coat of arms on the cover." Stritmatter discovered that more than a quarter of the 1,066 annotations and marked passages in the de Vere Bible appear in Shake-speare. The parallels range from the thematic—sharing a motif, idea, or trope—to the verbal—using

* *Another intriguing reference comes from the satirist Thomas Nashe, who included a dedication to a "Gentle Master William" in his 1593 book* Strange News, *describing him as the "most copious" poet in England. He alludes to "the blue boar," Oxford's heraldic emblem, and roasts "William" with the Latin phrase* Apis lapis, *which translates as "sacred ox."*

names, phrases, or wordings that suggest a specific biblical passage.

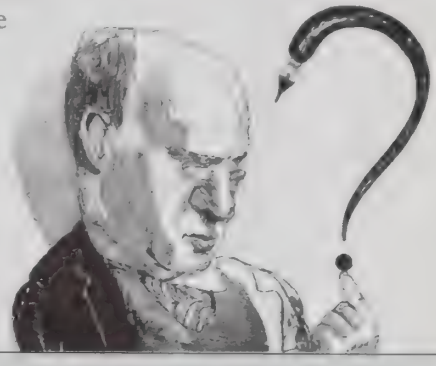
In his research, Stritmatter pioneered a stylistic-fingerprinting technique that involves isolating an author's most prominent biblical allusions—those that appear four or more times in the author's canon. After compiling a list of such "diagnostic verses" for the writings of Shake-speare and three of his most celebrated literary contemporaries—Francis Bacon, Christopher Marlowe, and Edmund Spenser—Stritmatter undertook a comparative study to discern how meaningful the de Vere Bible evidence was. He found that each author's favorite biblical allusions composed a unique and idiosyncratic set and could thus be marshaled to distinguish one author from another. Stritmatter then compared each set of "diagnostics" to the marked passages in the de Vere Bible. The results were, from any perspective but the most dogmatically orthodox, a stunning confirmation of the Oxfordian theory.

Stritmatter found that very few of the marked verses in the de Vere Bible appeared in Spenser's, Marlowe's, or Bacon's diagnostic verses. On the other hand, the Shake-speare canon brims with de Vere Bible verses. Twenty-nine of Shake-speare's top sixty-six biblical allusions are marked in the de Vere Bible. Furthermore, three of Shake-speare's diagnostic verses show up in Oxford's extant letters. All in all, the correlation between Shake-speare's favorite biblical verses and Edward de Vere's Bible is very high: .439 compared with .054, .068, and .020 for Spenser, Marlowe, and Bacon. Was "Shake-speare" the pen name for Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, or must we formulate ever more elaborate hypotheses that preserve the old byline but ignore the appeal of common sense and new evidence?

One favorite rejoinder to the Oxfordian argument is that the author's identity doesn't really matter; only the works do. "The play's the thing" has become the shibboleth of indifference-claiming doubters. These four words, however, typify Shake-speare's attitude toward the theater about as well as the first six words of *A Tale of Two Cities* express Charles Dickens's opinion of the French Revolution: "It was the best of times." In both cases, the fragment suggests an authorial perspective very different from the original context.

"The play's the thing," Hamlet says, referring to his masque "The Mouse-trap," "wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king." Hardly a précis for advocating the death of the author, Hamlet's observation reports that drama's function comes closer to espionage than to mere entertainment. Hamlet's full quote is, in fact, a fair summary of the Oxfordian reading of the entire canon. If pressed, Shake-speare, like Hamlet, would probably deny a play's topical relevance. But, as an ambitious courtier, he would have valued his dramaturgical ability to comment on, lampoon, vilify, and praise people and events at Queen Elizabeth's court. It is hard to deny that Hamlet is the closest Shake-speare comes to a picture of the dramatist at work.

Nowadays, assertions that one can recover the author's perspective from his own dramatic self-portraits are often ridiculed as naive or simplistic. Yet the consensus—that Shake-speare somehow evaded the realities and particulars of his own life in creating his most enduring, profound, and nuanced characters—is absurd on its face. Of course, the infinite recesses of the imagination make an appealing refuge to the savvy debater. Shake-speare was a creative genius (a claim no one would dare dispute); ergo, he could and did make it all up. Following the same reasoning, though, Hamlet's own masque holds no political purpose either. Rather than seeing it as a ploy to "catch the conscience of the king," a strictly Stratfordian reading of "The Mouse-trap" would be compelled to see it as little more than a fanciful Italian fable divorced of its obvious allegory to the foul deeds committed at the court of Elsinore. The fact that, just like *Hamlet*, "The Mouse-trap" stages a king's poisoning and a queen's hasty remarriage becomes just another "awful funny" coincidence.



> I am "a sort of" haunted by the conviction that the divine William is the biggest and most successful fraud ever practised on a patient world. The more I turn him round and round the more he so affects me. But that is all—I am not pretending to treat the question or to carry it any further. It bristles with difficulties, and I can only express my general sense by saying that I find it *almost* as impossible to conceive that Bacon wrote the plays as to conceive that the man from Stratford, as we know the man from Stratford, did.
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> —Henry James, *letter to Violet Hunt* [August 26, 1903]

In the history of the Shake-speare authorship controversy, every claimant to the laurels has queued up offering the promise of mouth-watering connections to the

canon. Justifiably, skeptics have countered that if you squint your eyes hard enough, any scrap or biographical datum can be made to resemble something from Shake-speare. With Oxford, however, *everything* seems to have found its way into Shake-speare. Gone are the days when heretics would storm the ramparts whenever some thread was discovered between the character Rosencrantz and Francis Bacon's grandpa. Today it's more alarming when a Shake-speare play or poem does *not* overflow with Oxfordian connotations and connections. The problem for any Oxfordian is the perhaps enviable task of selecting which handful of gems should be brought out from the treasure chest. In what follows, then, I will touch on five Shake-spearean characters—Hamlet, Helena, Falstaff, King Lear, and Prospero—and will briefly point out a few parallels with Oxford.

Hamlet. More than a mere authorial specter, the Prince enacts entire portions of Oxford's life story. Oxford's two military cousins, Horace and Francis Vere, appear as Hamlet's comrade-at-arms Horatio and the soldier Francisco. Oxford satirizes his guardian and father-in-law, the officious, bumbling royal adviser Lord Burghley (nicknamed "Polus"), as the officious, bumbling royal adviser Polonius. The parallels between Burghley and Polonius are so vast and detailed that even the staunch Stratfordian A. L. Rowse admitted that "there is nothing original" anymore in asserting this widely recognized connection. Furthermore, like Polonius, Burghley had a daughter. At age twenty-one, Oxford was married to Anne Cecil, and their nuptial affairs were anything but blissful. The tragically unstable triangle of Hamlet-Ophelia-Polonius found its living parallel in Oxford-Anne-"Polus." In short, from the profound (Oxford's mother quickly remarried upon the untimely death of her husband) to the picayune (Oxford was abducted by pirates on a sea voyage), *Hamlet*'s "Mouse-trap" captures the identity of its author.

Helena. Just as details of Oxford's life story appear throughout each of the Shake-speare plays and poems, Anne Cecil's tragic tale is reflected in many Shake-spearean heroines, including Ophelia, Desdemona, Isabella, Hero, Hermione, and Helena. In *All's Well That Ends Well*, Helena seeks out and eventually wins the hand of the fatherless Bertram, who is being raised as a ward of the court—precisely the situation Oxford found himself in when Anne was thrust upon him by his guardian and soon-to-be father-in-law. Like Helena, Anne was rejected by her headstrong new husband, who fled to Italy rather than remain at home with her. Both Oxford and Bertram refused to consummate their vows—and both eventually impregnated their wives by virtue of a "bed trick" (the strange and almost unbelievable stratagem wherein the husband thinks he is sleeping with another woman but is in fact sleeping with his own wife).

Falstaff. The comic conscience of the *Henry IV* plays, Falstaff can be read as an authorial self-parody embodying two of Oxford's more notorious qualities: a razor wit and a wastrel's worldview. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Falstaff also provokes Master Ford's jealousy, lampooning the author's own hypocrisy in flying into a jealous rage at his wife when he suspected her of infidelity. And the romantic subplot involving the daughter of the other "merry wife"—Anne Page—so specifically skewers the marriage negotiations between Oxford, Anne Cecil, and her onetime prospective husband, Sir Philip Sidney, that the dowries and pensions mentioned in the play match precisely those of the play's historical counterparts. In the same play, Falstaff brags to Master Ford that he "fear[s] not Goliath with a weaver's beam." This odd expression is in fact shorthand for the biblical Goliath's spear as it is detailed in II Samuel 21:19: "Goliath the Gittite: the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam." Not only did Oxford mark the verse in his Bible; he even underlined the words "weaver's beam."

King Lear. In a play whose dramatic engine is the family dynamics of two tragically flawed patriarchs (Lear and the Earl of Gloucester), Shake-speare stages the exact familial relationships that Oxford faced in his twilight years. His first marriage to Anne Cecil left him a widower, like Lear, with three daughters, of whom the elder two were married. His second marriage produced only one son, whose patrilineal claims could conceivably be challenged by Oxford's bastard son—a mirror of the gullible Earl of Gloucester's situation. As if highlighting one of the thematic underpinnings of *King Lear*, in his Bible, Oxford marked Hosea 9:7 ("The prophet is a fool; the spiritual man is mad"), which Lear's daughter Goneril inverts in her venomous remark that "Jesters do oft prove prophets."

Prospero. *The Tempest*'s exiled nobleman, castaway hermit, and scholarly shaman provides the author's grand farewell to a world that he recognizes will bury his name, even when his book is exalted to the ends of the earth. Oxfordians, in general, agree with scholarly tradition that *The Tempest* was probably Shake-speare's final play—and many concur with the German Stratfordian critic Karl Elze that "all external arguments and indications are in favor of [the play being written in] the year 1604." Before he takes his final bow, Prospero makes one last plea to his eternal audience. Drawing from a contiguous set of Oxford's marked verses at Ecclesiasticus 28:1–5 concerning the need for reciprocal mercy as the pre-

condition of human freedom, Prospero delivers his farewell speech with the hopes that someone will take him at his word:

> [R]elease me from my bands
> With the help of your good hands!
> Gentle breath of yours my sails
> Must fill or else my project fails,
> Which was to please. Now I want
> Spirits to enforce, art to enchant,
> And my ending is despair,
> Unless I be reliev'd by prayer,
> Which pierces so that it assaults
> Mercy itself and frees all faults.
> As you from crimes would pardon'd be,
> Let your indulgence set me free.

Like Hamlet, *The Tempest*'s aristocrat cum magus begs those around him to hear his story and, in so doing, to free him from his temporary chains. The rest, as the academic ghost-chase for the cipher from Stratford has ably demonstrated, is silence.

At the end of *The Tempest*, Prospero uses the metaphors of shipwrecks and stormy weather to deliver his closing salvo against the desolate island he called home. During the final year of his life, the Earl of Oxford clearly had such imagery on his mind, as can be seen in his eloquent April 1603 letter to his former brother-in-law, Robert Cecil, on the death of Queen Elizabeth: "In this common shipwreck, mine is above all the rest, who least regarded, though often comforted, of all her followers, she hath left to try my fortune among the alterations of time and chance, either without sail whereby to take the advantage of any prosperous gale, or with anchor to ride till the storm be overpast." The alterations of time and chance have been cruel to Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. But the last five years of discoveries and developments have made two things increasingly clear: the tempest has broken, and Prospero's indulgence is finally upon us.

ii.
The Reproof Valiant

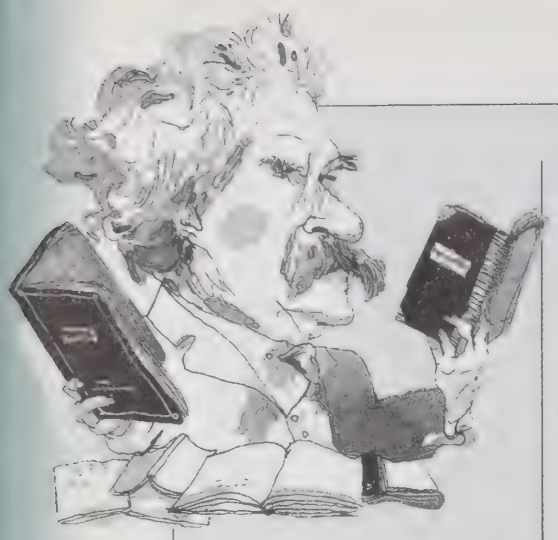
By Irvin Matus

The "Shakespeare Discussion Area" is a Web page where visitors may exchange comments and opinions on the dramatist and his works, but the greatest number of postings by far are from students seeking help with an assignment. One such plea was for information "on what awards Shakespeare won—either during his life or after his death." From "Harry" came the succinct, definitive answer: "You need a new project." Go ahead and laugh, but you, dear reader, may have a similar question you were afraid to ask. How many times has an educated, thoughtful person prefaced a query to me with, "This may be a silly question . . ." And how many times has that question sent me to the books to discover a fresh topic of fascinating and fruitful research.

In a way, no question about Shakespeare is silly. It may reflect a general lack of knowledge about how these miraculous creations came into being, but it will almost certainly reveal a problem that has been present in the study of both the man and his works for more than 300 years: the common tendency to view the people and products of another age through the glass of one's own. In the case of Shakespeare and the theater of his time, this is particularly pronounced, for in the years between the outlawing of the theater by the Roundheads in 1642 and the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, the records of most of the theater companies disappeared. Nearly all that survive are records of performances and the business of the theater. This was all for the best when the apotheosis of the Sweet Swan of Avon took wing in the last third of the eighteenth century. There was nothing to impede his scholars from indulging in their flights of fancy—not until Delia Bacon came along in 1857, that is. The playhouse Shakespeare, she declared, was but "a stupid, ignorant, third-rate player" in a "dirty, doggish group of players," with nothing in his background that qualified him to be the author of works whose depth and breadth of knowledge had been discerned by his scholars over the preceding ninety years.

Drawn from the ranks of the literary world, these scholars ripened the early-eighteenth-century notion that the plays were only incidentally works for the stage; first and foremost they were works of literature to be read and studied. It is "an indisputable certainty," declared Algernon Swinburne, "that Shakespeare never wrote merely for the stage, but always with an eye on the future and studious reader, who would be competent and careful to appreciate what his audience and his fellow actors could not." This may be recognized as a recipe for Shakespeare studies, and, indeed, ever since his plays were admitted to academia they have been increasingly overwhelmed by footnotes, critical studies, and, nowadays, an array of fashionable methodologies.

This primacy of the page over the stage is agreeable to the Oxfordians. In the words of the late Charlton Ogburn, the Earl of Oxford's force-



Shakespeare pronounced "Venus and Adonis" "the first heir of his invention," apparently implying that it was his first effort at literary composition. He should not have said it. It has been an embarrassment to his historians these many, many years. They have to make him write that graceful and polished and flawless and beautiful poem before he escaped from Stratford and his family—1586 or '87— age, twenty-two, or along there; because within the next five years he wrote five great plays, and could not have found time to write another line.

It is sorely embarrassing. If he began to slaughter calves, and poach deer, and rollick around, and learn English, at the earliest likely moment—say at thirteen, when he was supposedly wrenched from that school where he was supposedly storing up Latin for future literary use—he had his youthful hands full, and much more than full. He must have had to put aside his Warwickshire dialect, which wouldn't be understood in London, and study English very hard. Very hard indeed; incredibly hard, almost, if the result of that labor was to be the smooth and rounded and flexible and letter-perfect English of the "Venus and Adonis" in the space of ten years; and at the same time learn great and fine and unsurpassable literary *form*.

However, it is "conjectured" that he accomplished all this and more, much more: learned law and its intricacies; and the complex procedure of the law-courts; and all about soldiering, and sailoring, and the manners and customs and ways of royal courts and aristocratic society; and likewise accumulated in his one head every kind of knowledge the learned then possessed, and every kind of humble knowledge possessed by the lowly and the ignorant; and added thereto a wider and more intimate knowledge of the world's great literatures, ancient and modern, than was possessed by any other man of his time—for he was going to make brilliant and easy and admiration-compelling use of these splendid treasures the moment he got to London. And according to the surmisers, that is what he did. Yes, although there was no one in Stratford able to teach him these things, and no library in the little village to dig them out of. His father could not read, and even the surmisers surmise that he did not keep a library.

It is surmised by the biographers that the young Shakespeare got his vast knowledge of the law and his familiar and accurate acquaintance with the manners and customs and shop-talk of lawyers through being for a time the *clerk of a Stratford court*; just as a bright lad like me, reared in a village on the banks of the Mississippi, might become perfect in knowledge of the Bering Strait whale-fishery and the shop-talk of the veteran exercises of that adventure-bristling trade through catching catfish with a "trot-line" Sundays. But the surmise is damaged by the fact that there is no evidence—and not even tradition—that the young Shakespeare was ever clerk of a law-court.

It is further surmised that the young Shakespeare accumulated his law-treasures in the first years of his sojourn in London, through "amusing himself" by learning book-law in his garret and by picking up lawyer-talk and the rest of it through loitering about the law-courts and listening. But it is only surmise; there is no *evidence* that he ever did either of those things. They are merely a couple of chunks of plaster of Paris.

There is a legend that he got his bread and butter by holding horses in front of the London theaters, mornings and afternoons. Maybe he did. If he did, it seriously shortened his law-study hours and his recreation-time in the courts. In those very days he was writing great plays, and needed all the time he could get. The horse-holding legend ought to be strangled; it too formidably increases the historian's difficulty in accounting for the young Shakespeare's erudition—an erudition which he was acquiring, hunk by hunk and chunk by chunk, every day in those strenuous times, and emptying each day's catch into next day's imperishable drama.

He had to acquire a knowledge of war at the same time; and a knowledge of soldier-people and sailor-people and their ways and talk; also a knowledge of some foreign lands and their languages: for he was daily emptying fluent streams of these various knowledges, too, into his dramas. How did he acquire these rich assets?

In the usual way: by surmise. It is *surmised* that he traveled in Italy and Germany and around, and qualified himself to put their scenic and social aspects upon paper; that he perfected himself in French, Italian, and Spanish on the road; that he went in Leicester's expedition to the Low Countries, as soldier or sutler or something, for several months or years—or whatever length of time a surmiser needs in his business—and thus became familiar with soldiership and soldier-ways and soldier-talk and generalship and general-ways and general-talk, and seamanship and sailor-ways and sailor-talk.

Maybe he did all these things, but I would like to know who held the horses in the mean time; and who studied the books in the garret; and who frollicked in the law-courts for recreation. Also, who did the call-boying and the play-acting.

For he became a call-boy; and as early as '93 he became a "vagabond"—the law's ungentle term for an unlisted actor; and in '94 a "regular" and properly and officially listed member of that [in those days] lightly valued and not much respected profession.

Right soon thereafter he became a stockholder in two theaters, and manager of them. Thenceforward he was a busy and flourishing business man, and was raking in money with both hands for twenty years. Then in a noble frenzy of poetic inspiration he wrote his one poem—his only poem, his darling—and laid him down and died: "Good friend for Iesus sāke forbeare / To digg the dust encloased heare: / Blest be ye man yt spares thes stones / And curst be he yt moves my bones." He was probably dead when he wrote it. Still, this is only conjecture. We have only circumstantial evidence. Internal evidence.

Shall I set down the rest of the Conjectures which constitute the giant Biography of William Shakespeare? It would strain the Unabridged Dictionary to hold them. He is a brontosaur: nine bones and six hundred barrels of plaster of Paris.

—Mark Twain,
"Is Shakespeare Dead?"
[1909]

ful champion, "Though he gave us marvelous theater, I think we must recognize that he was above all a novelist, and a novelist above all other novelists." Shakespeareans and Oxfordians converge as well in the assumption that the author's age held him in no less estimation than does our own, and this agreement is the wellspring of the authorship debate; for if Shakespeare was, in the words of Ben Jonson, "not of an age, but for all time," surely his contemporaries broadcast his greatness as we do. But they didn't. Why not? This is the "mystery" at the heart of the mysteries the Oxfordians discern in the record of Shakespeare.

There was indeed a time when Shakespeare's position in the theater was unrivaled—because he was quite literally without a rival. In Francis Meres's *Palladis Tamia*, we find the names of many playwrights, but Meres places Shakespeare far above all others. Meres names twelve plays as examples of Shakespeare's excellence in both comedy and tragedy, five of which had already been published in individual quarto editions. Therein lurks another Oxfordian mystery, which is that the author's name was not in the first editions of any of these, nor of two other early plays not noted by Meres.

The Oxfordians have a solution: the author's noble name could not be affixed to lowly drama, and so the decision was made to use a pseudonym, supposedly coined years earlier: "William Shakespeare." That it was similar to the name of an ignorant player, William "Shakspere," perhaps made the choice more amusing to the knowing. But if the need to hide the identity of a noble author of this disdained literature is indeed the reason why these works were published without attribution, playwriting must have been quite the fashion among aristocrats, for in only seven of the forty-two popular plays printed between 1590 and 1597 was the author identified.

Nor were any of Shakespeare's plays brought to press with evident approval from their creator, and the texts of some truly earned their description in the First Folio as "maimed and deformed." This the Oxfordians regard as further proof that the author was a nobleman; a common man, they argue, certainly would have, and could have, complained. The generic anti-Stratfordian Sir George Greenwood acknowledged that although there was no copyright law at the time, authors had recourse to English common law as "a remedy for the violation of so elementary a right." This is as far as the Oxfordian argument usually gets, and so Greenwood's conclusion that there is no record of this common-law right being successfully appealed is not heard, anymore than is his concession that authors may have found "it was better to 'take it lying down'" than to try and obtain justice against a publisher protected by the "powerful Stationers' Company."

What makes the attempts to deny these facts remarkable is that Oxfordians are aware that Shakespeare's acting company—the Lord Chamberlain's Men, later the King's Men—tried at various times between 1598 and 1640 to block the unauthorized publication of their plays, only to be flouted on each occasion by members of the Stationers' Company. In initiating these efforts to prevent the publication of plays, the Chamberlain's/King's Men were not acting on behalf of Shakespeare or any of the dramatists who wrote for them. Rather, as the plays were the property of the company and its shareholders, the company was seeking to protect its own interests. This was true of every syndicate or acting company of the day, and the evidence to this effect, in contracts and in the words of playwrights themselves, is overwhelming.

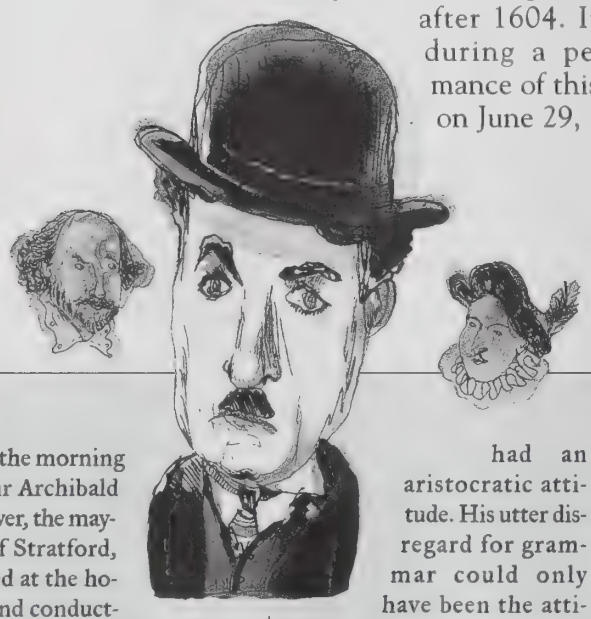
The Oxfordians are unsatisfied nevertheless and point to Ben Jonson's control over his plays. How he pulled this off is not known, but the probable explanation is that he was a dramatist in great demand, and acting companies therefore were willing to surrender to Jonson the rights to his plays. Unlike Jonson, who freelanced his plays, Shakespeare was attached to a single acting company in which he was a shareholder, and the Chamberlain's/King's Men were unrivaled in the protection of their plays. In the forty-eight-year history of the company, only three plays by one of its resident dramatists were published with the participation of their author and with the evident permission of the company.

The most difficult problem for Oxfordians is the dating of the plays, fully one third of which are given as 1605 or later in the Shakespearean chronology, whereas the Earl of Oxford died in June 1604. The Oxfordian response is the assertion that the scholars have fashioned their chronology to suit the lifetime of the man they assume to be the author and that there is no documentary evidence that proves any were written after 1604. But, of course, it is necessary for the Oxfordians to fashion *their* chronology to suit the lifetime of the man *they* would make the author, and there is no evidence whatsoever that any of the thirteen plays in question were written *before* 1605.

Of the twenty-six plays dated 1604 or earlier, fifteen were published and two more were entered for publication with the Stationers' Company; eight more are mentioned in print or in documents, leaving only *The Taming of the Shrew*

without certain contemporary mention before 1605. Which leaves us to wonder why, if the plays ascribed to years after 1604 had indeed been written before then, a stationer would print *Titus Andronicus* but not *Macbeth*, why Meres would mention *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* but not *King Lear* or *The Tempest*.

This last play is one of several for which there is solid evidence of late composition, to which some current Oxfordians give tacit assent. The tempest that gave its name to the play has definite parallels to two tracts and a letter, all three written in 1610, that contain accounts of a shipwreck near Bermuda of the Virginia Company flagship *Sea-Venture*. There are many such references, and they are so scattered throughout the play that the Oxfordian suggestion that they were later additions made by another is implausible. Nor can there be any doubt that *Henry VIII* was composed well after 1604. It was during a performance of this play on June 29, 1613, that the Globe playhouse burned to the ground which is attested to by two letters written within days of the event that describe *Henry VIII* as a "new play," one of which states that it "had been acted not passing 2 or 3 times before." What is more, this play is the second of three that Shakespeare wrote in collaboration with John Fletcher, whose career as a dramatist began two years after Oxford's death. The Oxfordians also ignore the fact that the Shakespearean chronology is based not only on the dates of publication or on mention of plays in books or documents but on Shakespeare's development as an artist. Where among the pre-1605 plays the Oxfordians would put these later plays, in which are found the highest achievement of the playwright's art, is a problem they have yet to approach. Put plainly, they have no chronology.



In the morning Sir Archibald Flower, the mayor of Stratford, called at the hotel and conducted me over to Shakespeare's cottage. I can by no means associate the Bard with it; that such a mind ever dwelt or had its beginnings there seems incredible. It is easy to imagine a farmer's boy emigrating to London and becoming a successful actor and theatre owner; but for him to have become the great poet and dramatist, and to have had such knowledge of foreign courts, cardinals and kings, is inconceivable to me. I am not concerned with who wrote the works of Shakespeare, whether Bacon, Southampton, or Richmond, but I can hardly think it was the Stratford boy. Whoever wrote them had an aristocratic attitude. His utter disregard for grammar could only have been the attitude of a princely, gifted mind. After seeing the cottage and hearing the scant bits of local information concerning his desultory boyhood, his indifferent school record, his poaching and his country-bumpkin point of view, I cannot believe he went through such a mental metamorphosis as to become the greatest of all poets. In the work of the greatest of geniuses humble beginnings will reveal themselves somewhere—but one cannot see the slightest sign of them in Shakespeare.

—Charles Chaplin
My Autobiography [1964]

Another issue in which Oxford's premature death plays a part is the playwright's sources. All of the primary ones for the later plays, they note, were in print before 1605; "Did he stop reading?" they ask. This is an interesting question, but it is the wrong one. A better question is, "What precisely *did* he read?" And what we find is North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives* and Holinshed's *Chronicles* accounting for five of the plays, an old play first published in 1605 as the source for *King Lear*, and popular works for the rest. In other words, very much the same sources, exactly or of a kind, that he used for the plays written before 1605, which raises a question about the Oxfordians' Shakespeare. Whereas he is proclaimed to be a person of great erudition, well-schooled and fluent in the ancient tongues, which the Earl of Oxford was indeed, apart from classical authors common to the grammar-school curriculum of the day, or decipherable to someone with even "small Latin and less Greek" (as Jonson defined Shakespeare's ability in these languages), there are relatively few allusions that suggest the author of the plays was particularly well-read in the ancients. There is nothing of Suetonius, Tacitus, Pliny, Dio Cassius, or Velleius Paterculus, among others found abundantly in Jonson's *Sejanus*, the 1605 edition of which has the author's own citations cramming the margins.

Margin notes of a different kind are of great interest to Oxfordians nowadays. These are in a copy of the 1568–1570 Geneva Bible bound especially for the Earl of Oxford, in which there are annotations and underlinings that have led his adherents to anoint it "Shakespeare's Bible." One example of its supposed parallel to the plays is Hamlet's declaration that Claudius "took my father grossly, full of bread," the last phrase of which is an allusion to Ezekiel, chapter 16, verse 49. We are told—in an article by Mark Anderson in the *Hartford Advocate* about a

tudy of Oxford's Bible by Roger Stritmatter—hat "over a span of more than 300 verses in the book of Ezekiel, Edward de Vere marks only one: Ezekiel 16:49." This is indeed remarkable, because there are as many as fifteen other allusions to Ezekiel in Shakespeare's plays. What happened to them?

This selectivity is made apparent in a further study of Oxford's Bible, by Dave Kathman, on the "Shakespeare Authorship" Web site. Kathman found that of the more than 200 parallel verses identified by Stritmatter, only about 80 are recognized by scholars of Shakespeare's biblical use. Granting Stritmatter the other 120-plus (as well as the benefit of the doubt that all the markings were made by Oxford), Kathman notes that there are roughly 1,000 verses marked in the Oxford Bible, whereas there are at least 2,000 biblical references in Shakespeare's works. Therefore, "only about 10 percent of Shakespeare's biblical allusions are marked in the Bible, and only about 20 percent of the verses marked in the Bible are alluded to in Shakespeare."

The Oxfordian justification for this passionate battle over the identity of the author is that our understanding and appreciation of the plays will be enhanced if they may be viewed in the light of the author's life. Let's see what happens to *Hamlet*, in which they discern a "master metaphor," the purported "projection" of de Vere's pseudonymous intent: to use his knowledge of court life to expose its inner corruption. But precisely what is the manifestation of the corruption in the court of Denmark? To all appearances, Claudius is an able ruler, sure in statecraft, and respected in his own court as well as in the courts of other nations. The corruption in Denmark's court is hidden in the *soul* of Claudius, and drama is its purge, in the mortal world of Shakespeare's time as it was in his play. In 1612, Shakespeare's colleague Thomas Heywood wrote a defense of the stage in which he told of performances that "have been the discoverers of many notorious murders, being concealed from the eyes of the world," two examples of which Heywood states occurred twelve years earlier, which would be about the time that *Hamlet* was written. And in the play we hear Hamlet say:

> I have heard
> That guilty creatures sitting at a play
> Have by the very cunning of the scene
> Been struck so to the soul that presently
> They have proclaimed their malefactions.

It would appear that the author of *Hamlet* used his knowledge not of court life to expose its corruption but of drama to expose the corruption in the human soul. And this is, as the scholar Henri Fluchère put it, "the domain of *art*, not the poet's *life*."

Self-promoting though he may have been, Ben Jonson has been proved right in eulogizing Shakespeare as "not of an age, but for all time." Later ages have admitted him into their cultures as a contemporary, sought images of the human experience in his words when their own failed, and proclaimed his genius to a degree that Jonson could never have dreamed of. The unvarnished life of the singularly self-obsessed Oxford offers no explanation for the scope of humanity found in the plays, and it is this that must be explained. For the unique achievement of the author is that, in the words of William Hazlitt, "[e]ach of his characters is as much itself, and as absolutely independent of the author, as if they were living persons, not fictions of the mind." And these are qualities that are the special province of the theater and the actor. Shakespeare was a character actor relegated to playing two or three roles in a play, as was the custom of the time, and the actor bears a likeness to the dramatist, who, as Gary Taylor defined him, "had to perform all the parts in his head, momentarily recreating himself in the image of each." In this Shakespeare has had no equal.

The human qualities of Shakespeare's characters have proven common to people of every age and society. Thus could Akira Kurosawa unite the pre-Christian world of *King Lear* with the medieval Japan of warlords in *Ran*, and thus could South African playwright Welcome Msomi create *Umabatha: A Zulu Macbeth*, acknowledging surprise at how readily Shakespeare's play lent itself to Zulu oral tradition. And, most tellingly of all, Peter Brook, who made his reputation directing Shakespeare, said that in the modern theater "we are faced with the infuriating fact that Shakespeare is still our model." The Oxfordians ask us instead to cast the stage aside as incidental to these creations, a disposable framework for the overarching genius of their noble creator.

To those who find that the stage is the only place where the plays truly live, it is a sort of poetic justice that the man who found so many lives within himself has come down to us seemingly without a life of his own. But his mastery of drama and his unique ability to create "an improvisation of life" upon the stage confirms what the documentary records of Shakespeare and his time tell us: that the domain of the poet's life, no less than the domain of his art, is the theater.

IV. LOVE

i

Every Word Doth Almost Tell My Name

By Joseph Sobran

Shakespeare's Sonnets have long baffled the academic Shakespeare scholars, and with good reason. Published under mysterious circumstances in 1609, these 154 intimate love poems clearly refer to real people and situations in the poet's life. They ought to be a gold mine for Shakespeare's biographers, who are otherwise forced to work from monotonously opaque baptismal registers and real estate titles that give no hint of the turbulent inner life the Sonnets disclose. But the Sonnets don't fit what we know of William of Stratford, their supposed author. Consequently, frustrated scholars, giving up the attempt to connect them to William, file them under the headings of "poetic fictions" and "literary exercises." They try, in effect, to declare the Sonnets inadmissible evidence, like lawyers who sense that a crucial document may be fatal to their client's case. This won't do. The Sonnets are too odd and earthy, too guarded and allusive, too personal and idiosyncratic, too full of loose ends, to have been fictional. The author of the Shakespeare plays knew how to tell a story, but these poems respond haphazardly to events and problems as they arise, unforeseen.

Who are the Fair Youth, the Dark Lady, the Rival Poet? These old questions have proved unanswerable, because the scholars neglect to ask the prior question: Who was the poet himself? They assume they already know the answer, so for them the Sonnets become a conundrum. The "riddle of Shakespeare's Sonnets," as Princeton's Edward Hubler called it, is really a facet of the riddle of Shakespeare's authorship. Once we recognize the author of the Sonnets as Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, the chief difficulties take care of themselves, and there is no need to resort to calling the poems fictions.

Of course the scholars won't hear of this: they prefer the legend of Stratford Will, self-made middle-class man, and their response to any doubt of his authorship is merely to jeer at it. But the evidence for Oxford is easier to mock than to refute.

The first 126 Sonnets lovingly address a handsome young man. They begin by unsuccessfully urging him to marry and beget a son; then the poet woos the "lovely boy" for himself, promising to give him "immortal life" in verse. Along with praise of the youth's beauty, the Sonnets record estrangements between him and the poet, charges of infidelity, a rival poet, a separation, reconciliation, and hints of the poet's own infidelity. The remaining Sonnets, wavering between love and insult, concern the poet's dark, sluttish mistress.

In the course of the poems, "Shakespeare" drops many clues about himself. He's "old," "poor," "lame," "despised," and "in disgrace." His face is "beated and chopp'd with tann'd antiquity," bearing "lines and wrinkles." He alludes to his "high birth." He seems to be a public figure, a target of "vulgar scandal." He never says what the source of the "scandal" is, but he implies that it is sexual, and he seems to have lovers of both sexes. He uses two hundred legal terms, showing wide knowledge of the law. He proudly expects his "powerful rhyme" to outlive marble and the gilded monument of princes, yet somehow hopes that his own name will be "buried" and "forgotten" after his death, which he feels approaching.

At the time the Sonnets were written, probably the early 1590s, William was under thirty and just beginning to prosper, with a long life ahead of him. There is no indication that he was lame. He had no legal training and caused no public scandal; we have no reason to think he was bisexual. He was rising in the world, not falling. If he wrote the works bearing his name, he would have expected immortal fame, not obscurity.

But the poet's self-description matches Oxford perfectly. Born in 1550, he hailed from the old nobility. He received the finest education, including legal studies at the Inns of Court. (His surviving letters use more than 50 of the 200 legal terms in the Sonnets.) By the 1590s Oxford was in his forties, over the hill and ailing. In three separate letters, written years apart, he describes himself as "lame" and "a lame man." He had wasted a huge patrimony and was forced to scrounge for money. His life had been marked by scandals; he had been accused of "buggering boys" and taunted about his "decayed reputation." He had made enemies, fallen from favor at court, served time in the Tower of London (at the Queen's command), nearly wrecked his marriage, and suffered grave wounds in a sword fight. Oxford also had a very high reputation as a poet and a playwright, though only a few short poems have been ascribed to

him. In 1589 it was reported that he had declined to publish his works under his own name. If he were writing poems under an alias, he might well hope both that his works would survive him and that his real name would be forgotten—which is exactly what happened.

And the youth? Stratfordian scholars now admit that his description matches Henry Wriothesley, third Earl of Southampton (to whom Shakespeare dedicated *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*). Oxford had reason to urge him to marry and procreate; his powerful father-in-law, Lord Burghley, had been pushing Southampton to marry his granddaughter and Oxford's daughter, Elizabeth Vere, which explains why Sonnet 10 pleads with the youth to beget "another self"—a son—"for love of me." Oxford is asking for a grandson. Coming from William of Stratford, such an appeal to Southampton would be bizarre, if not insane. And even if William wrote the Sonnets as fictions, is it credible that he would have created a narrator who closely resembles Oxford, addressing a "lovely boy" who so resembles Southampton, at a time when Southampton was being pressured to marry Oxford's daughter? We should also recall that the 1623 Folio of Shakespeare's plays was dedicated to two more earls, Pembroke and Montgomery, who had also been candidates for marriage to Oxford's other two daughters, Bridget and Susan Vere. Furthermore, Oxford's uncle the Earl of Surrey was a pioneer of the "Shakespearean" sonnet form. And his uncle and mentor Arthur Golding translated "Shakespeare's" favorite book, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Clearly, the standard view forces us to accept too many coincidences.

As many scholars now acknowledge, the Sonnets to the youth are homosexual. No common poet would have dared make amorous advances to an earl, but another earl might. Read rightly, the Sonnets tell us that Oxford fell deeply in love with Southampton, a fact that gives a practical edge to the poet's warnings to the youth to keep a discreet distance from him, as in the famous lines of Sonnet 71: "No longer mourn for me when I am dead/. . . Lest the wise world should look into your moan,/And mock you with me after I am gone." The "wise world" doesn't mock people for mourning their friends, though it might mock them for a scandalous affection, as homosexuality would certainly have appeared to the Elizabethans. In this view it seems clear that Oxford was afraid that his own soiled reputation would rub off on Southampton, which is why he hoped that his real name would be "buried where my body is . . . And live no more to shame nor me nor you."

Again and again the poet complains of his "disgrace," "bewailed guilt," "shames," "blots," "vulgar scandal stamped upon my brow." He is "despised," "attainted," "vile esteemed": his "name receives a brand." At a time when "Shakespeare" was being universally praised, the poet who wrote under that name was speaking strangely about his name. "Every word [of my poetry] doth almost tell my name," he says, as if his name is being concealed. And so it was. This is an obsessive theme of the Sonnets, yet mainstream scholars not only have failed to explain it but have hardly noticed it.

Only one detail in the Sonnets supports the traditional identification of the poet as William. In the bawdy and sometimes bitter later Sonnets to the Dark Lady, the poet puns on the name "Will" ("And then thou lovest me, for my name is Will"). But the context doesn't tell us whether this is his real name, a pen name, a nickname, an inside joke, or an alias his mistress knew him by. Otherwise, the Sonnets offer no help to those who insist that William wrote them. Perhaps the most telling fact of the authorship controversy is that William's partisans steer away from the very poems that tell us most about the poet. They don't really argue that William *did* write the Sonnets but that he *could* have—if they are fictional.

The Sonnets were published in 1609, five years after Oxford's death. The cryptic dedication was supplied by the publisher, not by the author, who is praised as "our ever-living poet." All we are told of the dedicatee is that he is "the only begetter of these ensuing sonnets, Mr. W.H."—Southampton's initials, but reversed. By praising the poet in such terms while presuming to dedicate his poems for him, the publisher invites the inference that the real author was no longer able to speak for himself: he was already dead. (William of Stratford still had seven years to live.) The poet's self-revelations match Oxford and nobody else in Elizabethan England. If the Sonnets and the other works of Shakespeare had been ascribed to Oxford from the start, it's hard to imagine that anyone would doubt his authorship today.

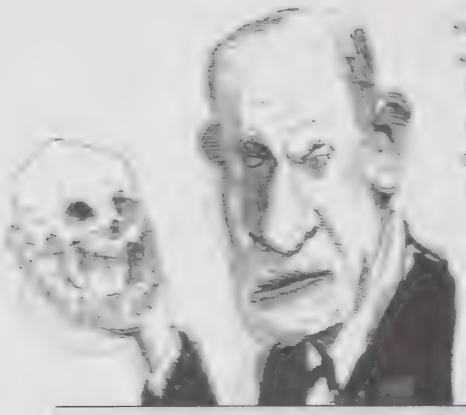
ii.

A Salvo for Lucy Negro

By Harold Bloom

I

As my correspondence shows me, since the October 1998 publication of my *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*, Oxfordians are the



> We will have a lot to discuss about Shakespeare. I do not know what still attracts you to the man of Stratford. He seems to have nothing at all to justify his claim, whereas Oxford has almost everything. It is quite inconceivable to me that Shakespeare should have got everything second-hand—Hamlet's neurosis, Lear's madness, Macbeth's defiance and the character of Lady Macbeth, Othello's jealousy, etc. It almost irritates me that you should support the notion. ❦
>
> ——Sigmund Freud,
> *letter to Arnold Zweig,*
> [April 2, 1937]

venerable quest to demonstrate that someone—anyone but "the Man from Stratford"—wrote the plays and poems of William Shakespeare.

The academy, as everyone knows, is shot to pieces. Even at Yale, I am surrounded by courses in gender and power, transsexuality and queer theory, multiculturalism, and all the other splendors that now displace Chaucer, Milton, Shakespeare, and Dickens. But the worst may well be over. A decade ago, I would introduce my Graduate Shakespeare seminar (never my Undergraduate) by solemnly assuring the somewhat resentful students that all of Shakespeare, and not just the Sonnets, had been written by Lucy Negro, Elizabethan England's most celebrated East Indian, whom Anthony Burgess, in his splendid fiction *Nothing Like the Sun*, had identified as the Dark Lady of the Sonnets and thus Shakespeare's peerless erotic catastrophe, resulting in heartbreak, venereal disease, and relatively early demise. Stone-faced (as best I could), I assured my graduate students that all their anxieties were to be set aside, since the lurid and brilliant Lucy Negro actually had composed the plays and Sonnets. Thus they could abandon their political reservations and read "Shakespeare" with assured correctness, since Lucy Negro was, by definition, multicultural, feminist, and post-colonial. And also, I told them, we could set aside the covens of Oxfordians, Marlovians, and Baconians in the name of the Dark Lady Negro.

Since I long ago joined Samuel Butler, who had proclaimed that the *Odyssey* was written by a woman, when I suggested in *The Book of J* that the Yahwist was a human female, I felt it would have been redundant had I introduced Lucy Negro into my Shakespeare book as the creator of Falstaff, Hamlet, Rosalind, Iago, Cleopatra, and the other glories of our language. And I propose to say no more about Lucy Negro here, except that she far outshines Oxford as a rival claimant since she at least slept with Shakespeare! Instead I will devote the remainder of this brief meditation to a surmise as to why the Oxfordians, Marlovians, and Baconians cannot cease to try to badger the rest of us.

The sorrows of the poet of the Sonnets are very complex, worthy of the best shorter poems in the language. In fact, we don't know for sure who this narcissistic young nobleman was, though Southampton will do, and there are many candidates for the Dark Lady, though none so exuberant as Lucy Negro. All we actually do know, quite certainly, is that the frequently unhappy (though remarkably restrained) poet indeed was Will Shakespeare. These are "his sugared sonnets among his private friends," doubtless a socially varied group extending all the way from lowlife actors (and Lucy Negro!) to the petulant Southampton, patron and (perhaps) sometime lover.

There is a shadow upon the Sonnets, as upon so many of the darker Shakespearean plays. We can call it scandal or public notoriety, something that transcends the poet's ruefulness at being a poor player upon the stage of the Globe. If the late *Elegy* for Will Peter is Shakespeare's (and I think it is, despite being a weak poem), then the shadow of scandal lingered for more than a decade. Yet the sense of self-wounding is only a small edge of the greater show of morality, which is the authentic darkness of the best Sonnets and of all Shakespeare from *Hamlet* onward. The Sonnets are poetry for kings and for enchanted readers, because few besides Shakespeare can fully portray that shadow, which in this greatest of all poets becomes "millions of strange shadows."

2

Astonishing as the Sonnets remain, they are of a different order than, say, *As You Like It*, *Henry IV* (1 and 2), *Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night*, *Measure for Measure*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, *The Winter's Tale*, and about a dozen other Shakespearean dramas. Most simply, the Sonnets do not invent (or, if you prefer, represent) human beings. Necessarily more lyric than dramatic, these poems have their clear affinities with Falstaff and

Hamlet and many more of Shakespeare's protagonists, and yet the affinities remain enigmatic. Unless you are a formalist or an historicist, Falstaff and Hamlet will compel you to see them as larger even than their plays, and as more "real" than actual personages, alive or dead. But the speaker of the Sonnets presents himself as a bewildering series of ambiguities. He is not and yet he is William Shakespeare the playmaker, and his two loves of comfort and despair, a young nobleman and a dark woman, never have the substance or the persuasive force of Anthony and Cleopatra, and of their peers in the greater plays. Shakespearean characters are adventures in consciousness; even the speaker of the Sonnets evades that immensity. Of the inwardness of the fair young man and of the dark lady, we are given only intimations.

We cannot recover either the circumstances of the personal motives (if any) of the Sonnets. *Love's Labour's Lost*, uniquely among the plays, shares the language of the Sonnets. Shakespeare's apparent dilemma in the Sonnets, rejection by beloved social superior, seems analogous to Falstaff's predicament in the *Henry IV* plays, but the speaker of the Sonnets has little of Sir John Falstaff's vitality, wiliness, and aplomb. Some of the Sonnets turn violently aside from life's lusts and ambitions, but these revulsions are rendered only rarely in Hamlet's idiom. It is dangerous to seek illuminations for the plays in the Sonnets, though sometimes you can work back from the dramatic to the lyric Shakespeare. The poetic achievement of the Sonnets has just enough of the playwright's uncanny power to show that we confront the same writer, but the awesome cognitive originality and psychological persuasiveness of the major dramas are subdued in all but a few of the sequences.

From at least *Measure for Measure* through *Othello*, and on through *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, sexuality is represented primarily as a torment—sometimes comic, more often not. As an archaic Bardolator, I am not inclined to separate this dramatic version of human reality from the playwright himself. Formalist and historicist critics frequently give me the impression that they might be more at home with Flaubert than with Shakespeare. The high erotic rancidity of *Troilus and Cressida*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, and *Timon of Athens* is too consistently ferocious to be dramatic artifice alone, at least in my experience as a critical reader. The bed trick, harlotry, and venereal infection move very near the center of Shakespeare's vision of sexuality.

3

Those who devote themselves to the hapless suggestion that Shakespeare did not write Shakespeare are secret, perhaps unknowing resenters of his cognitive and imaginative power. The greatest of all converts to the Oxford lunacy was Dr. Sigmund Freud, who could not acknowledge that his masterly forerunner had been a rather ordinary young man out of Stratford-upon-Avon. The Earl of Oxford, dead before Shakespeare's last twelve dramas had even been composed, left behind some commonplace lyrics, not worthy of rereading. Those who resent Shakespeare always will be with us; our only response should be to return to the plays and the Sonnets.

V. DEATH

* *

i.
Curst Be He Yt Moves My Bones

By Richard F. Whalen

A deafening silence marked the death of Will Shakspere, allegedly the famous playwright, on April 23, 1616, in Stratford-upon-Avon. No eulogies have been found, though poets often wrote eulogies for the deceased. His son-in-law, an educated doctor who left a diary, makes no mention of him at all, not even his passing. No contemporary letters or other writings noted his death; no one seems to have thought him anyone of importance.

No gravestone with his name marked his burial place. A grave in Holy Trinity Church in Stratford is identified as his because his wife and a daughter—with names on their stones—were later buried on each side of an unnamed stone. The stone carries only four lines of doggerel cursing anyone who digs up the grave. Why his family and friends would bury a prominent citizen in such obscurity is not known, especially if he were also the popular poet and playwright. He did get a monument later, but it, too, argues against him being the author. The monument on the wall of the church was sketched eighteen years after his death by

William Dugdale, a prolific, well-regarded author of illustrated histories. His rough sketch, the first eyewitness record of the monument, shows a half-length bust of a man with a down-turned mustache, arms akimbo, and grasping a sack of grain or wool; there is no sign of pen, paper, or writing surface. Will Shakspere was a grain dealer.

A century later the monument was refurbished, and today the bust depicts a man with an upturned mustache, goatee, and, befitting a writer, pen and paper. The sack has become a pillow, which oddly enough serves as a writing surface.

Dugdale's sketch was preliminary to an engraving for his book, *Antiquities of Warwickshire* (1656). His engraver followed it quite faithfully, depicting the same man grasping a sack. Dugdale accepted the engraving as an accurate depiction of the monument he saw and sketched. The engraving remained unchanged even into a second, revised and corrected edition of Dugdale's book.

Unsurprisingly, conventional biographies of Shakespeare almost never show or discuss the early engraving of the monument. The late Professor S. Schoenbaum, the dean of Shakespeare biographers, did recognize the problem, and he fretted that the engraving is "perplexing rather than helpful, for we reconcile it with difficulty" with today's monument. He concluded, incredibly, that either Dugdale or the engraver got it wrong.

The monument's inscription is also a problem for Stratfordians because it fails to identify him as the great poet and dramatist of London. Two lines of Latin mention Nestor and Socrates, neither of whom were writers, and Virgil, when Ovid—whom everyone agrees had the greatest influence on Shakespeare—would have been more appropriate. Six lines in English ask the passerby to read "if thou canst"—an almost insulting reproach—whom death had placed within the monument. But the body is not within the monument. The deceased is named simply "Shakspeare," and no first name is given to distinguish him from all the other Shaksperes (in whatever spelling) in Warwickshire. The epitaph concludes, "Since all that he hath writ leaves living art, but page, to serve his wit." This obscure line in a most enigmatic epitaph is the only mention of writing, and nowhere is the deceased described as a popular poet, playwright, or theater personage. Whoever commissioned the bust and whoever wrote the epitaph pointedly avoided identifying Will Shakspere of Stratford as the author of Shakespeare's works.

Yet another problem is Will Shakspere's last will and testament, a detailed, three-page document that is totally devoid of anything literary; it is the will of a businessman. In this utterly pedestrian document, Will disposes of a silver bowl, a silver plate, his sword, his clothes, and his second-best bed. There is no mention of any books, a surprising omission if he was the learned poet, or any manuscripts. The three signatures on the will's pages are in a crabbed handwriting that is probably not his, according to the will's custodian in London. Nothing in the will connects Will Shakspere to the theater except an interlineation, a late addition in another hand that leaves small sums for commemorative rings to three men, his "fellows" in their acting company. Seven years later two of them signed the dedication and a promotional letter to readers in the First Folio edition of Shakespeare's plays, yet it is almost certain that they did not write these documents. Stratfordian scholars see the hand of Ben Jonson in the texts.

The proponents of the traditional view attempt to use the prefaces of the First Folio to connect the Stratford man to the works of Shakespeare—and this is, in fact, their only plausible evidence—but the links are ambiguous, almost coy. Avon comes first. Ben Jonson alludes to Shakespeare as the "Sweet Swan of Avon" in his poem extolling him as "the Soule of the Age . . . the wonder of our stage." Three pages later Leonard Digges refers to "thy Stratford Moniment."* Only if the separate allusions are joined does Stratford-upon-Avon emerge. That's the closest the First Folio comes to biography. It provides no birth or death dates, nor anything about the author's life, except to recognize him as a member of an acting company.

Oxfordians suggest an explanation for the two allusions. If the 17th Earl of Oxford was the author, Jonson could have been alluding to the estate Oxford once owned on the Avon River, not far from Stratford. Digges might have been alluding to the Stratford suburb of London, which would have been more familiar to Londoners than a small town on the Avon a four-day journey away. As it happens, Oxford lived his final years on a country estate just outside the London suburb, and Digges's "moni-

** Stratfordians point out that Digges's stepfather was probably Thomas Russell, the overseer of Shakspere's will. In* The Genius of Shakespeare, *Jonathan Bate makes much of a note Digges inscribed in a 1613 edition of Lope de Vega's poems comparing the Spanish poet to "our Will Shakespeare," but this reference adds nothing to the debate. In fact, Digges, who was born in London and educated at Oxford, seems closer to Oxford's circle. In 1622, when the First Folio was being prepared, he dedicated a book to Oxford's son-in-law, the Earl of Montgomery, and the Earl's brother.*

nent," a word that meant a narration as well as a memorial, could denote Oxford's writings here. These readings may seem bizarre, but writers at that time were notorious for ambiguity and indirection. Jonson and Digges could defend either reading of "Avon" and "Stratford."

There is no ambiguity, however, in the telling fact that the Folio was dedicated to the earls of Pembroke and Montgomery, who undoubtedly financed and engineered its publication. Montgomery was married to Susan Vere, Oxford's daughter, and his brother, Pembroke, was lord chamberlain, the court official who controlled the performance and publication of plays. Pembroke was also a patron of Jonson's, and he arranged for an increase in Jonson's pension just as the printers were beginning work on the Folio.

The evidence piles up, any single piece of which might be dismissed as a coincidence, and the cumulative effect argues powerfully that the man from Stratford was not the author. Everything points to Oxford.

When Oxford died in 1604 there was an abrupt interruption in "first editions" of Shakespeare's plays. During the seven years before his death, publishers had issued twelve new plays, eight of which were the first to carry Shakespeare's byline; five were issued in 1600 alone. This outpouring of new plays stopped when Oxford died, and only four new plays appeared over the next twenty years. Finally, eighteen new plays, half the dramatic canon, appeared in the Folio in 1623. Stratfordians have no explanation for this abrupt halt in publication, which makes perfect sense if Oxford was the author. The Stratford man, by the way, was active in his various businesses until 1616.

Oxford's death in 1604 has also been used against him. Stratfordian scholars argue that he died too soon, claiming that a dozen plays were written after 1604, some in collaboration with John Fletcher. Dead men, they intone dramatically, don't write plays. Yet there is no historical evidence to support the Stratfordian chronology: no diaries, no manuscripts, no letters. Fletcher could have "collaborated" by completing a play left incomplete at the author's death. There is no evidence that he and Shakespeare worked together. Most responsible scholars admit deep uncertainty about the dates of composition, and Professor Sylvan Barnet, editor of the Signet edition of the plays, says that the exact dates of most of the works are "highly uncertain." E. K. Chambers, Shakespeare scholar and play chronologer, says that there is "much conjecture" dating the plays to particular years and admits fitting the plays "into the time allowed by the span of Shakespeare's dramatic career."

Stratfordians most often cite *The Tempest* as evidence against Oxford's authorship. The play opens with a ship being battered by a storm near an island, a detail, it is argued, that depends on descriptions of a shipwreck near the island of Bermuda in 1609 written by Sylvester Jourdain, who published a pamphlet in 1610, and William Strachey, who dated a letter concerning the event to an unnamed lady the same year. Composition of *The Tempest* is thus dated 1611. It's a neat sequence of years. But even if Shakespeare needed to read descriptions of a storm at sea, he need not have waited until 1610 for Jourdain and Strachey to provide them. There were many such descriptions before Oxford died, among them accounts of a shipwreck at Bermuda by Sir Walter Raleigh in 1591, a storm at the start of Virgil's *Aeneid*, St. Paul's wreck at Malta, and even one in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. All provided storm details very similar to those in *The Tempest*; all were in print long before Oxford died. As is always the case with Stratfordian attempts to prove that the plays contain references to post-1604 events, this piece of chronological evidence collapses under scrutiny.

Perhaps the simplest and most appealing Stratfordian argument is that a vast, implausible conspiracy would have been required to hide Oxford's authorship. But there is no need to postulate such a conspiracy. Shakespeare's true identity was probably an open secret; there would have been little reason to "reveal" Oxford as the author after his death. To be sure, many questions remain to be answered, though far fewer than plague the traditional view. Archives undoubtedly hold more information about Oxford, but it is unlikely that much more will be found about the Stratford man. For centuries scholars have searched in vain for evidence that would prove his authorship; research on Oxford has really only just begun.

Today we are left with a choice. Which man is the more likely author? The Stratford merchant and theater investor, a simple man of mundane inconsequence? Or the recognized poet, patron of acting companies, and playwright, known at the time to be writing under a pseudonym; a complex, mercurial nobleman in Queen Elizabeth's court whose life is mirrored in Shakespeare's works; a man with direct personal links to the publishers of the First Folio? The choice seems obvious.

ii.
Golden Lads and Chimney-Sweepers

By Jonathan Bate

There are few sights more moving than that of a dying man remembering his friends. Some time early in 1616, a well-to-do gentleman of Stratford-upon-Avon dictated his will. It follows the legal formula of the time and mostly concerns the disposition of real estate ("And all my barnes stables Orchardes gardens landes tenementes & hereditamentes . . ."). The beneficiaries are mainly family members, but token gifts are bestowed upon other local gentlemen—Thomas Russel Esquire, one of the overseers of the will, is given five pounds, and Hamlet Sadler, an especially long-standing friend, is left twenty-six shillings and eight pence for a mourning ring.

But tucked away in the middle of the will is evidence of another life. As well as the Stratford properties, there is a house in the London theater district of Blackfriars. And among those given money for memorial rings are "my fellows John Hemynges Richard Burbage & Henry Cundell." They were fellows in more than one sense: friends, but also fellow-actors and fellow-shareholders in a highly successful business venture dating back over twenty years. The business was a theater company, established on a joint-stock basis in 1594 as the Lord Chamberlain's Men and upgraded to the title of King's Men by courtesy of James I on his accession to the English throne in 1603. The Stratford gentleman was, of course, Master William Shakespeare. Soon after dictating the will, he died and was buried in the parish church. A monument was erected, commemorating him as a national writer, not a local businessman: it shows him holding a pen,* and it is inscribed with a text that refers to the "living art" of his writing and compares him to the greatest poet and the greatest thinker of antiquity, Virgil and Socrates.

There is no reference in Will's will to the manuscripts of the plays that had made him both rich and famous. This is because he did not own them: they belonged to the King's Men. Such had been the deal throughout his working life—a bit-part actor himself, his principal duty was to furnish his fellows with two or three new scripts each season, perhaps a comedy, a tragedy, and a history play. It was left to Burbage, the company's leading player, and Heminges and Condell, its sharpest businessmen, to decide what to do with the work. Their goal was to keep as much as possible in manuscript as the exclusive property of the theater company, because once a play was disseminated in print, control of it would be lost. The demand in the literary marketplace for Shakespeare's writing was such that, by one means or another, about half his plays had already found their way to the press, sometimes in the form of what Heminges and Condell called "stolen and surreptitious copies." For a while, at least, it seemed best to keep the written text of the other works out of the public domain.

But in 1619 a publisher named Thomas Pavier, who had already laid his hands on a number of the plays, appeared to be moving toward the production of what would advertise itself as a complete Shakespeare. Burbage died that year, and so it was left to Heminges and Condell to act. They set about blocking Pavier's plans and launching their own edition. It was a formidable task to gather together all the texts and transform them from working theater scripts to coherently and consistently presented printed works that would stand the test of time. Even once the copy was prepared, it would still take a long time to print the book—each individual letter of type had to be set on the press by hand. Heminges and Condell had thirty-five plays in their possession. At a late stage in the process, they made room for a thirty-sixth, *Troilus and Cressida*. They decided to exclude *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Cardenio*, Shakespeare's final two plays, written in collaboration with John Fletcher, his successor as the King's Men's in-house dramatist. Presumably they felt that to have included them in Shakespeare's works would have been a slight to Fletcher. *The Two Noble Kinsmen* was eventually included in the collected plays of "Beaumont and Fletcher." *The History of Cardenio by Mr. Fletcher & Shakespeare* was later registered for publication but is now lost. There is, however, ample evidence that it was a collaboration between the

* Anti-Stratfordians make much of an engraving of the monument published in 1656 in The Antiquities of Warwickshire. They say that it shows Shakespeare holding a woolsack, not pen and paper resting on a cushion. But this is a mistaken impression, deriving from the engraver's alteration of Sir William Dugdale's drawing. A recent re-examination of the original drawing reveals that Dugdale [illegible] Furthermore, a much more reliable early drawing of the monument, by George Vertue, clearly shows the pen and paper.

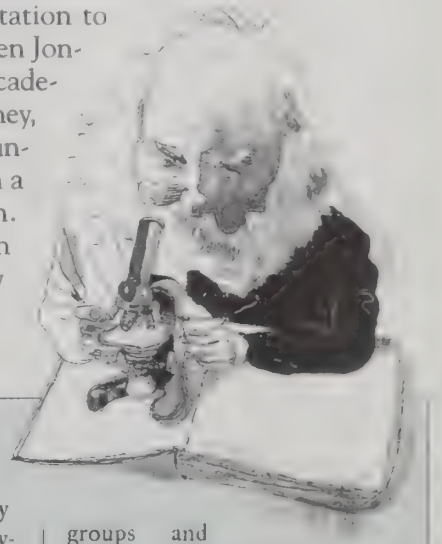
wo dramatists, undertaken shortly after the ublication in 1612 of the English translation f Cervantes's *Don Quixote*. Oxfordians are trangely silent as to how Edward de Vere co-vrote a play with John Fletcher some eight ears after his own death.

By 1623 the great book was finally ready. It vas printed on large paper in double-olumned "folio" format. A consortium of ublishers, headed by William and Isaac aggard, had joined together in the publica-ion of *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to he True Originall Copies*. That latter phrase proclaims the accuracy of these texts, in con-rast to the unauthorized earlier editions of ndividual plays.

The title page of the 1623 Folio (known as the "First Folio," to distinguish it from the reprints of 1632, 1663, and 1685) was adorned with Martin Droeshout's famous woodcut of the dramatist, his forehead domed like the Globe, as if to gesture toward the name of his theater and the universality of his genius. Opposite the "cut" is a brief poem by Shakespeare's friend and fellow dramatist Ben Jonson, attesting to the authenticity of the image. Heminges and Condell contributed both their address to the reader and a dedicatory epistle to the Pembroke brothers, two noble earls who had assisted them in the blocking of the Pavier edition. Each of these documents explicitly states that William Shakespeare, their colleague in the King's Men, was author of the plays. Special praise is given to his extraordinary verbal facility, to what we would now call his innate genius: "His mind and hand went together: And what he thought, he uttered with that easinesse, that wee have scarce received from him a blot in his papers."

The preliminary pages of the First Folio also include four commendatory poems. One of these, by a poet identified only by the initials "I.M.," makes the assumption—which was made by everyone in the period—that "Master William Shake-speare"* was both an actor and the author of the works. Oxfordians reply that a universal assumption is not necessarily a truth. Could "I.M." and others have simply not been in the know? Could it have been that Master William was just the front man, and that the plays were really written by Earl Edward? In response to such questions, the Stratfordian will point to the identity of the authors of two of the other dedicatory poems. For they knew what they were talking about.

Pride of place in the Folio's front matter is given to Ben Jonson's magnificent tribute, "To the memory of my beloved, the Author Mr. William Shakespeare: and what he hath left us." This great poem has long been recognized as the chief stumbling block in the way of the Oxfordian case. William Shakespeare of Stratford, an actor who lacked a university education, and Ben Jonson of London, an actor (and sometime bricklayer) who lacked a university education, were intimate friends and friendly rivals. They were swiftly acknowledged as the nation's two greatest living dramatists. The best response to skeptics who doubt that the Stratford man could have written his plays on the foundation of nothing more than a grammar-school education is an invitation to read the complete plays of Ben Jonson. They are vastly more academic than Shakespeare's, yet they, too, were written on the foundation of nothing more than a grammar-school education. The thing is, Elizabethan grammar schools were very good. They put our high schools to deep shame.



Superb and inimitable as all is, it is mostly an objective and physiological kind of power and beauty the soul finds in Shakspere—a style supremely grand of the sort, but in my opinion stopping short of the grandest sort, at any rate for fulfilling and satisfying modern and scientific and democratic American purposes. Think, not of growths as forests primeval, or Yellowstone geysers, or Colorado ravines, but of costly marble palaces, and palace rooms, and the noblest fixings and furniture, and noble owners and occupants to correspond—think of carefully built gardens from the beautiful but sophisticated gardening art at its best, with walks and bowers and artificial lakes, and appropriate statue-groups and the finest cultivated roses and lilies and japonicas in plenty—and you have the tally of Shakspere. The low characters, mechanics, even the loyal henchmen—all in themselves nothing—serve as capital foils to the aristocracy. The comedies [exquisite as they certainly are] bringing in admirably portray'd common characters, have the unmistakable hue of plays, portraits, made for the divertisement only of the élite of the castle, and from its point of view. The comedies are altogether non-acceptable to America and Democracy. ●

—Walt Whitman,
"A Thought on Shakspere"
[1889]

* *Several occurrences of the dramatist's name in the preliminary matter to the First Folio are hyphenated, but most are not. The presence or absence of a hyphen is quite arbitrary—a printer's vagary, not the momentous matter supposed by Oxfordians.*

Shakespeare acted in Jonson's plays. He was godfather to one of Jonson's children. Jonson described Shakespeare's writing habits in his private notebook and wrote that "I loved the man, and do honour his memory (on this side idolatry) as much as any. He was indeed honest, and of an open, and free nature . . ." In the First Folio poem to the memory of his beloved friend, Jonson praised Shakespeare's plays to the skies and referred to him as the "Sweet Swan of Avon." In the Through-the-Looking-Glass world of the Oxfordians, this is not a reference to Stratford-upon-Avon! The supporters of Edward de Vere ask us to suppose that the whole body of preliminary matter in the Folio was an elaborate hoax to cover up the true identity of the author of the plays. Setting aside the question of why there would be any need for a cover-up so long after de Vere's death, why on earth would *Jonson* have continued to perpetrate such a hoax in his private notebook?

Heminges and Condell are remembered with affection in the will of the Stratford man, and they were editors of the First Folio. Jonson knew the dramatist intimately in the context of the London theater world but also linked him to the Avon. This ought to be evidence enough to lay all anti-Stratfordian claims to rest. But still another contributor to the Folio establishes an equally strong link that has, surprisingly, been overlooked by previous contributors to the authorship debate. Opposite the "Catalogue of the severall Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies contained in this Volume" there is a poem by Leonard Digges entitled "To the Memorie of the deceased Authour Maister W. Shakespeare." Digges's verses refer both to the stone of the author's tomb and to "thy *Stratford* Moniment." Digges, then, knew that "the deceased Authour" lay beneath a stone in the aisle of Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon, and that there was a monument to him and his work on the adjacent wall.

He knew this because he was brought up in a village just outside Stratford. His stepfather was none other than Thomas Russell, overseer of Shakespeare's will and legatee of his ceremonial sword. Here, then, is another decisive, hitherto insufficiently recognized, link between the Stratford man and the plays. Digges was proud of his acquaintance with the great writer from his own locality. On a visit to Spain, he wrote a memorandum to himself, noting that Lope de Vega was admired as both a poet and a dramatist as "our Will Shakespeare" was admired back in England for both his plays and his sonnets. As with Jonson's private notebook, a personal note of this kind is a very special sort of evidence.

The Oxfordian account of the First Folio as a gigantic put-up job presupposes a conspiracy extending not only through Heminges, Condell, Jonson, and the rest of the London theater world but also to Digges, Russell, and the family and friends who erected the Stratford monument. Equally conspiratorial is the Oxfordian approach to the plays themselves. *Hamlet* is approached via fantastically cryptic supposed parallels between Lord Burghley and the character of Polonius. More obvious associations do not appeal to the Oxfordians' cloak-and-dagger mentality: plain old intuition inclines me to the view that the dramatist who anglicized the name of the historical Amleth Prince of Denmark was a certain Stratford gentleman who named his own son after his old friend Hamlet Sadler. "Hamlet" was a distinctive Warwickshire name. In December 1579, a Katherine Hamlett drowned in the Avon at Tiddington, a village just outside Stratford. At the inquest, which was held in Stratford, there was some debate as to whether she had committed suicide, but it was concluded that she had died by accident and would therefore be entitled to Christian burial. Sounds to me like the origin of Ophelia's end.

Read the First Folio from cover to cover and you will be filled with wonder at the sheer range and variety of Shakespeare's style and vocabulary. The courtly language may make you think he must have been a courtier. But then the country language will make you think he must have been a countryman. In establishing the author's identity, what you need to look for are the quirky things. Courtly language may be learned by imitation. It is the small, seemingly inconsequential details that constitute the unique fingerprint. The plays were written by someone with an intimate knowledge of the technical terminology of leather manufacture. Sounds to me like the son of a glover, not the son of a lord. In one of his loveliest songs the dramatist writes, "Golden lads and girls all must,/As chimney-sweepers, come to dust." In Warwickshire vernacular dialect, a dandelion is a "golden lad" when in flower, a "chimney-sweeper" when ready to be blown to the wind. This does not feel like a lord's memory. It belongs to a local country boy in a Warwickshire field. And it is because of such lovely little things as this that my money and my reputation will always be staked firmly on the friend of Jonson and Digges, "our Will," the Stratford lad. There is too little room for doubt.

LISTENING FOR SILENCE

Notes on the aural life

By Mark Slouka

Music, Claude Debussy once famously remarked, is the stuff between the notes, an observation that resonates, pardon the pun, from the flawless spacing of a Billie Holiday tune to the deletions—whether generous or cruel—in our daily lives. Essentially neuter, neither balm nor curse, silence, like light or love, requires a medium to give it meaning, takes on the color of its host, adapts easily to our fears and needs. Quite apart from whether we seek or shun it, silence orchestrates the music of our days.

I'm well aware, of course, that one man's music is another man's noise, that the primary differences between a cork-lined room and solitary confinement are the lock on the door and the sensibility of the inmate. I wish not to define silence but to inquire about its absence, and I ask the question not to restate the obvious—that silence, in its way, is fundamental to life, the emotional equivalent of carbon—but because everywhere I turn I see a culture willing to deny that essential truth. In my idle moments I picture a god from my son's book of myths (with an Olympian straw and sucked-in cheeks) drawing the silence out of the land, and if the conceit is fanciful, the effect, sadly, is not: as silence disappears, the world draws tighter, borders collapse, the public and the private bleed and intermix. Victim to the centripetal pull, the imagination crackles with the static of outside frequencies, while somewhere in the soul—listen!—a cell phone is chirping. Answer it quickly, before someone else does.

At the close of the millennium, a new Tower of Babel, monolingual (despite the superficial mixture of tongues), homogeneous (because almost invariably pitched in the vernacular of the marketplace), casts its shadow over the land. Ubiquitous, damn-near inescapable, it is rearranging the way we live, forcing crucial adjustments in our behavior, straining our capacity for adaptation. If it continues to grow, as I believe it will, fu-

Mark Slouka is the author of Lost Lake, *a collection of stories published last year by Knopf. His most recent piece in* Harper's Magazine, *"Hitler's Couch," appeared in the April 1998 issue.*

LOCKED IN A GRID OF SOUND, LASHED BY INFINITE CHANNELS, WE ARE ALONE IN OUR BABBLE, IMPOVERISHED BY OUR COMMUNICATIONS

ture generations may one day distinguish our age not for its discovery of Elsewhere, as E. B. White called the world beyond the television screen, but for its colonization of silence.

Ensnared in webs of sound, those of us living in the industrialized West today must pick our way through a discordant, infinite-channeled auditory landscape. Like a radio stuck on permanent scan, the culture lashes us with skittering bits and bytes, each dragging its piece of historical or emotional context: a commercial overheard in traffic, a falsely urgent weather report, a burst of canned laughter, half a refrain. The pager interrupts lectures, sermons, second acts, and funerals. Everywhere a new song begins before the last one ends, as though to guard us against even the potential of silence. Each place we turn, a new world—synthetic, fragmented, often as not jacked into the increasingly complex grid that makes up the global communications network—encroaches on the old world of direct experience, of authentic, unadorned events with their particular, unadorned sounds.

Although a great deal has been said about our increasingly visual age, the changes to our aural landscape have gone relatively unremarked. The image has grown so voracious that any child asked to sum up the century will instantly visualize Einstein's hair and Hitler's mustache, mushroom clouds and moon landing; this despite the fact that each of these visual moments has its aural correlative, from the blast over Hiroshima to the high-pitched staccato ravings of the Führer, to Neil Armstrong's static-ridden "giant leap for mankind."

But make no mistake: sound will have its dominion. The aural universe, though subtler than the one that imprints itself on our retina, is more invasive, less easily blocked. It mocks our sanctuaries as light never can. If my neighbor decides to wash his car in front of my study window, as he does often, I can block out the uninspiring sight of his pimpled posterior by drawing the shades; to block out his stereo, I must kill noise with noise. We hear in our sleep. There is no aural equivalent for the eyelid. In our day, when the phone can ring, quite literally, anywhere on the planet, this is not necessarily good news.

I have nothing against my aural canal. I adore music (though I make it badly). I have nothing against a good party, the roar of the crowd. But I make a distinction between nourishment and gluttony: the first is a necessity, even a pleasure; the second, a symptom. Of what? In a word, fear. One of the unanticipated side effects of connectedness. Perhaps because it's never enough, or because, having immersed ourselves in the age of mediation (as Bill Gates refers to it), accustomed ourselves to its ways and means, we sense our dependency. Or because, finally, like isolated apartment dwellers running the TV for company, we sense a deeper isolation beneath the babble of voices, the poverty of our communications. So, adaptable to a fault, we embrace this brave new cacophony, attuned, like apprentice ornithologists, to the distinguishing calls of a mechanical phylum. Capable of differentiating between the cheeps and chimes of the cell phones, portable phones, baby monitors, pagers, scanners, personal digital assistants, laptop computers, car alarms, and so on that fill our lives, we've grown adept, at the same time, at blocking them out with sounds of our own, at forcing a privacy where none exists.

At the supermarket, a middle-aged man in a well-cut suit is calling someone a bitch on the phone. Unable to get to the ricotta cheese, I wait, vaguely uncomfortable, feeling as though I'm eavesdropping. At the gym, the beeps of computerized treadmills clash with the phones at the front desk, the announcements of upcoming discounts, the disco version of Gordon Lightfoot's "If You Could Read My Mind." A number of individuals in Walkman earphones, unaware that they've begun to sing, bellow and moan like the deaf.

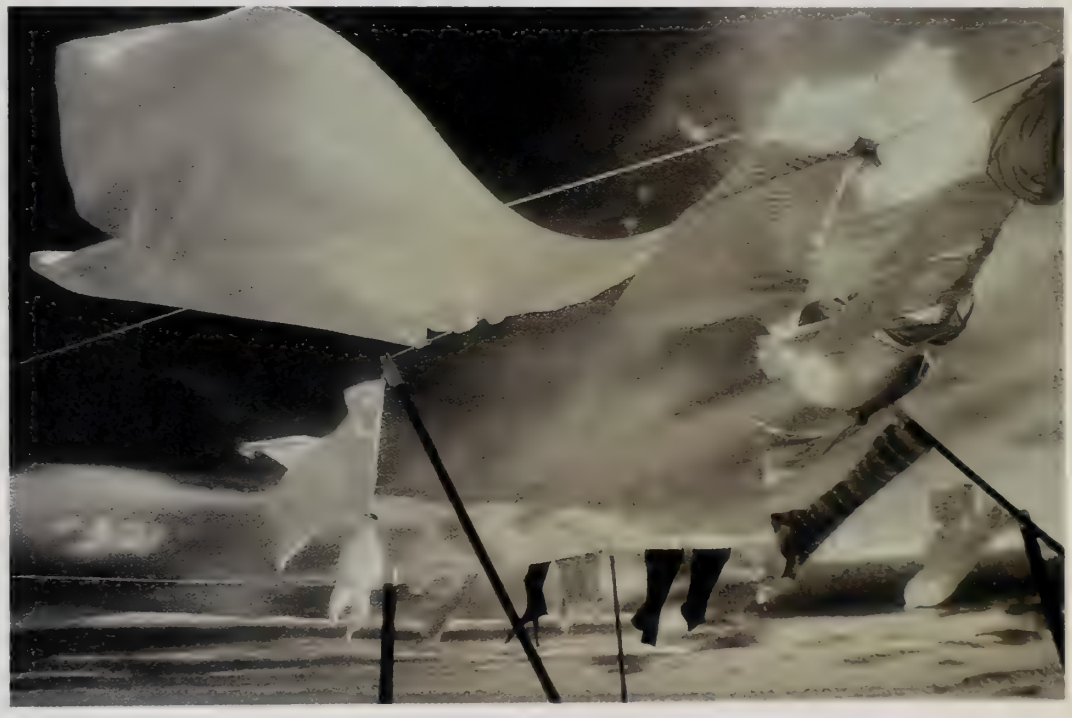
"I love a wide margin to my life," Thoreau remarked, quaintly, referring to the space—the silence—requisite for contemplation, or, more quaintly, the forming of a self. A century and a half later, aural text covers the psy-

hic page, spills over; the margin is gone. Walking to work, we pass over mbling pipes and humming cables, beneath airplane flight corridors and tellite broadcasts, through radio and television transmissions whose sounds, reconstituted from binary code, mix and mingle, overlap and clash, and everywhere drifts the aural refuse of our age.

Thus may the stuff between the discordant notes of our lives re-uire—and I'm not unaware of the irony here—a few words in its defense. egin anywhere. The cottage in which I spend my summers is silent yet ll of sound: the rainy hush of wind in the oaks, the scrabble of a hickory ut rolling down the roof, the slurp of the dog in the next room, inter-minably licking himself . . . I've never known perfect silence. I hope to void making its acquaintance for some time to come, yet I court it daily.

My ambivalence toward silence is natural enough: the grave, the cythe, the frozen clock, all the piled symbols of death, reinforce an essen-ial truth, a primal fear: beneath the sloping hood, death is voiceless. Si-ence spits us out and engulfs us again, one and all, and all the noisemak-rs on Bourbon Street, all the clattering figurines in Cuer-navaca can't undo the un-pleasant fact that *el día*, prop-erly understood, always ends n *la muerte*, that quiet, like a pair of great parentheses around a dependent clause, closes off our days. Sorry.

But if it's true that all sym-phonies end in silence, it's equally true that they begin there as well. Silence, after all, both buries and births us, and just as life without the counterweight of mortality would mean nothing, so si-lence alone, by offering itself as the eternal Other, makes our music possible. The image of Beethoven composing against the growing void, like all clichés, illuminates a com-mon truth: fear forces our hand, inspires us, makes visible the things we love.



JUST AS LIFE WITHOUT DEATH WOULD MEAN NOTHING, SO SILENCE, BY OFFERING ITSELF AS THE ETERNAL OTHER, MAKES OUR MUSIC POSSIBLE

But wait. Does this mean that all is well? That the pendulum swings, the chorus turns in stately strophe and antistrophe, the buds of May rou-tinely answer winter's dark aphelion? Not quite. We are right to be afraid of silence, to resist that sucking vacuum—however much we depend on it—to claw and scratch against oblivion. The battle is in deadly earnest. And therein lies the joke. Resistance is one thing, victory another.

Left partially deaf by a childhood inflammation of the mastoid bones, Thomas Edison throughout his life embraced the world of silence, reveled in its space, allowed it to empower him; as much as any man, perhaps, he recognized silence as the territory of inspiration and cultivated its gifts. Deafness, his biographers agree, acted like an auditory veil, separating him from the world's distractions, allowing him to attend to what he called his business: thinking.

I mention these facts, however, not for the small and obvious irony—that a man so indebted to silence should do more than any other to fill the world with noise—but to set the context for a scene I find strangely compelling. In June 1911, hard at work on what would eventually become

Photograph by Russell Hart / Photoni

WHO COULD DENY THAT SILENCE, THOUGH BOTH THE MEANS AND THE END OF TOTALITARIAN REPRESSION, IS ALSO ITS NATURAL ENEMY?

the disk phonograph, Edison hired a pianist to play for him (as loudly a possible) the world's entire repertoire of waltzes. And there, in the salo at Glenmont, either out of frustration at not being able to hear the music to his satisfaction or, as I'd like to believe, out of sudden desperate love fo the thing he'd missed (as charged as any of love's first fumblings), th sixty-four-year-old Edison got on his hands and knees and bit into th piano's wood, the better to hear its vibrations. Will Edison's fate be ou own? Afloat in the river of sound loosed upon the world b Edison's inventions, having drunk from it until our ear ring, we now risk a similar thirst.

Tacked to the wall above my desk, staring out from a page tor from the back of *The New York Times Magazine*, are the faces of seventee men and women whose portraits were taken by KGB photographers mor than half a century ago, then filed, along with hundreds of thousands lik them, in the top-secret dossiers of Stalin's secret police. Over the years I've come to know the faces in these photographs nearly as well as I know those of the living. I study them often—th woman at the left whose graying hair has begun to loosen, the beautiful young man at the right, the fading lieutenant at the bot tom corner whose cheeks, I suspect, had the same roughness and warmth as my fa ther's—because each and every one of them, within hours of having his or her pic ture taken, was driven to a forest south of Moscow and executed; because all, or nearly all, knew their fate at the time their pictures were taken; and because, finally, having inherited a good dose of Slavic morbidity (and sentimentalism), I couldn't bear to compound the silence of all of those lives unlived by returning them—mothers and fathers, sons and lovers—to the oblivion of yet another archive, the purgatory of microfiche. On my wall, in some small measure, they are not forgotten; they have a voice.



Today, as the panopticon reveals to us, as never before, the agony of our species, the lesson is repeated daily. We read it in the skulls of Srebrenica, growing out of the soil, in the open mouths of the dead from Guatemala to the Thai-Cambodian border, whose characteristic posture—head back, neck arched—seems almost a universal language: the harvest of dictatorship, properly understood, is not death, but silence. Mr. Pinochet's "los desaparecidos" (like Slobodan Milosevic's, or Heinrich Himmler's), are really "los callados" (the silenced), the snuffing of their voices only the last, most brutal expression of a system dependent on silence as a tool of repression. The enforced quiet of censorship and propaganda, of burning pages and jammed frequencies, is different from the gun to the temple only in degree, not in kind.

And yet who could deny that silence, though both the means and end of totalitarian repression, is also its natural enemy? That silence, the habitat of the imagination, not only allows us to grow the spore of identity but, multiplied a millionfold, creates the rich loam in which a genuine democracy thrives. In the silence of our own minds, in the quiet margins of the text, we are made different from one another as well as able to understand others' differences from us.

In the famous John Cage composition *4'33"*, the pianist walks onstage, bows, flips the tail of his tuxedo, and seats himself at the piano.

Photograph by Nick Vaccaro / Photonica

Taking a stopwatch out of his vest pocket, he presses the start button, hen stares at the keys for precisely four minutes and thirty-three seconds. When the time is up, he closes the piano and leaves the stage.

Nearly half a century after it was first performed, *4'33"* rightly strikes us s hackneyed and worn, a postmodern cliché intent on blurring a line between art and non-art, order and disorder, formal structure and ran-lom influence) that has long since been erased. As simple theater, how-ver, it still has power. Cage's portrait of the artist frozen before his medi-m, intensely aware of his allotted time, unable to draw a shape out of the niverse of possibilities, carries a certain allegorical charge, because we ecognize in its symbolism—so apparently childlike, so starkly Manichaean—a lesson worthy of Euripedes: art, whatever its medium, at-empts to force a wedge beneath the closed lid of the world, and fails; the rtist, in his or her minutes and seconds, attempts to say—to paint, to carve; in sum, to communicate—what ultimately cannot be communicat-ed. In the end, the wedge breaks; the lid stays shut. The artist looks at his watch and leaves the stage, his "success" measurable only by the relative depth of his failure. Too bad. There are worse things.

But if silence is the enemy of art, it is also its motivation and medium: the greatest works not only draw on silence for inspiration but use it, flirt with it, turn it, for a time, against itself. To succeed at all, in other words, art must partake of its opposite, suggest its own dissolution. Examples are legion: once attuned to the music of absence, the eloquence of omission or restraint, one hears it everywhere—in the sudden vertiginous stop of an Elizabeth Bishop poem; in the space between souls in an Edward Hopper painting; in Satchmo's mastery of the wide margins when singing "I'm Just a Lucky So and So." In the final paragraph of Frank O'Connor's small masterpiece "Guests of the Nation," an Irish soldier recalls looking over a patch of bog containing the graves of two British soldiers he's just been forced to execute, and observes, simply, "And anything that happened to me afterwards, I never felt the same about again." Such a black hole of a line, dense with rejected possibilities, merciless in its willingness to sacrifice everything for a quick stab at truth.

"Silence," wrote Melville, only five years before withdrawing from writing more or less for good, "is the only Voice of our God." The assertion, like its subject, cuts both ways, negating and affirming, implying both absence and presence, offering us a choice; it's a line that the Society of American Atheists could put on its letterhead and the Society of Friends could silently endorse while waiting to be moved by the spirit to speak. What makes the line particularly notable, however, is that it appears in *Pierre, or, the Ambiguities*, a novel that, perhaps more than any other in American literature, calls attention to its own silences, its fragility. Offering us a hero who is both American Christ and Holy Fool, martyr and murderer, writer and subject, Melville propels him toward his death with such abandon, with such a feel for what Thomas Mann would one day call "the voluptuousness of doom," that even his language gets caught in the vortex: in one particularly eerie passage we watch the same sentence, repeated four times, pruned of adverbs, conjunctions, dependent clauses, until it very nearly disappears before our eyes.

There's nothing safe about this brinksmanship, nothing of the deconstructionists' empty posturings. "He can neither believe," Hawthorne wrote, "nor be comfortable in his unbelief." Melville had simply allowed his doubts to bleed into his art. As they will. Having "pretty much made up his mind to be annihilated," he quite naturally took his writing with him.

Reading *Pierre* is an uncomfortable business, akin to watching an artist painstakingly put the finishing touches on his own epitaph. One naturally hopes for a slightly more redemptive vision, a vision that shifts the stress

"SILENCE," WROTE MELVILLE, ONLY FIVE YEARS BEFORE WITHDRAWING FROM WRITING, MORE OR LESS FOR GOOD, "IS THE ONLY VOICE OF OUR GOD"

DECIBELS AND DOLLARS ARE INVERSELY PROPORTIONAL; MONEY BUYS SPACE, AND SPACE BUYS SILENCE. LACKING MONEY, I'VE LIVED WITH NOISE



from the inevitability of doom and the triumph of silence to the creative energy these release to the living. Within Melville's own work, we don't have far to look. In *Moby-Dick*, the book he wrote just before *Pierre*, Melville also engineered an apocalypse yet managed to remain far enough away to avoid its pull, to save something, to offer us a metaphor that captures perfectly the tensions essential to our work and our lives. Something survives the *Pequod*'s sinking; though silence may reign over the waters, the vortex eventually slows. The coffin bursts to the surface. And on that coffin are the hieroglyphics of our art.

If one of the characteristics of capitalism is that it tends to shut down options, narrow the margins, then perhaps what we are seeing these days is one of the side effects of the so-called free market: most of the noises we hear are the noises of buying and selling. Even the communication between individuals has been harnessed to the technologies that make them possible: to be deprived of the fax machine, the cell phone, the TV, the pager, etc., is to be relegated to silence. Communication, having been narrowed into whatever can be squeezed into binary code, has been redefined by the marketplace into a commodity itself.

Yet capitalism, we know, always tries to feed the hungers it creates, to confect its own antidotes—so long as the price is right. As the vast silences of the republic are paved over by designer outlets and shopping malls, a kind of island ecosystem remains, self-conscious in its fragility, barely viable. The proof is detectable in any upscale travel magazine: there you will find exclusive spas advertising the promise of silence—no pagers, no cell phones, just the sounds of lake water lapping—as though silence were a rare Chardonnay or an exclusive bit of scenery, which, of course, is precisely what it now is.

That silence, like solitude, is now a commodity should not surprise us. Money buys space, and space buys silence; decibels and dollars are inversely proportional. Lacking money, I've lived with noise—with the sounds of fucking and feuding in the airshaft, MTV and Maury Povitch coming through the walls, in apartments with ceilings so thin I could hear the click of a clothes hanger placed on a rod or the lusty stream of an upstairs neighbor urinating after a long night out. I've accepted this, if not gracefully at least with a measure of resignation. The great advantage that money confers, I now realize, is not silence per se but the *option* of silence, the privilege of choosing one's own music, of shutting out the seventeen-year-old whose boombox nightly rattles my panes.

But if the ability to engineer one's own silence has been one of the age-old prerogatives of wealth, it's also true that the rapidly changing aural landscape of the late twentieth century has raised the status (and value) of silence enormously. As the world of the made, to recall e. e. cummings, replaces the world of the born, as the small sounds of fields at dusk or babies crying in the next apartment are erased by the noise of traffic and Oprah, as even our few remaining bits of wilderness are pressed thin and flat beneath satellite transmissions, Forest Service bulldozers, and airplane flight corridors, we grow sentimental for what little has escaped us and automatically reach for our wallets. Like a telltale lesion that appears only on those who are desperately ill, value—even outrageous value—often blossoms on things just before they leave us, and if the analogy is an ugly one, it is also appropriate; the sudden spasm of love for the thing we're killing, after all, is as obscene as it is human. As we continue to pave the world with sound, we will continue to crave what little silence escapes us, an emptiness made audible by its disappearance. ■

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DENNIS G. DALTON, Ph.D., is the Ann Whitney Olin Professor of Political Science at Barnard College, Columbia University. Professor Dalton has been honored with numerous scholarships and grants, including the Gandhi Peace Foundation Grant. Professor Dalton has written numerous articles about political theory, both classical and modern. He is a member of both the American Political Science Association and the Association for Asian Studies. Professor Dalton also is the author of *The Indian Idea of Freedom.*

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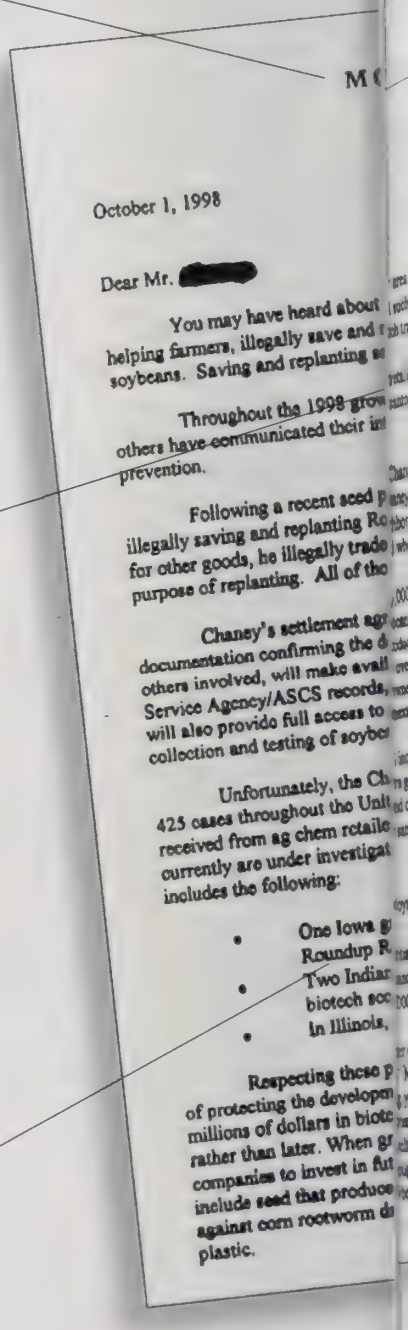
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THE GRE

Is Monsanto sowing the seeds of

This letter, sent by the agrochemical company Monsanto to 30,000 farmers last fall to warn them that saving and replanting seeds from genetically engineered crops constitute "piracy," appears to be the act of a company on the defensive. But, in truth, it's a display of corporate sovereignty, Monsanto's way of staking the flag of empire upon the land. Thanks to advances in transgenics—inserting a gene from one species into an unrelated organism's DNA—seeds are now considered "intellectual property." According to the Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI), more than one third of the world's commercial-seed sales are controlled by a handful of corporations. Among them, Monsanto—the world's third-largest agrochemical and second-largest seed company (with a majority of the U.S. cotton, corn, and soybean markets)—is the most aggressive.



October 1, 1998

Dear Mr. [redacted]

You may have heard about helping farmers, illegally save and soybeans. Saving and replanting

Throughout the 1998 grow others have communicated their in prevention.

Following a recent seed p illegally saving and replanting Ro for other goods, he illegally trade purpose of replanting. All of the

Chaney's settlement agr documentation confirming the d others involved, will make avail Service Agency/ASCS records, will also provide full access to collection and testing of soybe

Unfortunately, the Ch 425 cases throughout the Unit received from ag chem retaile currently are under investigat includes the following:

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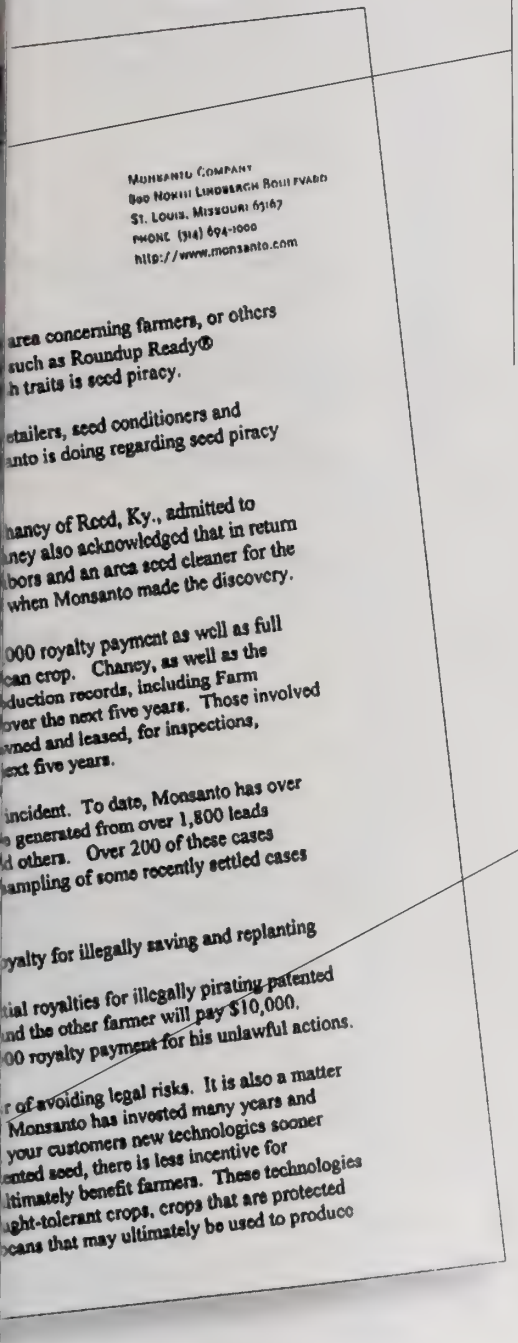
Commercial hybrids were first developed in the 1930s, and were protected both by biology (hybrids don't breed "true") and by trade laws. In the 1980s, Supreme Court decisions permitting patents on DNA offered companies extra protection whether they genetically modified non-hybrid crops, like soybeans, or hybrids, like corn. Today, use of transgenic seeds is increasing exponentially, from 4 million acres planted in 1996 to 70 million acres in 1998. In 1997, sales of transgenic crops totaled $4 billion, and the worldwide market is projected to double by 2002. Monsanto, which has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in genomics R&D, insists that farmers who save and replant "self-reproducing" transgenic seeds are engaging in copyright infringement. The company requires U.S. farmers to sign a contract forbidding them to save seed; any farmers subsequently caught will have to pay royalties and have their farms inspected for five years.

The planting methods associated with monoculture biotech crops tend to increase susceptibility to weeds and the need for herbicide, which not only threatens the environment but can have the unintended effect of killing the crop plants. Monsanto, however, has turned this drawback of the green revolution into a distinct advantage. After a 12-year search, Monsanto found a bacterium containing a gene immune to the company's herbicide Roundup. By introducing this gene into its seeds, Monsanto created crops immune to its own herbicide, ensuring demand for both products. Today, Roundup and Roundup Ready seeds account for at least a fifth of Monsanto's $8.5 billion annual sales, and the market is growing: in 1996, only 1 million acres of Roundup Ready soy were planted; this year at least half of the U.S.'s 70-million-acre soybean crop will be Roundup Ready. To the price of each bag of soy, Monsanto adds a $6.50 "technology fee," which will earn the company almost $300 million in soy royalties next year—provided it keeps suing seed-saving farmers.

IACHINE

r destruction? *by Jennifer Kahn*

Monsanto likes to bill itself as the answer to farmers' problems and the solution to the world's food crisis. Although transgenic crop seeds can cost as much as $32 more per bag than old-fashioned varieties, U.S. farmers have proved willing customers as long as the seeds result in higher yields or reduce the need for expensive pesticides and fertilizers. Monsanto's Bollgard cotton, YieldGard corn, and NewLeaf potatoes are engineered to be insect-resistant. And this is only the first wave. In 1997 alone, there were 10,500 patent applications for biotechnology traits, and companies envision a bright future of customized plants that produce high-nutrient animal feed, colored cotton, drugs, and even plastics. Potatoes that contain a vaccine for hepatitis B already exist, while Monsanto dreams of drought-proof crops and high-starch potatoes that will absorb less oil while cooking.



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such as Roundup Ready®
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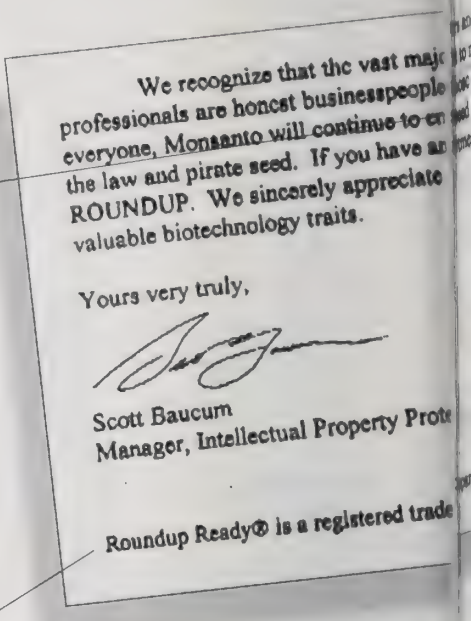
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Such dreams could turn into ecological nightmares. Notable biologists worry that the lack of crop diversity associated with corporate farming combined with transgenic advances could result in a reprise of the Irish potato famine or the U.S. corn blight of the 1970s. Monsanto calls such fears "fantasies," but some of its crops have already faced significant problems. In 1996, the company had to recall 60,000 bags of canola seeds that contained an unapproved gene. In 1998, Monsanto had to settle with Mississippi farmers whose Roundup Ready cotton crop suffered from deformed bolls and bolls that fell off early. A 1998 *Nature* study found that transgenic traits were 20 times more likely to "flow" to other plants by cross-pollination, which could result in the evolution of weeds that can resist herbicide. Similarly, bugs feeding on the insect-resistant corn, cotton, and potatoes—which Monsanto created by splicing a gene from a pest-killing bacterium (*Bacillus thuringiensis*, or Bt, normally sprayed over crops) into seeds—could survive and breed progeny resistant to the pesticide, much like the multi-antibiotic-resistant bacteria that plague hospitals. Swiss government researchers found that Bt crops killed beneficial insects when the toxin jumped the food chain—failing, for example, to kill the African cottonworm but killing the beneficial green lacewings that ate the cottonworms. Monsanto says the solution to these problems is "proper crop management." The EPA "requires" farmers to prevent resistance by leaving large insect refuges un-Bt-protected, but it expects Monsanto to prod them to do so "through grower agreements and education." An unenforceable, corporate-run compliance program seems unlikely to work. Farmers want to minimize crop loss to bugs, the Bt "advantage" for which they pay Monsanto up to $32 a bag. Barring stricter regulations, farmers have little incentive to set aside acreage, since they'll earn less and superbugs bred in their competitors' fields will migrate to their own.

*ennifer Kahn, a former intern at Harper's Maga-
ine, is a graduate journalism student at the Univer-
ity of California, Berkeley.*

Just as Monsanto's products lead to agricultural homogeneity, the company's policies encourage farmers to act in lockstep—the so-called level playing field referred to here. In 1996, when Monsanto hired five full-time inspectors to hunt down seed pirates, farmers and seed distributors lined up to turn in their competitors and former customers. "Farmers are being turned into criminals and rural communities are becoming corporate police states," noted Hope Shand of RAFI. "We call it bioserfdom." Thus far, Monsanto has investigated at least 500 farmers but won't disclose the amount of back royalties it has recovered, which it donates to agricultural college scholarship funds. Such generosity only goes to show that the real point of the investigations and their inherent legal fees (as well as an extensive ad campaign reminding farmers of the penalties outlined in this letter) is deterrence, not recouping losses.


We recognize that the vast majo
professionals are honest businesspeople
everyone, Monsanto will continue to en
the law and pirate seed. If you have an
ROUNDUP. We sincerely appreciate
valuable biotechnology traits.

Yours very truly,

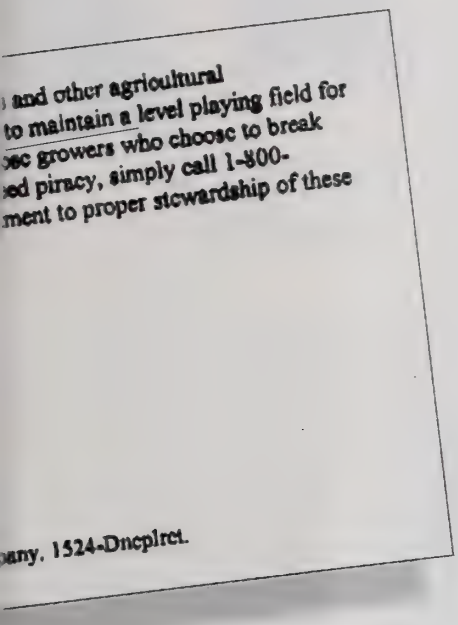
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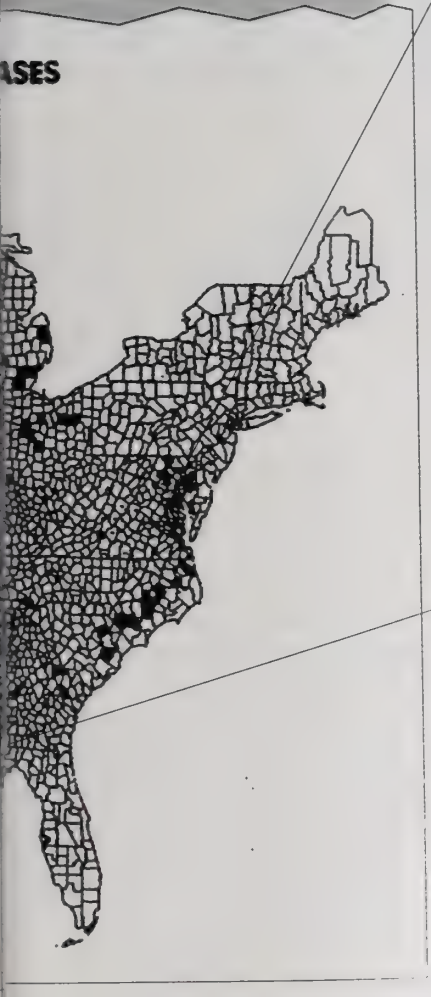
Roundup Ready® is a registered trade

Between 1996 and 1997, Monsanto's sales of agricultural products increased 22 percent, largely due to a boom in Roundup sales, especially in the U.S., Brazil, and Argentina. Monsanto attributes this increase to several factors, only one of which is the advent of Roundup Ready seeds. Company studies show that Roundup Ready crops require less herbicide, because farmers can wait to see where weeds develop before spraying. But given the magic bullet of herbicide-resistance, farmers might instead spray more liberally, eliminating weeds that they might otherwise tolerate for fear of damaging their crops. In any case, Roundup Ready seeds are critical to Monsanto's long-term herbicide sales. The patents protecting glyphosate (Roundup's active ingredient) expired in various countries in 1991 and will expire in the U.S. in 2000. No patent? No problem! Monsanto requires farmers using Roundup Ready seeds and a glyphosate-based herbicide to sign a contract promising to use only Roundup. Last June, Monsanto sued to stop a rival company, Zeneca, from testing Touchdown, a glyphosate-based herbicide it is developing, on Roundup Ready soybeans. Zeneca's countersuit claims restraint of trade.



Not on the attached map: the 48 Superfund sites where the EPA named Monsanto a "potential responsible party." Monsanto once manufactured virtually all the world's PCBs—as well as Agent Orange. But these days, "life sciences" are more profitable than chemical weapons, so, in 1997, Monsanto spun off its chemical division and has, since 1996, spent $6 billion acquiring seed companies like Cargill International Seed ($1.4 billion) and DeKalb Genetics ($2.3 billion). Rival DuPont followed suit by spinning off its petroleum division, Conoco, and forming a $1.7 billion "research alliance" with Pioneer Hi-Bred International, the world's largest seed company. One of the goals of these mergers is the acquisition of germplasm, the patented parent seed from which hybrids are bred. Prices are often exorbitant. The world's largest agrochemical company, Aventis, recently bought Plant Genetic Systems, a Dutch company with sales of $30 million, for $730 million, the $700 million difference due to PGS's patents on strains of corn and wheat.





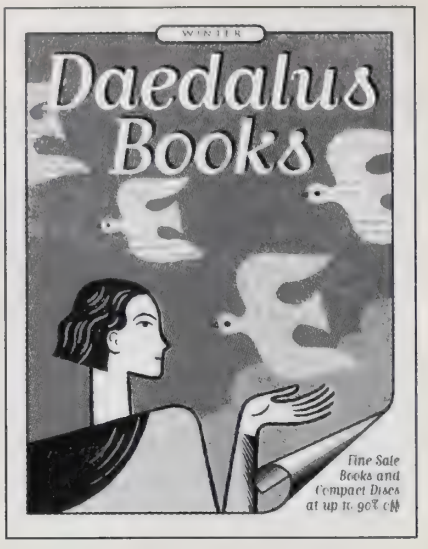
Monsanto's headquarters is in St. Louis, but the real locus of its power is in Washington, D.C., where a revolving door exists between Monsanto's 42 lobbyists and U.S. regulatory agencies. In 1992, when the FDA wrote its policy on transgenic foods, it ruled that consumer labeling and safety testing were unneeded unless the genetic modification altered the nutritional content or posed a known health risk. The policy was written by an FDA deputy commissioner who had worked for Monsanto for seven years, and who does so again. In 1994, when Monsanto introduced Bovine Growth Hormone, the FDA warned retailers not to label milk as being rBGH-free. Studies dispute whether there is a link between rBGH milk and cancer, but Dr. Samuel Epstein of the University of Illinois School of Public Health notes that "with the complicity of the FDA, the entire nation is currently being subjected to an experiment involving large-scale adulteration of an age-old dietary staple." Thirty transgenic foods used in thousands of products are now available but the FDA has done little to research their possible health effects. Last year, Monsanto (whose board includes former U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor) pressured the U.S. to threaten to cancel a trade agreement with New Zealand when the country said it would test and label transgenic food; direct pressure from Clinton, Gore, and four cabinet members also persuaded France to import Monsanto's corn. The U.S. plans to petition the World Trade Organization if Europe introduces a compulsory labeling system, saying it constitutes a non-tariff trade barrier. Monsanto hired Clinton pollster Stan Greenberg and launched a $1.6 million ad campaign entitled "Let the Harvest Begin" to convince Europeans that it will solve the world's food crisis. A U.N. African delegation called the ads "totally distorting and misleading," and *The Ecologist* devoted an issue to Monsanto. The magazine's British printer, however, shredded the print run, fearing that the notoriously litigious company would sue for libel.

As seed sales expand beyond U.S. borders, it will be impossible for Monsanto to guard its patents by making spot inspections of fields. So it has found the ultimate protection by moving to acquire Delta & Pine Land, which, along with the USDA, holds the U.S. patent on "Terminator Technology," a genetic alteration that causes seeds to die after a single season. If the deal goes through, Monsanto may patent Terminator in 77 countries to prevent poor farmers from breeding patented seeds. The U.N. African delegation says that "the only aim of its technology is to force farmers back to the Monsanto shop every year" and that it will "destroy an age-old practice of local seed saving that forms the basis of food security in our countries" and "undermine our capacity to feed ourselves." Thus far only India has banned the import of the "suicide seeds." U.S. Army War College strategists have discussed the possibility that Trojan horse technologies like Terminator could be developed so that plants could injure or kill themselves on demand. Kamikaze crops! But even if biogenetic warfare is not waged, biologists worry that were Terminator-type modifications to "flow," non-transgenic varieties of corn, soy, wheat, and rice could eventually become sterile, affording companies like Monsanto the ultimate monopoly.

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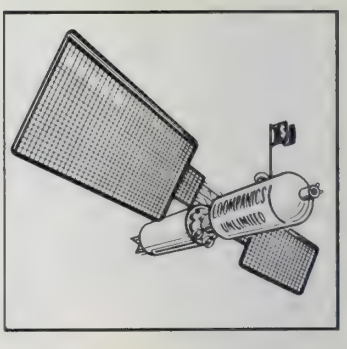
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COURT OF PALMS

By Leslie Epstein



Leib Goldkorn
130 W. 80th Street, 5-D
New York, N.Y. 10024
August 15, 1997

Miss Michiko Kakutani
The New York Times
Times Square
New York, N.Y.

My Dear Madam Kakutani,

Greetings from L. Goldkorn, Graduate, Akademie für Musik, Philosophie und darstellende Kunst. It has been now twelve long years since you wrote the critique of my well-known memorial volume in the pages of the *New York Times*. Such insight, my dear! *Artistry*, end quotation. *Ambition*, end quotation. *Commodious talent* and *humanity*—these are quotations, too. With what joy did my eyes fall upon this praise. With what dreams of riches. Little wonder that I have not been able to forget the person who saw with such fellow feeling into the author's heart.

Kakutani? Kakutani? Michiko? What kind of name—thus have I posed to myself the question—is this? Javanese? Japanese? Like the place-mat weaver, Marimekko, a blond-headed Finn? *Ja*! A person of such taste is not likely American born. Now these many years later I take pen in hand to ask if perhaps my Laplandic lass would join me in a lunch?

Fear not! Do not misapprehend. First let me inform you that I have been for fifty-five years a happily married man. Ha! Ha! Did you think I intended a proposition? An adventure? *Pas du tout*! Perhaps a tea, a crustless sandwich, followed by a depth-discussion of music and literature, such as the thematics in the excellent O. Henry and G. D. Maupassant. A meeting of the souls, as described in the texts of Plato.

A happily married man. This is relative. Sometimes, in carefree moments, for example during a Riverside Drive promenade, I have slipped my hand about the flesh folds of Frau Goldkorn's waist. Once—this was in the years of D. D. Eisenhower, liberator of Europe; to be exact, April 1958—my lifetime companion requested that I blow upon the crimson polish she had applied to her toes. On another occasion, some force, a breeze or breezlet perhaps, caused me to wake there, in the moonlit window, sat my yokemate, applying a hand massage to her breast fruits and pressing, between her sirloins, the Ivory soap dish. I had, at the gleam of a garter trolley, a paroxysm. And now? Clara now? Even though it is three-fifteen, Bulova watch time, on this summer afternoon, there she lies a-snoring. Sans hair, as the poet says, sans teeth, sans sense: sans all! Oh, Miss Michiko! Loneliness!

Leslie Epstein is the director of the creative writing program at Boston University. His eighth book of fiction, Ice Fire Water, *a Leib Goldkorn trilogy, will be published by Norton in September.*

Illustration by N. Ascencios



And how, Madam, are you? In good health? Eating the calcium-rich sardines? Are you in amazement that I can remember each word of your excellent review? Harken, Kakutani: The capital of Alabama is Montgomery. Highest point: Cheaha Mountain, 2,407 American feet. State flower: Camellia. Cotton, livestock, peanuts, hogs. The capital of Arizona is Phoenix. Highest point: Humphreys Peak, 12,633 feet. State flower: Cactus Blossom. Fruit, alfalfas, beef cattle. These are the memory gymnastics with which I keep myself in fettle. To ward off the disease that Dr. Goloshes calls "Uncle Al." And the capital, Miss Michiko, of Finland? Is it not Helsinki? Do we not find there rye oats, peat products, and excellent herring? I have always had a spot of softness for what Americans call platinum blondes. Gentlemen prefer them, too!

Where then shall we have our tête-à-tête? I am proposing the Court of Palms, the Hotel Plaza. This is at the corner of 59th Street and the famed Fifth Avenue, opposite the statue of Napoleon upon his horse. A pleasant tropical oasis in the heart of the busy city. Cooling drinks. Atmosphere suave. It was at this establishment that Mr. and Mrs. Goldkorn consumed at their wedding feast the Grand Carousel of confections. Those were the dark days of the Second World War. Literally dark: over the glass panes of the hotel stretched black linens, lest the least chink reveal to the lurking U-boats the blaze of happiness that burned in Leib Goldkorn's heart. Then away! Away to the ritual breaking of the hymen at the snow and ski lodge in Syracuse, New York. Honeymoon. Alas, there was not at that season any snow. Also, poor Clara here began the series of head pains that were the first signs of the dropsy. Still—*ach*, Miss Michiko, I have for some reason snapped here my Scripto pencil: still, we enjoyed the calm company each of the other and the sight of the squirrels and chipmunks busily hiding away their winter nuts.

Let us meet on the last day of August, the 31st, at 3, *post meridiem*. This is the time at the Court of Palms for cuplets of tea. Once mor like a gypsy, I read your thought *How will I recognize this prize-winnin Graduate?* Brief description: a fiv footer five. Woodwinder's lips. Ea growing still. Definitely hairles And the style of my haberdasher now consists of large-size gabardine To prevent any possible error I sha sport, in the buttonhole of my lum berman-type jacket, a sprig of—wh is your favorite? Gardenia? Carn tion? Forget-me-not!

Will we establish, at our ren dezvous, a rapport? Will we becom intimates? Only time, as they say will tell. As summer turns to autum with its falling leaves, and then win ter comes with its Mackinaws an ginger snaps, our friendship ma ripen. There is no need to restrict ou intercourse to dry and dusty books What young man, bursting with vig or, reads these days Washington Ir ving or Anatole France? My exper tise is on woodwinds. The day ma come when, reaching around the tor so, I might instruct you upon the fin gering of the flute. Is it not the cas that in the Finnish sauna cold wate is thrown upon the red hot rocks And that the saunaists are beaten or the back and the loin sector with twigs and twiglets of thorns? Perhaps you can make upon my own shoul ders—these are hirsute, like the flesh of ancient elephants that are some times discovered intact beneath the Finlandic ice—a demonstration. Yes, you can beat me! Beat me! I will not cry out. I will not beg for mercy. Like the lusty Lemminkäinen, stalwart hero of the *Kalevala*, the folkish epic of your people, this devoted Leib will bear with stiff lip his fate.

Sixteen days! Sixteen days, Miss! Thus must wait, turning the calendar pages, the triste Leib for his tryst.

Sincerely yours,
L. Goldkorn, Graduate
A.f.M.P.u.d.K.

Tea for two, two for the tea

A fine summer day. Too torrid, perhaps, for my red-and-black plaid. One hundred percent sheep's wool. But the high standards of the Court of Palms demand of its patrons jack-

, Arrow-brand shirt, and tie. Also
anamanian hat.

A me for you, a you for me

On the outside of my Thom
lcAns, a shoeshine; heel-lifts with-
. Nose nicks and chin nicks from
ne Gillette brand. Look sharp, ha-
a! Feel sharp! Under each armpit, a
ay rum sponge. Final perusal:
nnish phrase book. Check. Senior
tizen underground pass, with trans-
r. Check. One cylinder, LifeSaver-
and pastilles, multi-flavors. Check.
oil-wrapped sanitary, Trojan-type,
atchdog against disease. Check.
ong odds, undeniably, not even the
hance of a Chinaman; but is not
he motto of the scouting move-
ent, Sir R. Baden-Powell founder,
e prepared?

No personage near us to see or to
ear us

"Mr. Goldkorns! Why are you
histling? Why cheerful and chip-
er?"

Can this be? It is less than one
our since I administered the noon-
ime injection, after which it is this
ausfrau's habit to fall deep in the
rms of Morpheus, awakening only
t the evening prospect of mush-
oom cream. Clairvoyant Clara! To
ense my guilty secret!

"Whistlings? What whistlings?
erhaps, you know, a few bars of
Hatikva."

"What are you doing with the Ad-
niral? Help! He's taking the televi-
ion to the brothers Glickman!"

"No, no. Calm yourself, Madam
Goldkorn. I would never remove this
et to the shop for prawns."

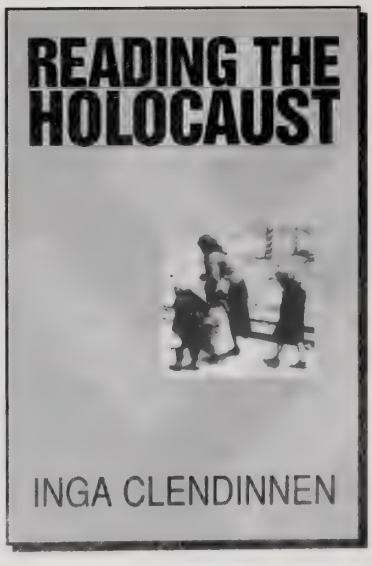
What an amazement! Shadows,
wisps, illusions—that is all, with her
cataract-clouded eyes, that Clara can
see. Still, she notes my presence at
the back of the Admiral, an instru-
ment that has been blank from the
moment that N. Armstrong, a non-
Jew, walked in haziness upon the
surface of the moon. 20 July. *Anno*
Domini, 1969. Exhaustion of the
vacuums. Still, like drowning victims
who cry out from within the wreck-
age of their sunken vessel, or tap-
tap-tap upon its iron hull, voices
emerge yet from the wood-style ve-
neer. To these ghosts—one can
barely discern whether they lisp in
English or some foreign tongue—the



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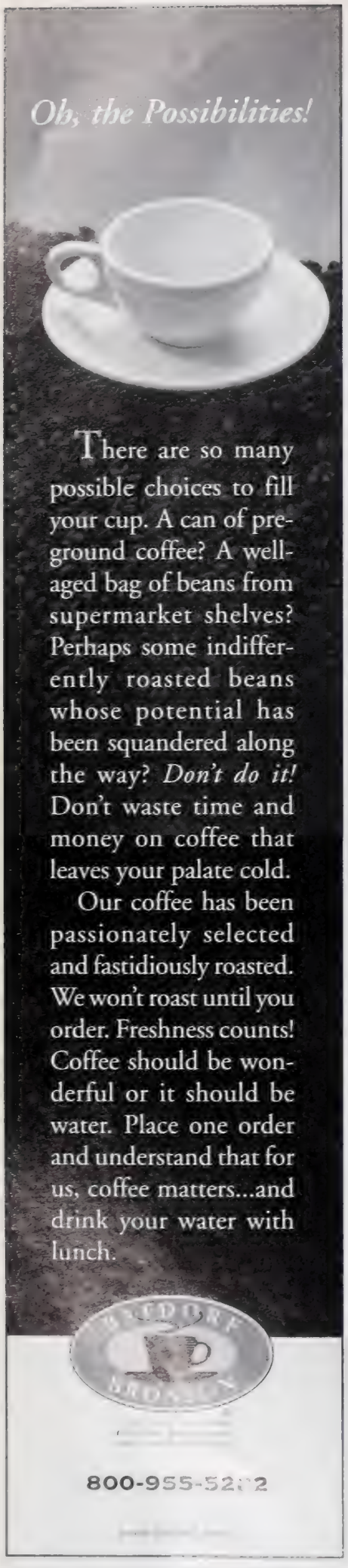
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comatose Clara likes to cock an ear. To while away interminable hours! Interminable years!

"Mr. Goldkorns, I am not hearing Merv Griffin."

"Wait. We have now warm-ups." Indeed, I have turned on the instrument, but not before first leaning behind it to extract the remains of this year's savings—nine fives, with the image of A. Lincoln, who set free the slaves, and two George Washington ones. Forty-seven dollars. Not counting the expense of florals, which I now remove from the Frigidaire.

No friendly relations to make us vacations

"Flowers? Why flowers? And why in such hot weather a lumberjacket?"

We won't have it known, honey—

"Speak, sir! What is that odor? Bay rums! I am smelling bay rums!"

That we own a Bell telephone

"What is this funny business?"

Day will break and you will wake in order to bake da-dee-dum-dee *ein Honigkuchen!*

"Help! Police! Is hankypankies!"

For me to take for all the goys to see!

"Where are you going? Out windows? Forsaking! *Der man farlozt zayn weib!"*

We will raise a family, a boy for you a girl—Ah, Martha! Little Martha!—*for me*

"Der shmutsiker mamzer! No Campbell's chowder! No Slim Jim!"

I'm going to have tea for two, dee dindle dum, dum dindle dee, *and two are arriving for tea!*

From the circle of Columbus to the Monument of Napoleon we have but a twenty-minute perambulation—a stroll among, upon the right hand, the toot-tooting taxis, the eager knickerbockers all helter and skelter; and, upon the left, the ladies with borzois, the lasses and lads with their wooden hoops. And here, all golden, is the statue of Bonaparte, a gift of the children of France. With awe I stare up at the conqueror not only of continents, Italy and Egypt and the Holy Roman Empire, but of Joséphine and Marie-Louise, heir to a mighty throne. With his outstretched hand he points me, a fellow five-fiver, across the crowded thoroughfare to the entrance of the Hotel Plaza. There smart liverymen stand at attention. Sunshine gleams in the window glass. Atop the green-stained turrets wave the stars and stripes—fifty of the former; do you know how many of the latter? Thirteen! One for each of the original colonies, of which the first to ratify the Constitution was wee Delaware: one of only four states whose capital begins with the identical alphabetical letter. Chemicals, petroleum, broiling chickens. Dover. So, even in this moment of doubt, of qualms, all mental functions remain intact. No sign of Uncle Al.

Doubt? Qualms? Can Leib Goldkorn be suffering, in the vernacular, cold toes? As if he were some youngling who has never eaten wild oats? Or experienced a fertilization? Think of the motto of the Artilleryman of Austerlitz. Was it not, *L'attaque! L'attaque! Toujours l'attaque!?* I must copy the Corsican: forward! Across the boulevard, you *boulevardier!* Yet much as I try to lift them, these McAns remain stuck to the heated pavement. Beware, Leib Goldkorn! You are heading toward a Waterloo. Imagine what Madam Kakutani will see, as she gazes across the Court of Palms table. A Bonaparte? A Beau Brummell? Not precisely. A hairless old Jew, one who must make water eight times in the night. Size of gabardines: 44. It is not too late. Retreat! Sound the retreat! I might still return to hearth, home, and *hausfrau*.

No! Never! No, no! There now arises in the eye of the mind the Late City Final Edition, 3 April, 1985. Ah, the smell of the newsprint. The rustle of crisp pages. And what do I see? Section C, page 24, column 3. Here, all afresh, are the words that Miss Michiko used to describe the present speaker: *A person of some culture and sensitivity*. End quotation. Ah! Wise woman! She knows I have been a *Glockenspieler* for both Der Konigliche und Koenichliche Hof-Operntheater and the Orchester der Wiener Staatsoper, as well as a former subscriber, *New York Herald Tribune. Hyvää päivää, rouva.* This is "Good afternoon, Madame," in the

nnish tongue. A heel click, a hand ss, a bow. *Hauska tutustua.* "A plea- re to make your acquaintance." way, abdominal butterflies! Bulova watch time: 3:07. Our imp is becoming impatient.

Everything at the Court of lms is as it was upon my nuptial ght. The tables with tableclothes d the chairs with wicker woven in- the backs. The band platform with ano and double bass. Here are the noothly gliding waiters with napkins er their arms. And at the center, st as during the dark days of war, is e display of éclairs, petit-fours, and e fingers of ladies. I can see those me candy-coated almonds, pale ink, Easter yellow, a grassy green, hich—there, at that corner table, here three dames now eat their frit- rs—my brand-new bride threw layfully into the air and caught with exterity in her open mouth.

"May I help you?"

The speaker: a woman of heft, ark-haired, in my judgment a cup umber C.

"I am wearing a tie with a knot. lso a surcoat. You see before you a itizen since the year 1943. I request, herefore, a table: a table, you know; ou know the kind I mean—"

"I'm sorry. What kind of table?"

Across my cheekbones spreads the trawberry flush, up and over my row. This awkward moment is rem- niscent of the time that, suffering a toppage, I was examined by a Goloshes, M.D., assistant. A woman f gender. Shirtless before her. Also ndershirtless. With pantswaist at he ankles. My voice drops to a whis- er: "For two."

I am led to a spot at the back of he Court, next to the wall of mir- ors. Placing my lumberman on the ack of my chair, I sit down. To one ide, the musical bandstand, at the moment absent of musicians. To the ther, one of the palms-in-pots that ave given this room, formerly, it eems, a chamber for squash games r tennis, its name. A prima loca- ion. The Court itself is perhaps one- half full, with a yield of some thirty or thirty-five women and perhaps one dozen men. More guests walk the hallways on the far side of the transparent partition. But where is Miss Michiko? Spread before me are coiffures in profusion: redheads and brunettoes, locks in gray and curls in black. There is the twin who has the Toni, and there a peruke in pink. Yes, I can see the false goldilocks, which have from a bottle been bleached. But nowhere, in this sea of tresses, is there a Baltic Sea blonde.

Now comes forth a waiter, a so- phisticate with a waxed-type mous- tache. "Would the gentleman care to order?"

I hand wave the menu away. "Grand Carousel," I say. "Tutti-frut- tis for two."

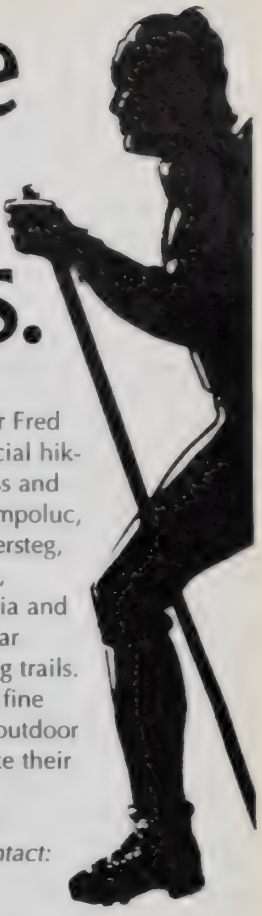
Impossible to disguise, in that at- tendant's eyes, the look of amaze- ment. For this old favorite costs, if I am remembering correctly, three twenty-five.

Three twenty-five! Little hand on three! Big hand on five! Almost a half-hour late! An unthinkable thought: what if the coquette has al- ready arrived and, not seeing the dawdler, departed? Could such a thing be? No, no: for would I not have seen her going out as I, but a brief moment tardy, came in? Then where is she? In this cosmopolitan Court there are all manners and races of people: Jews and non-Jews, an Afrikaner, Malayan traders, whis- pering Arabians, and even, with short black hair and her face pressed to the partition glass, a tea-colored Nipponese. But nowhere, in all this motley, is my far-flung Finn.

Saanko suudella kättäsi, rouva? This, on page 9 of my phrase book, means, "May I kiss your hand, Madame?" An excellent way to break apart the ice. Ah, here comes the Carousel of confitures. Also a pipkin of Lipton-brand tea. Should I have, whiling the time, a jelly? Per- haps a frozen pudding? What's that: a pandowdy? Leib Goldkorn, what are you thinking? If I partake now, and the Kakutani should spy a miss- ing maraschino or half-eaten ingesta, might she not take offense?

What is that sound? Piano chords? Yes, and a pianist. His bent back, and his hair pony, is toward me; the re- flection of his face and hand knuck- les may be seen on the waxed surface of this Bösendorfer-brand grand. Ac-

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companiment? A near hairless bassist. Trills. Tremolants. Tremolos. Then music hall tunes. F-sharp, f-flat, c-sharp. *Some Enchanted Evening.*

Have I the daring to seek out once more the time on the Bulova? Three forty-one, and the seconds hand circling, endlessly circling, 3:42, 3:43, like a prisoner in a prison yard. It must be admitted that some thing has gone amiss. Is it possible that my admirer is not going to come? Have I mistaken the time of the assignation? The agreed-upon date? Horrors! Is August a month in which one may not eat oysters? *Thirty days hath September*—With frail fingers I fish forth the folio of Finnish phrases. Alas! The paper I seek is no longer inside. Ah, there it is, atop the caramel clusters. On the instant I unfold the creases of the sweet billet-doux:

August 22, 1997

From the desk of Michiko Kakutani
The New York Times

Mr. Leib Goldkorn
130 W. 80th Street
Apt. 5-D
New York, NY 10024

Dear Mr. Goldkorn:

Ms. Kakutani has asked me to inform you that she will meet you at the Palm Court of the Plaza Hotel at 3 PM on August 31st.

Yours truly,
R. Bernstein
Assistant to Ms. Kakutani

Speak for yourself, Miles Standish, ha, ha, ha! Thus said the Indian maiden to John Smith when he attempted to propose on behalf of his friend. Surely it is significant that Miss Michiko similarly uses an amanuensis when enscribing this note of romance. Too bashful to reveal your heart, my little Pocahontas? Must you speak through a lackey? *Yours truly,* note you that? Can that be the emotion of a stranger? An anonymous pusher of pen? Never! No, never! Ach! Each time I see these words, *Yours truly, truly yours,* I record degrees of warming within my S. Klein drawers. 3 *PM.* Thus writes the Pilgrim of my heart. August 31st. There has been no error. Ah, coquette! Why such coyness? Do not hide behind others. Play not peek-a-boo in back of a palm pot. Show yourself!

Missä rautatieasema on? "Where is the train station, please?" No, no: mistaken page.

Onniteluni rouva charmikkaasta ja ilahduttavasta hatustasi. "My compliments, Madame, upon your charming and delightful hat." With such urbanity one thaws the cool Nordic heart. Even the strictest rabbi, surely, would permit the sampling of a small gooseberry tart. *Voilà!* Excellent crusts. But thirst-provoking. This tea is now like the cucumber. "Waiter! If you please! A schnapps!"

"Of what sort, sir?"

"Plum. You know, plum brandy. And will you have the kindness to—this will be our little secret, ha-ha—leave the bottle."

"But of course. It will just take a moment to cross to the Oak Room Bar."

And no sooner has my servant departed than there—there, *Across a crowded room,* ha-ha-ha!—I see her, precisely as, for these many long years, I have imagined her: tall, firm of flesh, twin-bosomed, with golden curls falling like coin stacks to her shoulders. A glance at my Bulova. Exactly 4, *post meridiem.* Of course! *Spring back! Fall forward!* I have failed to adjust for summer savings! It was now, by her watch, and all the millions of clocks in our Eastern zone, exactly 3 PM! Mystery solved! Oh, my eager Aryan! A Joannie on the spot! With joyfulness I jump to my feet.

"Miss! Oh, Miss!"

That cry fills the whole of the Court and causes even the electrified candles to flicker. The Nordic stands in her tracks. In a daze of delight, with, in my nether parts, a definite peppercorn feeling, I dart between the tables to her side. Then she turns and casts her pale eyes and the dark pinpricks of her pupils upon me.

"Kakutani!" I cry. "Let us have a coition!"

I shall make a tall story shorter. Mistaken identity. Mild indiscretion. Understandable error. Why, then upon hearing my explanation tha the wrong pig has been taken by th tail, create such a stigma? Or strik with one's weighty purse, and on th noggin, a nonagenarian? Or send fly ing, for a *faux pas,* his Panama hat This is an overreaction, in my opin ion. Luckily, the pianist, and th bassist too, break into a lively melody *Oklahoma*—Sooner state, mining in terests, natural gas—in order to dis tract the teatime guests from the hul labaloo. At my table slivowitz awaits Thoughtfully uncorked. Chin-chin Skoal! To my Norse nymph! On an on the seconds hand goes ticktickin by. Is it my imagination, or is th boulevard without falling into shade into shadow? Cheers! Down t the hatch! Mud in you eye!

Sleep! Have I been asleep? An for how many hours? Look! Look friends! It has grown dark in th Court of Palms. No sunlight shine through the outer windows. Th electric candles have lost their cur rent. The Court itself is almost de serted. Here and there a waiter i removing, from a table, the table cloth. Both the pianist and the bald headed bassist have vanished. A lady with a costume of a hospita nurse, including starched headdress is running over the carpets Hoover. *Ehkä voimme viettää tunni poreammeessa. Saunassa. Ehk voimme hakata toisiamme vihdalla* These words, on a warm breath with a mouth moue, will not b Miss Michiko be uttered in proximi ty to L. Goldkorn's ear. No sauna No steambath. No healthful blow of thorns.

"*Garçon!* If you please!"

The waiter, wax on his moustach tips, and a goiter from a surfeit o sweets, steps to my table. I hold up fiver.

Waiter: "What is that?"

"For you, my good fellow. For th condiment Carousel. For th schnapps. When you bring change make a deduction of fifteen cents Excellent service."

"Sir, the bill is one hundred an twenty dollars, tax not included. have it here."

"What? Am I in your opinion a ountry pumpkin? I have purchased ese sweetmeats before. The cost as three American dollars and one merican quarter."

The waiter, instead of responding, aces before me first the menu and en the bill. Imagine the depths of y horror upon the discovery that e charge for the schnapps alone uals sixty dollars, the tea ten, and e Carousel twenty-five. I can, rough the cords in my throat, arely utter objections.

"Mistake. Definite error. Sixty and n and twenty-five, this is not even ne hundred dollars. It is only: wait, making lightning calculations—"

"But, sir, the Carousel is twenty- ve dollars *per person*. *You* ordered r two."

"Wasser! Ein bißchen Wasser!"

Something in my manner must larm him, for, with tea towel flap- ing, he turns on his heel and akes for the kitchen. Now what ust occur with the speed of light- ing is not a mental calculation but physical act. I jump to my feet. I luck up my Panama. Then, paus- ng only for a quick bite of crumb ake, I dash for the exit of the Court of Palms. Has anyone seen ne? Will I be called before *der Polizei*? But no one seems to notice. The Hooverer continues hoovering. The waiters clear off their tables. The doorman, with finger and cap brim, gives the salute. Only one person, the black-haired Oriental, remains with her face pressed still to the glass. What's this? A shy smile? A wee winsome wave? But I have no time to engage, with this Nipponese cleansing lady, in ban- ter. Out I dash, into the lamp-lit air. Run, Leib Goldkorn! Faster! Yet faster! But where am I to run to, thief in the night? To the Admiral, with its whisperings; to Madam Goldkorn, lifetime companion, whose teeth rest, like a mollusk, in- side a water glass? And what am I running from? For no matter with what speed I dash the avenues, I cannot escape in the depths of these gabardines, the still raging fire, or the painful knowledge that I have been by Miss Michiko, in the vernacular, left standing up.



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VIRAL CULTURE

A fashionable theory takes the self out of consciousness

By Mark Kingwell

Among the books discussed in this essay:
Cultural Software: A Theory of Ideology, by J. M. Balkin. Yale University Press. 352 pages. $35.
Ecstasy Club, by Douglas Rushkoff. HarperCollins. 315 pages. $17.50.
Consciousness Explained, by Daniel Dennett. Little, Brown. 511 pages. $16.95.
The Selfish Gene, by Richard Dawkins. Oxford University Press. 368 pages. $12.95.



A man, let's say a quarterback or a hockey center, does something extraordinary and erupts into celebration. Randall Cunningham points both index fingers at the sky; Wayne Gretzky goes into a sliding crouch while pumping his fist. It's spontaneous, it's unthinking. The next thing you know, everyone from college athletes to the kid down the street is doing it. Somebody turns his baseball cap around, who knows why. Overnight, as if by divine fiat, every cap in the land is backwards. Paula Abdul or Scary Spice or Snoop Doggy Dogg comes up with a new dance move. Soon we're all moving that way, swiveling our hips, pointing flathanded, raising imaginary rooftops. It happens all the time.

But why does it happen?

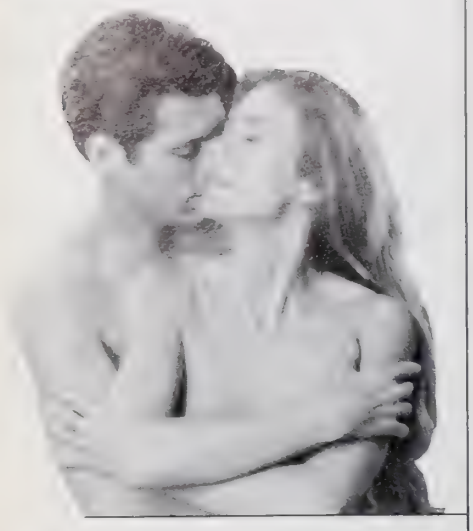
Theories come and theories go, from the innovation-diffusion research that compares cultural spread to hydrodynamic trickle-down, to epidemiological models that posit analogies between cultural influence and influenza. Depending on their nuances, such theories can become very good at predicting how, and how fast, a fashion will make its way from New York to Spokane, from MTV to your neighborhood. All models of this spread face one basic problem, however, whatever their variation on the viral or irrigational pictures, and it is this: what, exactly, is being spread when human behavior shifts in these apparently trivial examples? What are the relevant units of cultural infection, and how do they work their insidious way with us? More important, do the same dynamics that shift fashions and trends work with more significant things like civility and toleration?

The latest candidate is an unlikely one, an offshoot of evolutionary biology known as memes. According to the theory, memes are self-replicating bits of cultural material—"cultural software," to use the title of one prominent book on the subject, by the Yale law professor J. M. Balkin—that take up residence in the material world by colonizing the imitative, fertile brains of language-using creatures like us. Memes are units of meaning—such as gestures, clichés, ideas, and fashions of every kind—

Mark Kingwell is the author of Better Living: In Pursuit of Happiness from Plato to Prozac, *to be published next year by Crown. His essay "Fast Forward" appeared in the May 1998 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

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that spread from one "infected" person or community to another. Memes are the DNA of our taste.

Which might be one reason the theory has lately moved out of the small circle of Netheads, fringe thinkers, and cutting-edge artists who first embraced it to catch the imagination of advertisers, marketers, image consultants, and even some media-savvy political parties. In an age of inescapable image- and information-driven technologies like television and the Internet, the idea that our brains are running various kinds of cultural software, which can be altered and copied and spread by the file transfer protocols we call the media, is enormously seductive—even, we might say, natural. What else is a marketer trying to do but plant a unit of cultural meaning in the audience's brain? What else is a politician trying to effect but a change of behavior? If the athlete can do it without trying, why can't we do it with intent?

Fine. But is meme-talk merely a harmless fad, just the latest cool way to talk about cool? Are the long books and pages of detailed theorizing that now crowd the bookshelves just an intellectual gloss on what shills, brainwashers, and rhetoricians have known for centuries, if not for millennia? Or is there something deeper going on? When a friend of mine, a wealthy financier with a web of international business and charity interests, recently sat me down to discuss meme theory, I became convinced that something had indeed changed.

It's not just that the business world is apparently more interested in acquiring intellectual capital now than at any time since the Renaissance. It's rather that for a man of commerce, even an exceptionally intelligent one, to speak casually of memes suggests that we are in the midst of a decisive change in self-image. Meme theory is widespread, and that may be a sign that the world is now truly materialistic—not in the common sense of acquisitive (though that's true) but in the philosophical sense of believing that only matter exists. When culture is understood as the play of viral agents in the heedless flesh, we have finally completed th[illegible] deflation of our self-conception th[illegible] began a century ago wit[illegible] evolutionary theory.

The term "meme" was coined l[illegible] the celebrated Oxford University b[illegible] ologist Richard Dawkins in his infl[illegible] ential 1976 book, *The Selfish Gen[illegible]* Dawkins did no more than sketc[illegible] his idea, devoting a scant twelv[illegible] pages of text to what he called "th[illegible] new replicator," but since his boo[illegible] was published, the idea has spread [illegible] a rapid clip. Memes, Dawkins sai[illegible] are self-replicating bits of coded in[illegible] formation that take up residence i[illegible] our brains, like parasites, and pa[illegible] from organism to organism via a se[illegible] ries of entirely physical causes an[illegible] effects like the one involved in yo[illegible] reading this page: a matter of ink[illegible] paper, light, neural impulses, an[illegible] electro-chemical changes. Lik[illegible] genes, in other words, memes dis[illegible] seminate and reproduce by means [illegible] animals like us, without particula[illegible] regard for the individual hosts o[illegible] even for the species as a whole.

Also like genes, memes are selfish[illegible] they care only about reproducin[illegible] themselves through time, nothin[illegible] else. But they are new, in evolution[illegible] ary terms, because they are not phys[illegible] ical codes for particular adaptive or[illegible] ganisms, as genes are, nor are the[illegible] simply ideational means of further[illegible] ing the survival of given organisms[illegible] as in, say, the developed ability t[illegible] wield tools. "Memes and genes ma[illegible] often reinforce each other," Dawkin[illegible] noted, "but they sometimes come in[illegible] to opposition," as, for example, i[illegible] the meme for celibacy, which is ge[illegible] netically doomed but may, unde[illegible] certain conditions—in a theocracy[illegible] say—be culturally persistent. A mor[illegible] vivid, if fanciful, example: violen[illegible] video games or action movies, whic[illegible] seem to demonstrate high memeti[illegible] success, might prove genetically dis[illegible] advantageous if they encourag[illegible] pointless social violence.

Although memes need materia[illegible] hosts to live, the information the[illegible] code does not necessarily have to d[illegible] with the biological organism itself, o[illegible] its chances of evolutionary success[illegible] but instead with various catchy ideas[illegible] memorable songs, well-turned phras[illegible]

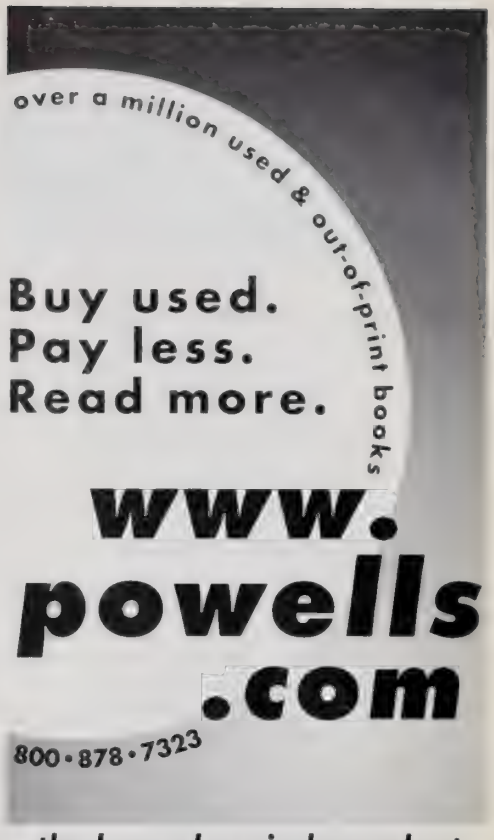
enduring literary themes, and use- mathematical equations—among er cultural programming that real- itself through us. "All that is nec- ary is that the brain should be ca- ble of imitation," Dawkins ncluded, and "memes will then olve that exploit the capability to full." His own tentative list of me examples, circa 1976, included nes, ideas, catch-phrases, clothes hions, ways of making pots or of lding arches." He talked of belief God and the tune "Auld Lang ne," of the stiletto heel and Jewish igious law: memes of varying de- es of short- and long-term success, ssed from host to host through usal exchanges of sound waves, pa- r, light. "When you plant a fertile me in my mind you literally para- ize my brain," psychologist N. K. mphrey wrote, "turning it into a hicle for the meme's propagation just the way that a virus may para- ize the genetic mechanism of a st cell." Memes, Dawkins argued, e highly successful and rapid repli- tors, compared to genes, and they hibit a range of benignity with re- ect to the host, from memes that tually impair our thoughts (belief God, for him, is one such) to more eful "symbiont" memes that make e more interesting, and possibly tter in other ways too.

"As material structures," the notechnologist BC Crandall puts "memes are always on their way, nsformationally, from medium to edium: speech vibrates air mole- les that, if near an ear, enter the ain through the tuning forks of the ner ear and thus into more or less able molecular patterns in the ain." They travel via the mouth in ords or lyrics, from the hands in estures or the use of tools. In all ses of such transfer, what we call lture is really a matter of matter, r, as Dawkins says, "[t]he comput- ers in which memes live are human brains."

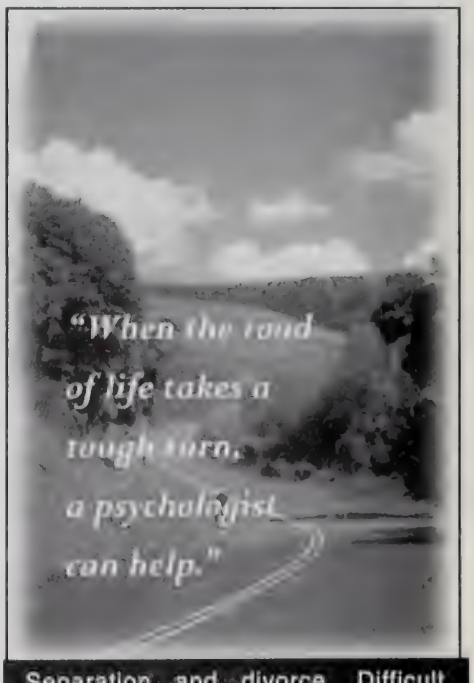
The "meme" meme itself has roved relatively durable. The word is now quite widely used," Dawkins roudly wrote in the 1989 edition of *The Selfish Gene*, "and in 1988 it oined the official list of words being considered for future editions of the Oxford English Dictionaries." More significant than lexicographical success, however, or rather the necessary precondition for it, is acceptance of the word, and the concept, by thinkers who claim to understand the nature of the mind: philosophers, psychologists, neurobiologists, systems theorists. The study of consciousness, or, as it's sometimes styled, cognitive science, is booming in these final days of the century. The success of the meme meme is a sign of vertiginous changes in self-consciousness among these specialists, changes that have trickled down to the rest of us in the form of a pervasive, unnoticed modeling of our cultural selves as wired.

The Tufts University philosopher Daniel Dennett has been responsible for much of this success. A genial, bear-like man with a large gray beard and a gruff, cheerful mien, Dennett is a charismatic and tireless speaker and a writer of exceptional clarity. Whether lecturing on the nature of the brain as a meme-nest or writing lively, provocative books such as *Consciousness Explained*, Dennett is a one-man crusade to banish the Cartesian orthodoxy of the mind/body dichotomy from our midst. He is openly dismissive of those, like the Rutgers University philosopher Colin McGinn, who have suggested that the human mind may be beyond its own ken, and more gently disapproving of scientists who cling to vestiges of atavistic belief in a "central meaner" or "inner spectator" within the material organism.

According to Dennett, the processes of consciousness are most striking when they give rise to utterances. Much of consciousness, indeed, is a kind of running commentary, linguistic but muddled, on what we call (or choose to heed as) experience: a Joycean stream of verbiage, or, better, a Nicholson Bakerish spew of asides, cancellations, qualifications, and tangents. Consciousness is like light trapped in the greenhouse of language. And because language must be shared in order to function at all, there is reason to believe that humans were not conscious until they formed quite complex linguistic com-



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munities in which they could distinguish themselves from one another as individuals. "We pick up our vocabulary from our culture," Dennett writes; "words and phrases are the most salient phenotypic features—the visible bodies—of the memes that invade us, and there could hardly be a more congenial medium in which memes might replicate than a language-production system in which the supervisory bureaucrats had partially abdicated, ceding a large measure of control to the words themselves, who in effect fight it out among themselves for a chance in the limelight of public expression."

All of which *could* be true. This theory certainly accounts for things like Freudian slips, malapropisms, and spoonerisms, in which semantically incompatible elements press together, reverse themselves without warning, or replace the suitable alternative, invariably with comic results. More commonly, such a "multiple-drafts" account of consciousness squares with our sense that speaking (and, to a lesser degree, writing) is a kind of fraught-with-danger tightrope walk from language as such to what we actually say, a constant struggle to find the right word to shape our meaning. This is not easy, even for experienced talkers. We're all Mistress Malaprop sometimes, getting the word just slightly wrong, perhaps not knowing quite why. Sometimes we don't know what we want to say until we say it; sometimes, more deeply, we don't know *that* we want to say until something is said.

So what is going on in our brains that makes of consciousness at every moment a minor cognitive adventure? Well, if this picture, or something like it, is correct, then our consciousness is a very recent feature of a brain well-colonized by various memes that have taken up residence in the accommodating electrified flesh. The self as we experience it is like the graphic user interface developed by those proto-Macintosh visionaries at Xerox's Palo Alto Research Center, a comforting and simplistic piece of make-believe that presents a friendly visage, the familiar illusion of the desktop, masking the intricacies of machine code buzzing away below, all those march ing zeros and ones. The conscio self is no more the whole organis than the interface is the whole con putational system.

In some ways, indeed, the self the least important element of th organism, because it captures onl the final feed, the ever-elaboratin story-stream that retroactively, w might even say delusionally, tries t make sense of the massive processin power behind it. Meme theory thu smacks gratifyingly of director Ridle Scott or novelist William Gibson, c the fashionably gloomy sci-fi depic tions of wetware mergers of huma and machine, or the neo-religiosit of Neal Stephenson's cult bestselle *Snow Crash*, with its sly conflation c the categories of virus, drug, lan guage, program, and religion—a now understood as different ways c describing the same meme invasion the same alteration of post-Babe consciousness.

Here we have the true postmod ern condition, which has nothing t do with "incredulity towards meta narratives"* or any other fashionabl emergent property of recent Frenc theorizing. It is, instead, captured b this stealthy triumph of material ism—a triumph that is, ironically, it self a form of meta-narrative. For, a Dennett's insistent optimism make abundantly clear, science is the onl solution to problems of self-under standing, with everything else re duced to more or less graceful way of being irrational. The notion tha there is something non-material— something purely mental or spiritu al—going on in the world is re vealed, from this perspective, a little better than a form of illici mysticism, a kind of wishful thinkin or cop-out from the irrefutable mate rial world that science alone vindi cates as real.

What is surprising is how easil meme theory accommodates newe forms of mysticism, not to mentio anarchistic politics, conspiracy theo

* *According to French philosopher Jean François Lyotard, our postmodernity consists of our inability to believe any longer in the grand narratives—such as the Jewish, Christian, and Marxist eschatologies—that hitherto have bestowed meaning on history.*

es, and weird scientistic forms of ietzschean übermensch thinking. awkins was already worried about is when he wrote *The Selfish Gene*: 'he analogy between cultural and netic evolution has frequently en pointed out," he said, "some- nes in the context of quite unnec- sary mystical overtones." Dennett ops short of any *Celestine Prophecy* iivering-wavelength hoo-hah, but goes Borgesian at the end of his ook, talking of the self as a narrative enter of gravity, accepting the byrinthine self-mirrorings of our orld-constructing language, and autiously endorsing the views of ose trendy literary critics who ught us to speak of "multiple sub- ct positions" and "culturally manu- ctured singularities" rather than lves. Perhaps more surprisingly, ennett speaks seriously of immor- ality, a state he claims we can achieve through our memetic progeny.

Once you believe that human ulture is entirely material, however, nmortality is only the beginning. "Memetic engineering," to use Crandall's term, or "memetic revolution," as advocated by culture-jammers or the rave warriors of Douglas Rushkoff's novel *Ecstasy Club*, also becomes plausible. Because memes actually *are* what people think, installing them in brains is the equivalent of rewriting their cultural programming. This can be either haphazard or directed; and if directed, it can be for good or ill. ("Memetic engineering," says Crandall, "can be found at the core of contemporary techno-corporate communication apparatuses.") In *Cultural Software*, Balkin argues ingeniously that meme theory replaces more familiar critical theories of ideology, because it alone explains how people come to believe the things they believe, without reference to dubious assumptions about "false consciousness" or "hegemony." Once we understand this, we can act to change cultural beliefs for the better.

Because memes are selfish, though, their success is not always our success—or, anyway, the success of all of us. We have to face up to the possibility that the currently dominant memes, though briefly rewarding for some, ultimately will destroy us through reduced biodiversity, the creation of lethal waste, and potentially destructive computer viruses. Balkin, who writes with lucid balance of this old problem in critical theory, is convinced that this situation is an opportunity, not a dire statement of entrapment: We create memes as much as they create us, for they are the tools we use to make tools. Culture evolves not toward some divinely sanctioned end but in an unpredictable direction that both responds to our desires and shapes them.

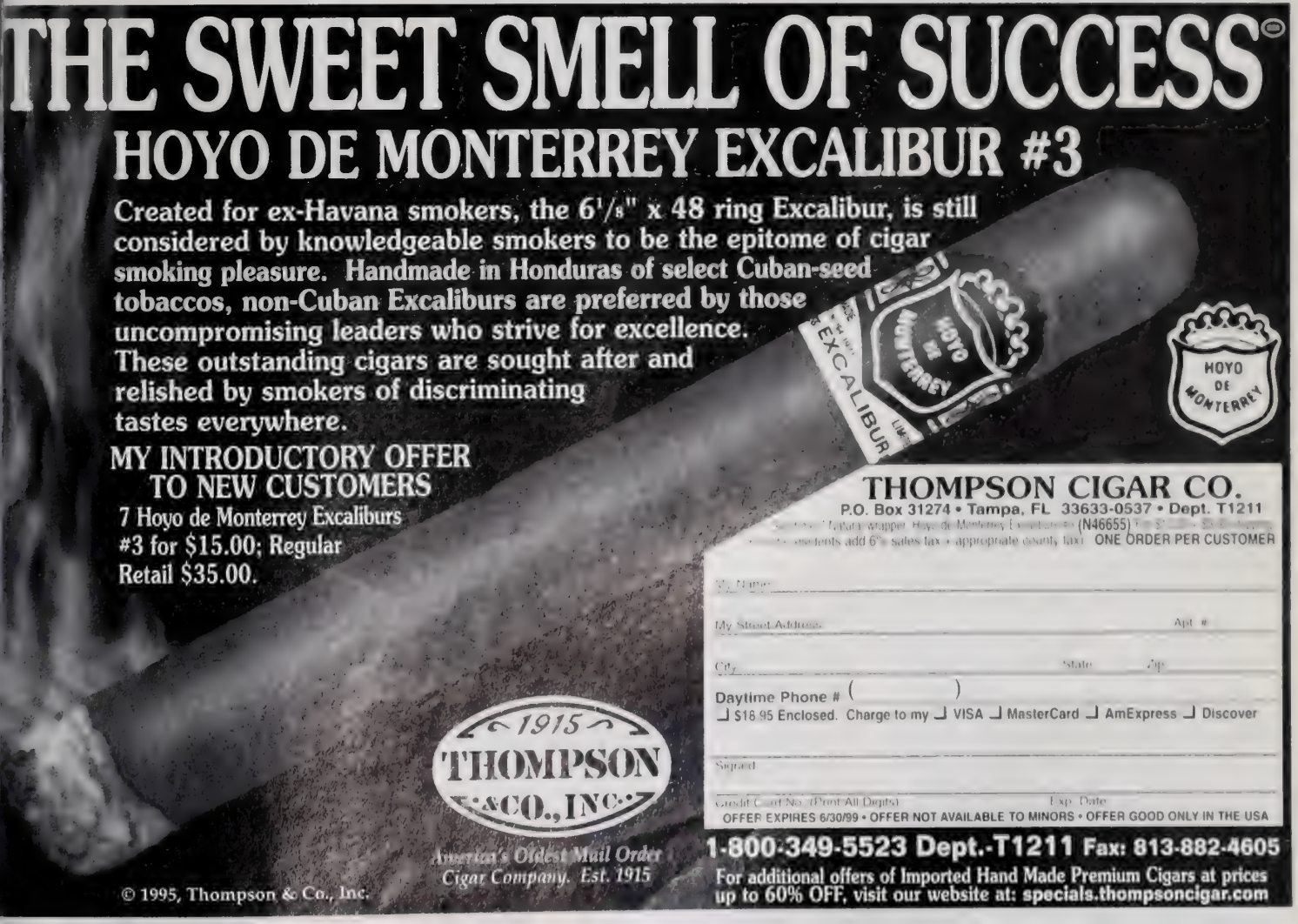
Some meme-heads now talk hopefully of an "emergent politics" that might seep from the complex play of human consciousness and make the ecosystem more sustainable. Balkin speaks of the "transcendental value of justice," which, guiding our software efforts, will make of memes not "just metaphor" but rather "just metaphors," with the emphasis on justice. The editors of the Vancouver-based journal *Adbusters* recently declared what they call "the meme

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NOTES FOR "SHORT STORIES":

Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).

ACROSS: 1. * (Looms/are); 5. ar(O-U.S.)e (Ruffle/created); 10. N(ancy)-rob, rev. (take/back); 11. net (rev.)-anted (resident/in); 12. B-eatniks* (Kerouac/I); 14. me(rev.)-b-e(ZZ)lement (diversion/concealed); 18. * (artisans/An); 19. out-set (place/without); 20. * (unfortunately/one); 22. Di(on)ne (included/they); 26. * (the/kind); 27. stiletto* (it/making); 28. two mngs. (out/a); 29. nur-), (no, one/was); 30. two mngs. (Up/For); 31. D.(lace, rev.)S. DOWN: 1. Ab(Bess)e's (Hon[o]lulu*); 2. a(bar, rev.)s (street There); 3. inter-diction (speech Looks); 4. homonym (nothing); 5. hidden (thankless/shot); 6. * (shush/Don't); 7. (p)utters (mentions/movie); 8. sea-n.-Penn (quickly/rewrite); 9. rev. (up/revision); 13. inques(t)* (circle/convertible); 15. * (carriage/drivers); 16. * (spoilt/Big); 17. stet-sons (boys/The); 21. Sea(so)n (mature/Gave); 23. [illegible]; 24. grin-[illegible]; 25. hidden (set-rim); 26. C-usp

SOLUTION TO MARCH DOUBLE ACROSTIC (NO. 194) (titled STEEL COMMOTION) THE EMPIRE OF REASON. The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had been the Age of Discovery, yet at the [illegible] most of the globe was still unexplored and much of it unknown even to Europeans. The broad sweep of the Pacific was still unmapped

Winners of the February Double Acrostic (No. 193) are Jean Copp, Rochester, New York; Gayle M. Downing, Jackson, Wyoming; and Joan [illegible], North York, Ontario.

wars," issuing a "blueprint for a rev lution" more or less in the spirit Guy Debord and the Situationist I ternational of 1968 Paris. ("Tl global economy is a doomsday m chine that must be stopped and r programmed.")

Unfortunately, it's easy for all th higher-order meme-talk to fall in self-parody or self-indulgence. Tl Internet acts as a fertile new breedi ground for ideas, a huge throbbi brain that hastens the process memetic infection—usually for ill, at least for banality. The memet warriors of my own acquaintance- media critics and culture jamme and techno-anarchists of variou kinds—spend an awful lot of tim writing elaborate e-mails but n much time actually changing th world. Balkin's confidence in jus memes, though laudable, cannot b squared with global cultural softwa that is more and more in favor profit-taking, resource depletion, an blithe acceptance of yawning gap between a prosperous few and an im poverished many. It's also hard t imagine what lasting influence eco friendly memetic revolution, say could have on the massive power the world's most successful cultura ideas, like consumerism or short-ter self-interest. Spreading new memes i a harder business than it seems, be cause the other aspects of material ism, like who collects the profits in consumer economy, are much harde to change than a dance move.

Rushkoff's novel, which begin with much bold, if mushy, philoso phizing about a meme-driven revolu tion ("A declaration of indepen dence from status quo reality. W are attempting to intensify the over all level of novelty in the extant cul tural organism, in order to change it Mutate it") ends, many misadven tures and hits of ecstasy later, with its protagonist forsaking the drug and-dance craziness of San Francis co's warehouse raves in favor of fa therhood, domesticity, and good ol romantic love. So much for memetic revolution.

From one critical vantage, meme theory is little more than a slight re casting, in apparently hard-edge

entific terms, of long familiar as: the self as story, the world as erpretation. Memetic revolution merely a fancy way of describing at we used to call cultural criti-n, as "meme" itself might be just a ed-up way of speaking of ideas allusions. What, if anything, has n gained here, apart from a cer-n form of cultural cachet for the ly adopters of this new way of cing about talking?

The baseline is that, whatever its eal to ravers and shamans and cy--anarchists who fear conspiracy, me theory is a type of hard-core terialism, and thus reductivist, en eliminativist, in intent. What eliminates is our ability to speak aningfully of an existing mind as nething other than a feature of e body. Reductionism is pernicious d dangerous not because it reduces e mind to matter—something no re theory could do if the facts of e case were otherwise—but be-use it results in an impoverish-ent of our vocabularies of self-owledge. What becomes of dividuality when what is "really" ing on is a complex neurobiologi-l imperative unrelated to "my" entity or desires?

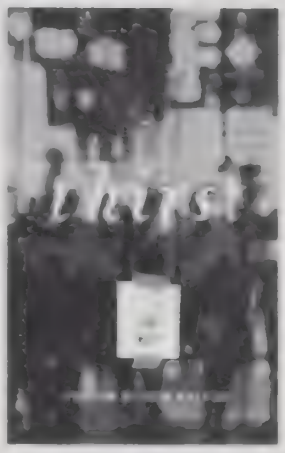
Our attitude to such reductions mains confused. Most of us react to e suggestion that we are mere eme-nests with incomprehension, nger, or even horror. At the same ne, we implicitly reinforce the ma-rial picture whenever we partici-te in the medicalization of every-ay life. Mental states such as dness, badness, or lack of attention e now regarded by most people as xclusively organic deficiencies—at is, as diseases of the body—that an be treated most effectively by al-ering the chemistry of the brain. issenters from this position are re-arded as unsympathetic, misguided, aybe even evil. Some form of so-iobiology, meanwhile, influences ost people's view of what they are p to in love, marriage, and work—ven if they tend to resist giving up a esidual sense of themselves as more an drops in the gene pool.

Much of the appeal of these new aterialistic models of consciousness nd the self stems from the highly contingent social fact of computer ubiquity. In brains softened up by computer metaphors, the meme meme finds a ready host. We are very much taken with the idea that we resemble the cool machines that dominate our lives from their position on your desk and mine. Thus, much of our growing inclination to accept the meme-nest as a valid model for our souls is a matter of currently dominant scientific vocabulary, rather than some fact of the matter about the world. Indeed, this point would seem to follow naturally from memetic evolution itself, and is embraced by some, including Balkin. The meme meme emerges, on cue, as the latest successful idea in the ongoing process of self-reflection.

But on closer inspection the computer metaphor breaks down. The human brain is no simple input/output machine: there is no central processing unit, no Von Neumann bottleneck through which all output must pass, no simple algorithm for storage and retrieval. The brain's parallel distributive processing, its radical decentralization of computation, is one of the things that make modeling android intelligence so persistently vexing. How do you build a computer complex enough to make its "owner" little more than a merely superficial aspect of the whole operation when you are only such an aspect yourself?

And if all this vocabulary is just part of a larger tale of cultural evolution, the theory of memes risks a quagmire of incoherent self-contradiction. Seen as a grand explanation of What It All Means, meme theory paradoxically suggests that such grand explanations are impossible. If, on the other hand, that impasse is resisted, and all objections to the tale are pre-explained as simply further proof of the tale's validity—"Of course you object to memes. That's what your current memes demand of you!"—then the premium is revealed as triumphantly ideological. To use a different Burgesian image, it becomes a kind of illicit master key to the library of reality. Despite the proponents' avowed hatred of metaphysics, and their refusal to endorse the existence of "mentalese," or a

Quenched?



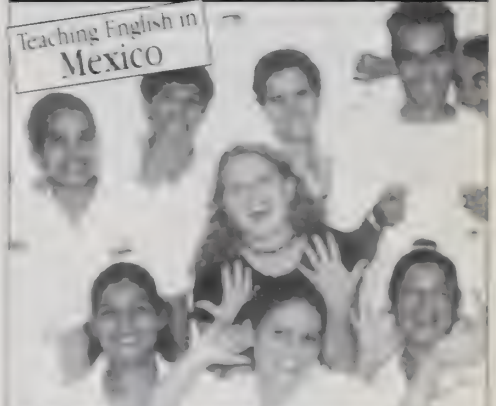
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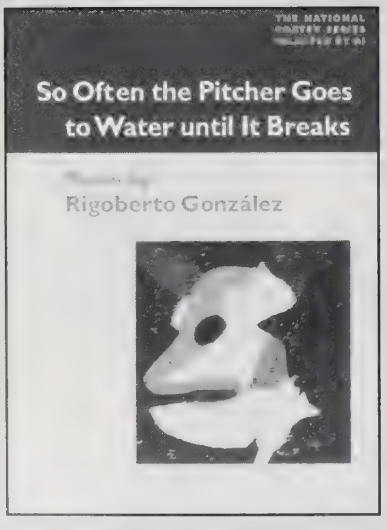
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pure meta-language of thought, memes emerge as little more than Plato's Ideal Forms in another guise: a means of fitting all reality into one overarching conceptual scheme, which brooks no contradiction.

Balkin's account is the most nuanced and convincing on the question of what we actually gain from meme theory, but even he fails to make a good case. He accepts the metaphorical status of meme-talk, and he comes closest to acknowledging the potential for self-contradiction when what purports to be a theory of ideology is itself an ideology —the old rap against Marx. But he waves off the objection, because, he says, self-reference is inevitable in cultural theory and, anyway, he is "ambivalent" in his stance on ideology. Meanwhile, his insistence that justice is the governing value of human societies—a value he is forced to water down to the phrase "normative order" to cope with drastic changes in the idea of justice across distances in time and space—is one of those philosophical arguments that are unhelpful just to the extent that they are valid. It may be meaningful to talk about a universal value of justice, but at the level of abstraction necessary to do so, the value does no work in solving day-to-day problems of conflict. And despite what Balkin claims about the new language of cultural software, recasting the conflicts as battles between competing memes helps us not one whit. It's a bit like explaining to the thuggish hockey players in my local bar that the reason they want to beat me up when I quote Proust is because they have surrendered to the memes of the male-competency cluster. As an explanation, it simply fails to meet the case—even if it's true in some strained sense.

Suppose one day a woman gives a man a postcard of a Scottish beach with these words written on the back: "My love is strength'ned, though more weak in seeming;/I love not less, though less the show appear;/That love is merchandiz'd whose rich esteeming/The owner's tongue doth publish everywhere." The man, recalling a sadness at what had seemed a waning passi feels a new joy, and sadness, at t woman's deft explanation. At t same time, he experiences a swelli of his love for her that is neverth less already tempered with the ha er edges of compromise. Somewh in the back of his mind, he allows creep into view certain ironic refl tions and literary-critical jetsam nearly forgotten tales of Dear Jol letters, the rhyme and syllable str ture of sonnets, some lewdness co cerning beach-image postcards. H eyes fill, his breast swells. And v say, He is moved.

Is the best explanation of th scene that a memetic replicator relatively high durability has be transferred into his brain? Does t bio-computational theory of redu tive materialism change our min about what has just been describe Does it make any headway, even as metaphor?

The problem with the memet engineers is not that they are Bo gesian; it's that they are not Borg sian enough. The language memes, even when understood as metaphor, is no more than inte mittently useful: it is no improv ment on the metaphor of the co lective unconscious, for exampl and it is arguably more dangero because it has an aura of scientif sanction. But when elevated to t status of a scientific theory, mem theory self-destructs. That self-d struction disappears just as soon we surrender the need decisively t plant the materialist flag in the cu rent slag-heap of belief about ou selves. In these wired days, the nee to vindicate materialism is quick taking deeper root in us, even con ing to dominate our thinking, meme-talk demonstrates; but it is need that can be satisfied only the cost of drastic diminution of th rich, textured story concernin what it is to be human.

In the end, any attempt to explai consciousness by getting outsid consciousness, and hence to writ the story of the world as if we wer not already conditioned by tha world in the labyrinthine, hypertex tual way Borges so adroitly brings t our attention, is both doomed an

ngerous. "Borges," says Umberto
o in a recent essay on the madness
metaphysical ambition, "comes to
e conclusion that no classification
the universe is not arbitrary and
njectural." As so should we. The
ychologist Julian Jaynes once com-
red consciousness to a flashlight
at could only ever illuminate what
me within its limited, highly mo-
le beam: the rest of what was real
mained in darkness—including the
ructure of the flashlight itself.
lkin, Dennett, and other explain-
all thinkers would probably call
at giving up. I call it facing up—to
e infinite task of acknowledging
r limits. ■

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pril Index Sources

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What are the facts?

Victimized by Arab Myths. Israel is the only country in the world whose "right to exist", has always been questioned. From its very beginning, Israel was surrounded by mortal enemies,single-mindedly obsessed with its destruction. The very day of its birth, six Arab armies invaded the newborn state. Miraculously, the invading hordes were defeated by the ragtag Israeli army.

In 1967, the same aggressors launched another attack against Israel. The Six-Day War resulted in a complete rout of the Arabs, and a victory for Israeli arms that will be studied in war colleges for centuries to come.

Unable to vanquish Israel on the battlefield, the Arabs launched a propaganda war that has been very successful, and which the Jews have clearly lost. Among the many myths propagated by the Arabs are that there is such a thing as a "Palestinian nation" (it's a concept that is not more than 40 years old); that the Israelis (Jews) are "occupiers" (if they were, who would be the sovereign that they displaced?); that Jerusalem is Islam's "third holiest city" (it's never once mentioned in the Koran, but hundreds of times in the Jewish Bible); the concept of "settlements" (with its connotation of illegality); and much more.

Israel — Utterly Vulnerable. These and other myths are what fuel the insistence of the Arabs, of most of the world, and, yes, also of the United States, that Israel allow itself to be dismembered. All concerned know well that Israel would be utterly indefensible, at the mercy of its implacable enemies, if it were to divest itself of the Jordan Valley, of the "West Bank", of the Gaza Strip, and of the Golan Heights. Why then does the world insist that Israel make itself so utterly vulnerable? Does anybody really believe that the "Palestinians", or any of the Arabs, would be appeased, even if Israel were to yield everything, except perhaps Tel Aviv and its suburbs? Everybody knows the answer. It would be an emphatic "NO", because the very existence of Israel, in whatever reduced territory, is an intolerable insult to the Muslim Arabs, for whom Israel must be rubbed out regardless of the sacrifices to be brought.

> "By its pious insistence on 'justice for the Palestinians' and pursuit of the 'peace process', by fomenting and profiting from the buildup of weapons of mass destruction solely destined for the destruction of Israel, the world actively promotes this second Holocaust."

Why does the world focus on the spurious claims of the "Palestinians", an artificially created nationality that never in recorded history had an identity or country of their own? Why is there no clamor that the French and Spanish give an independent country to their Basque minorities? How about the Kurds? How about the Tibetans; and so many others? Nobody cares. Nobody wants to "liberate" them. It's only the Jews who are being asked to dismember their tiny country, less than half of the size of San Bernardino County in California.

The Arab countries (and Iran) are frantically arming themselves with the most dreadful weapons of mass destruction. As the world knows, it is for one purpose only—namely the destruction of Israel. Two or three nuclear weapons would wipe Israel off the map once and for all. Retaliation by Israel, the destruction of major Arab cities, and millions of Arab casualties, would not deter the Muslim fanatics from pursuing their goal. For them, it would be a small price to pay. With Israel dismembered, with five or six Arab states poised to attack with weapons of mass destruction, can anybody really doubt that a second Holocaust, even more terrible than the first one, is just about upon us? By its pious insistence on "justice for the Palestinians" and pursuit of the "peace process", by fomenting and profiting from the buildup of weapons of mass destruction solely destined for the destruction of Israel, the world actively promotes this second Holocaust. Deep down inside, does the world really want the Jews to live or to disappear?

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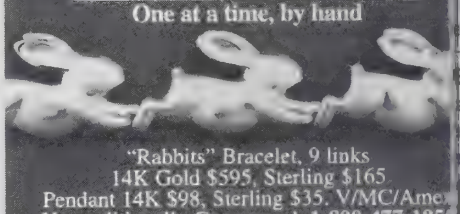
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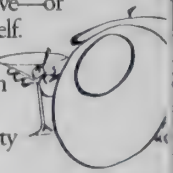
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ROUTLEDGE

LETTERS

Continued from page 9

cheerfully pay a woman who knows how to clean house to middle-class standards $80 to $100 for a day's work. Around here, self-employed cleaning ladies have to turn down work because their services are so much in demand.

I'm sorry Ehrenreich and her erstwhile colleagues feel exploited and abused. But there's one solution for that, the same one that's been there for women who have always faced job discrimination: if you can't get a decent job, make one for yourself.

Victoria Hay
Phoenix

Minimum-wage workers are not a homogeneous group of struggling working-class clichés. I am not generous or kind, and the crazy life I lead is not meant to be a sentimentalized platform for essayists who apparently view undercover journalism as yet another new-age tool for self-fulfillment.

G. K. Darby
New Orleans

Barbara Ehrenreich wonders if minimum-wage earners have some non-obvious resources to help them cope. Certainly they do: a mental-emotional toughness to do what needs doing, to approach the world as it is and on its own terms, not the world they wish it to be.

Roy Shaw
Ashland, Oreg.

You don't have to be a high school dropout or a welfare mother to be stuck in the insecure world of temp work at miserable wages. You could spend ten years at the University of Kansas getting a Ph.D. in political science only to find that there are almost no tenure-track teaching positions open nationwide for anyone like you.

Without the right certification, degree, or connection, a life of borderline poverty, debt, and downward mobility awaits those foolish enough to pursue the arts and sciences route. In a world run by users, one must, above all, be useful.

Raymond Birt
Kansas City, Mo.

As a waitress, I can back up Barbara Ehrenreich's conclusion that foreigners and "Visible Christians" often tip horribly. But I and my colleagues would add another category to that list: left-wing liberals. A "Power to the People" button means you're about to get stiffed; a graying ponytail and a Greenpeace credit card mean getting run around like crazy for an insultingly low tip. Ehrenreich's own group of "faded ex-hippie types in shorts with long hair pulled back in braids" triggers inward groans from the foot soldiers of the service industry. And socialists, for some reason, never tip at all.

So, in reflection, I am happy to see you print Ehrenreich's excellent account of the lifestyles of the poor and unknown. Perhaps some of your readers will realize that it is not enough to sympathize with the working poor; they actually must respect us when they see us in person and literally put their money where their mouths are.

Hannah C. Feldman
Baltimore

EDITOR'S NOTE

Beginning this month, the Double Acrostic by Thomas H. Middleton will no longer appear in our pages. The June issue will introduce a new Map feature, which will appear monthly on the magazine's last page; Richard Maltby's puzzle will move to the penultimate page.

We are deeply grateful to Thomas Middleton for his sixteen years of partnership with *Harper's Magazine*. His work has been a joy as well as a challenge to the magazine's readers, and we wish to convey our profound thanks.

Readers interested in a book collection of his *Harper's* acrostics should contact: Franklin Square Press, c/o LPC Group, (800) 243-0138 or (800) 626-4330.

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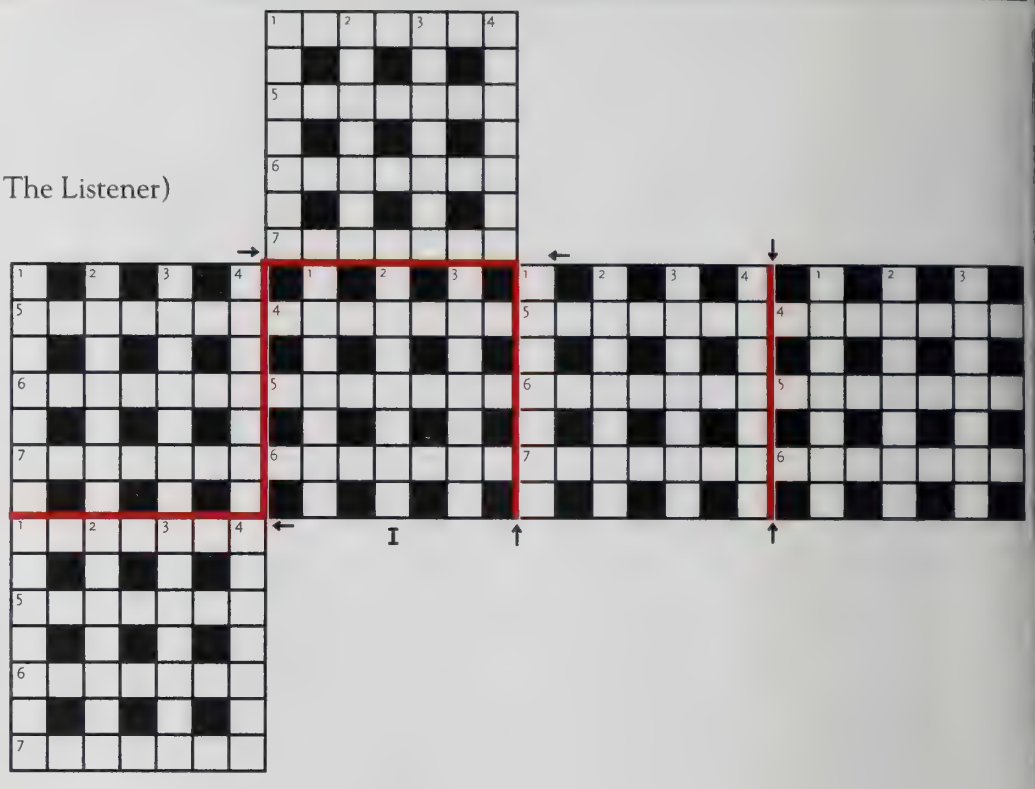
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Faces

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.
(with acknowledgments to Jeffec of The Listener)



Folded as indicated, the diagram would form a cube. Along each edge, adjacent letters are the same. Only Face I is indicated; solvers must locate the other five. Parallel answers on each face read in the same direction. In Face I, they read left to right and top to bottom. In other faces, however, they may read right to left or bottom to top. All answers are of seven letters. Note that Down clues are listed first on each face.

Answers include one proper name. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 88.

FACE I

1. A large area right inside a smaller area
2. Military man, a not very good one, is holding everything back
3. Carbo cocktail, by the tumbler
4. Plug pulling back hack in mid-autumn, with nothing in it
5. Long car races to stop before our maneuvers Sunday
6. More than once—fleet as a mare—run back inside

FACE II

1D. Dogs that can be found in streets
2. Successful runner in meet celebrated on returning
3. Is cross, bursts out "Cut it out!"
4. Dump on upsetting separate work of art
1A. For a second time, plants' sound fades away
5. Pitchfork Kid receives explosive coverage
6. Way of learning about class decoration
7. Scrapes off astronomical numbers

FACE III

1. Make-up for bad dresser
2. What cutthroats and rattlesnakes share? Old clothing
3. Aced but confused about illegal CIA bugs
4. Words for keener weak responses that are unsuitable?
5. Keep the original writing about fighting man's name
6. Josh, the avant-garde composer, creates organ housing
7. Great service includes it—or, conversely, books by hot writers!

FACE IV

1. Have they chased through the old West—yes, finally
2. Phone company tracking unit goes around making an end to vermin!
3. Stickier circle in the rug getting cleaned up
4. Dark and gloomy hatchet slayers
5. Being kind of green, creates havoc taking the top off bustle
6. Ministers holding a concealed weapon—the dregs
7. Sort coins?

FACE V

1D. Go back, Rex (Way out!)
2. Fellow traveler, after coming back around, split—he just won't stay
3. Will extra money for packages here in Bayonne get left behind
4. Old poets' uplifting personal quality: unending gentleman at heart
1A. Getting to the root of the revolutionary character
5. Peel wrote about German hero? Quite the opposite!
6. Flirts sent into disarray about Frost
7. Overrun, yes, but not completely by an asset

FACE VI

1. Starts to submerge ocean liner under berg, lifeboat's end disappearing in water
2. Train for uterine transplants
3. Came into $100—this gets you put into the middle of things
4. Drawings of laurels?
5. Puzzled cluer, if making match
6. Bit an unnamed person

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Faces," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by April 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the June issue. Winners of the February puzzle, "Heart Transplants," are Gayle Dempsey, Needham, Massachusetts; Carole Gubeno, Elyria, Ohio; and Marion Yalof, New York, New York.


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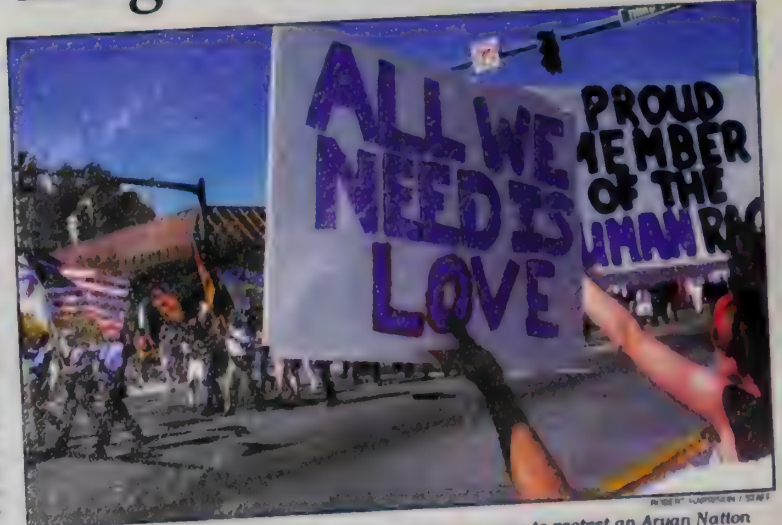
BELGRADE, YUGOSLAVIA

WHEN an earthquake hit northern Serbia last week, the people of Belgrade thought it was the Big One – not a natural disaster, but the bomb attack NATO had been threatening after seven months of violence down in Kosovo.

I was in that southern province at the time, just a three-hour drive away, and my phone began to ring. One caller was Aca, my best friend in Belgrade. He was wise

Idaho Battles Image as Haven for Hate

A white-supremacist group marched here July 18
State has most hate groups per capita.



by Brad Knickerbocker
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

COEUR D'ALENE, IDAHO- When someone says "Idaho," do you think: "First state with a Jewish governor, first state where a native American won statewide office; fourth state to allow women the right to vote; first state to pass the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)?"

Or do you think: "Site of the shoot-out with white separatist Randy Weaver at Ruby Ridge, home of James "Bo" Gritz, ex-Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke's running mate in the 1992 presidential race; place where former Los Angeles police detective

Human rights group turned out en masse to protest an Aryan Nation



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LETTERS

All About Me

In "God's Spies," Lewis Lapham's essay on the practice of surveillance and the striving for federal omniscience [Notebook, February], he observes that Americans no longer resist governmental invasions of privacy. This can't be surprising. Americans have apparently come to loathe privacy, their own or anybody else's. A week's worth of casual channel surfing gives the proof. Take MTV's *Loveline*, on which a real young woman—someone's daughter or, quite possibly, someday somebody's mother—voluntarily called in recently to discuss her boyfriend's desire to insert not just his penis but both testicles during intercourse. She wanted, as I recall, to know if this was normal or at all dangerous. Or watch *America's Funniest Home Videos*, on network television, which never seems to want for homemade tapes of people falling down drunk at their own weddings or getting hit in the groin by flying objects. These tapes are not seized by heartless governmental investigators; people submit them willingly, gleefully. Need I even mention Jerry Springer?

Americans who can't get on television can always turn to the Internet. Millions of them have put up Web pages devoted to themselves. In these bizarre advertisements for Brand Me, they eagerly give away, to a global audience, their names, addresses, birth dates, lists of favorite movies and CDs, and sexual activities, often illuminating any or all of these interests with digitized photos.

So who cares about privacy? The only invasive police state Americans would fear is one that forced them to stop talking about themselves.

A. Kam Napier
Honolulu

In reading Lewis Lapham's typically penetrating analysis of the individual and society, I felt a familiar rise of fear. When had I felt it before? When airlines, playing on America's alarm over terrorism, began requiring photo identifications of passengers; when authorities, using parents' fear of the (highly unlikely) abduction of their children, began recommending that we have our kids fingerprinted; when law-enforcement agencies, preying on our hysteria over drunk driving, requested and received broader authority to stop drivers. Every time I see a sign of the further erosion of our constitutional rights, I am deeply disturbed and yes, afraid.

Cecilia Kingman Miller
El Cerrito, Calif.

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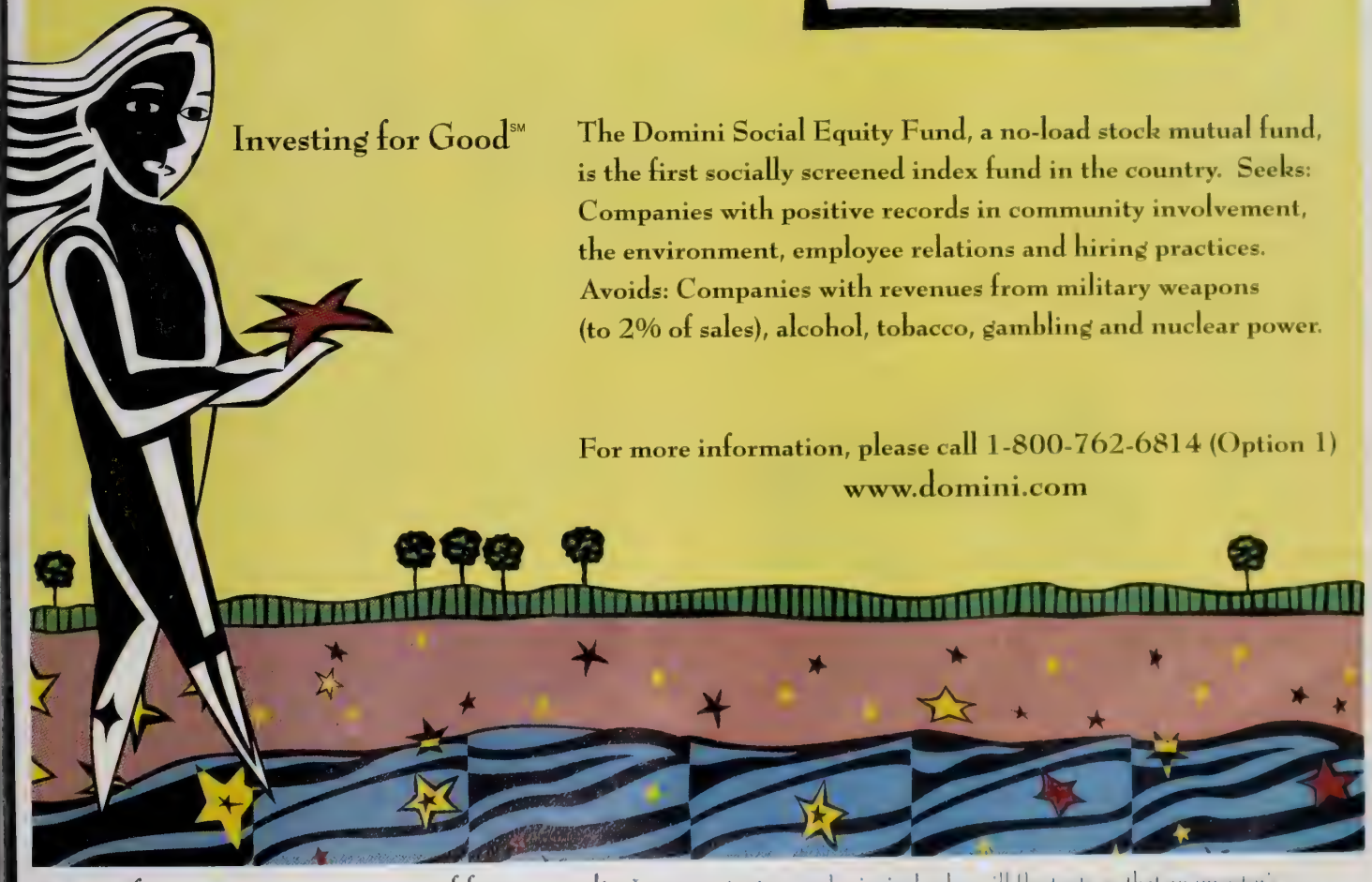
"Don't bother, dear," her mother said,
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and looked at the starfish in her hand.

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Defense Mechanisms

"The [illegible] Talk" by Matthew Klam [February] vividly confirms that an aircraft carrier conducting operations is a scene of thunderous chaos orchestrated with balletic grace and precision. No one experiencing it for the first time can fail to be overwhelmed by the scope, speed, complexity, and awesome power of these operations. I once served as an escort to Walt Disney onboard a carrier, and he was so impressed that he contemplated encapsulating the experience in a Disneyland attraction. Unfortunately, after some back-of-the-envelope calculations, he concluded that catapulting and arrested landings, even simulated, would cost more than the park could charge. During my more than thirty years in the Navy, including an assignment as a carrier commanding officer, I introduced people like Danny Kaye, Ann-Margret, and Robert Mitchum to the carrier experience, and they all had much of the gosh-golly-gee-whiz reaction that dominates Klam's story. It is difficult to resist.

I agree that flight operations at sea represent the most demanding performance of routine military operations in peace or war. But what first-time observers don't know is that the carrier is a place where routine governs. The long history of carrier aviation has been shaped by bloody lessons learned. Such lessons have led, step by step, to the capabilities that Klam describes with the wonder of the uninitiated. Everything he witnessed was performed by teams so trained and tested in each task that they were repeating familiar routines. The success of this learning process has led to continuous improvements in training, equipment, standards, and procedures; the result is that carrier aviation today is ten times safer than it was just forty years ago, a fact not reflected anywhere in Klam's account.

I have served on at least fifteen carriers and made 500 landings, day and night, many on decks half the size of the USS *Eisenhower*. It does not take a superhero to fly from a carrier when the pilot is properly trained and fully supported by equally well-trained crews aboard ship.

On a much broader issue, the assertion that a carrier is "90,000 tons of diplomacy" sounds more impressive than it is. It is difficult to demonstrate that the carrier task groups continuously patrolling foreign seas restrain any expressions of violence. They certainly have not inhibited ethnic wars or acts of terrorism against U.S. embassies, for instance. Recall that when we dispatched two carrier groups during Chinese navy missile exercises in the Straits of Taiwan in 1995, the Chinese were so intimidated that they expanded the area of their operations and extended the duration of the missile firings. Gunboat diplomacy isn't what it used to be.

Eugene J. Carroll Jr.
Deputy Director
Center for Defense Information
Washington, D.C.

Matthew Klam's seductive report on the life of Navy air-strike pilots fails to expose the flip side of their missions: the horror of death, destruction, and misery reaped on countless innocent foreigners.

Klam may have had a difficult time reconciling his once bright-eyed college friend, Doug, with the killing machine that the U.S. Navy created. Equally baffling to Klam is how Doug could risk his own life for "national security" with a wife and baby at home. The rest of us should acknowledge the nasty paradox that Klam's homage neglected to make explicit: the American military, in its supposedly benign attempts to stabilize world conflict, actually presents the biggest danger to human life. Let us not forget this during the unraveling of Kosovo.

Krister Knapp
Boston

I was a third-class petty officer in Jimmy Carter's Navy, aboard the USS *America*. Matthew Klam's descriptions of carrier life were generally accurate. But his preachiness about how the United States projects its sea power is unfair to his friend and demeans his dangerous job. If Klam really wants to know how he "lost" his friend, he should enlist, or go to officers' training and get a commission. Years later, he might experience, and thus understand, why a sailor's ego, "the size of a cathedral," comes in handy on the razor's edge between life and death.

Barry Nelson
Saginaw, Mich.

As a retired Navy commander and pilot with 2,700 flight hours and 502 carrier landings, I read Matthew Klam's story with an ever increasing sense of discomfort at his inability to come to grips with what the mission of the military truly is: to be able to kill people and destroy things. Klam seems to be unable to relate to the pilots he meets unless he manufactures an angst for them about their purpose. I did not relish the thought of killing people when I was on active duty, but I did not shrink from it either. If you can't deal with that possibility, you have no business being in the military.

Has Klam ever studied history? Does he think our independence from England was won cheaply? Or the World War II struggle against Germany and Japan? Our veterans would have given much to have had the weapons that Klam describes with such distaste, and for a simple reason: to have saved American lives.

When the world powers renounce violence as a mean of achieving political ends, I will happily support the elimination of the military. Until that time (and I don't expect it soon) we better have a military that is at least equal to everyone else's. That means being able to kill the other guys and destroy their ability to fight back—quickly, efficiently, and without apology.

So welcome to the gruesome reality, Mr. Klam. Whole nations wish us, you and me, ill simply because we are Americans. And don't forget that the USS *Eisenhower* is a ship, just like the *Titanic*, and can sink if struck hard enough.

Donald Conklin
Virginia Beach, Va.

Conscience With One's Wrestling

Dennis Cass seems to view Jesse Ventura's election to the governorship of Minnesota as a victory for yahoos ["An Action Figure for All Seasons," February], but many of us disagree. Ventura may not be a man of refinement, but he is a man of considerable intelligence, competence, and determination. This, we hope, will help compensate for his lack of political experience.

Although he has been much criticized for not having detailed policies worked out before his election, Ventura did have a platform. His message stressed personal responsibility, lower taxes, reduced government interference in citizens' lives, and better resistance to influence-peddlers. This is a very welcome message in a political age characterized primarily by irresponsibility, abuse of power, higher taxes, and corporate welfare.

When our voting choices are limited to self-righteous hypocrisy versus sanctimonious hypocrisy, socialism versus intolerance, bigger government and higher taxes versus much bigger government and higher taxes, then a different approach that better respects the individual is sorely needed. Instead of being disdainful of Minnesotans, many of us are thankful to them for a breath of political change. If Ventura handles his governorship well and remains loyal to his stated principles, I'd vote for him for president.

Philip Boncer
San Diego

Dennis Cass wonders "what is next, whether somewhere in America there is a birthday-party magician destined to be president." What's next may be, for Cass, the ultimate evil: a country where anybody could become president.

Marc S. Lazard
Brooklyn, N.Y.

At a time when candidates borrow tips from the entertainment industry on how to be camera-friendly, is it really surprising that a professional

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entertainer can make short work of his opponents? Isn't a candidate's "name recognition" another term for "celebrity"? Was Oliver North elected for his sound legislative record?

Cass's main fear, perhaps a valid one, is that the public is an ass. His description of Ventura's election party is awash in unbridled contempt for the voters he encountered, as if somehow the citizenry's right to participate in the political process ought to be determined by how well they dress, comport themselves, or hold their liquor (this yardstick would have disqualified much of the Continental Congress). We self-righteously say that people who don't vote get the government they deserve, while behind closed doors we whisper that people who don't vote get the government that's good for them, so be quiet and don't ruin a good thing. We've been lulled into complacency by the belief that those who follow, understand, and are passionate about the political process in a representative republic will tend to vote, while those who follow, understand, and are passionate about *Melrose Place* will tend to notice it's Election Day only when the returns preempt programming.

Perhaps this fear misses the point. Sure, Ventura's celebrity put him over the top, but perhaps Cass's neighbor, who voted for Ventura "for the hell of it," represents a positive change in American politics: the willingness to roll the dice on door number three. Many of us are weary of the tired posturing of the two-party system. When there are but two parties, it is inevitable that the focus of both will be to tip the seesaw. Power eclipses good ethics and good governing.

Can we, at last, return to a government of people from all walks of life performing a temporary service? Cass sneers at the infamous porn star turned politician in Italy but forgets the playwright-politician in Czechoslovakia.

So while I won't be "woof-woofing" with the frat boys, I am willing to give The Body a chance. After all, is he less intelligent than Dan Quayle or less honest than Clinton or Ronald Reagan? The worst thing that can happen is he'll do a lousy job as governor, not a new phenomenon in any state, and in four years they'll elect the Vikings' mascot.

Noah Gregoropoulos
Chicago

Dennis Cass gives the impression that Minnesota must be populated by nobody but drunken ice fishermen.

Column after column details the mob-rule mania of frat boys and undersexed, uneducated housewives, but Cass's observation that "except for those over sixty or earning more than $100,000, Jesse carried every demographic" is significant.

Ventura was elected not only by brewski-swilling, bratwurst-belching bikers but by people who went to college, hold good jobs, and understand politics and economics, and perhaps too well.

The cynicism here is not that of Minnesota's voters, who still dare to hope that people can fix their own political system. It lies with Cass, who seems to suggest that adults should not be entrusted to elect their own leaders, given the chance that they might make a mistake.

Erik Rye
Washington, D.C.

Thank you for publishing Dennis Cass's report on the election of Jesse Ventura as governor of our formerly fair state. It was a needed analgesic.

Ventura's win was a victory for all those who equate bellowing at the idiot politicians on the tube with astute political commentary. It was a victory for all those (many) who can't discern between the ickyness of politics and the value and difficulty of day-to-day governmental operations, and a victory for those who, whenever there's a budget surplus, break out in cries of "Gimme back my twenty-five dollars!" rather than realize that the state might use the money for roads, transit, schools, hospitals, and other improvements of the public weal.

Since his election, Ventura has gathered some smart people around him and has said a few smart things. However, he also got a special permit to carry a pistol in the state capitol, told a crowd of poor adults seeking college tuition support that they should help themselves (just like he did!) and not look to the state for a damned dime, angrily stalked out of press conferences when reporters asked questions that rattled him, and threatened to bring down the prosecutorial weight of Minnesota on a grandmotherly state employee who created a Valentine's Day card bearing a cartoon likeness of him, feather boa and all. In the same vein, he made testosterous noises about Garrison Keillor's new wan little satiron of him, claiming that Minnesota's self-appointed satiric deity had no right to monkey with his own carefully wrought public image. I could go on. But I won't.

Phil Freshman
St. Louis Park, Minn.

Blood Offering

It was in the spirit of "Necessary Incivilities," Tony Kushner's essay about the beating death of openly gay student Matthew Shepard [Readings, January], that I recently took it upon myself to assign blame at the very first service of Southeast Christian Church, a brand-new, $78 million complex in Louisville, Kentucky. Southeast is one of the nation's ten largest churches by attendance. Nondenominational and conservative, the church is known for its "love the sinner, hate the sin" theology that Kushner poignantly characterizes as "unimpeachably civil hypocrisy." My indictment simply consisted of standing up in the middle of the service, before the flock of 4,000, and shouting the substance of Luke 19:46—"My father's house is a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves." Unlike the Jesus of Luke, I did not drive the faithful out of the temple with a whip, nor did I refer to those assembled as homicidal liars. Nonetheless, I was promptly arrested, and a charge of "disorderly conduct" is pending.

Surely my behavior is representative of the "death of civil discourse" that, Kushner reminds us, is lament-

d by the Pope. Like Kushner, I ould gladly enjoy a mild-mannered nversation if only the Christian ght would take the gun away from y head. But nay, it has long emed, as Kushner points out, that ne only language such jockeys of od and the millions who tune them on television and radio understand that which is writ in blood.

I applaud *Harper's* for having the urage to publish Kushner's soul-renching essay. I would submit at it is only by being confronted ith the truth of Kushner's claim—at gains in democracy and freedom ave long required blood offer-ngs—that we, the fractious com-unities that make up this country f dreams and nightmares, might d ourselves of the farce of civil iscourse in the interests of civic sponsibility.

avid Waggoner
uisville, Ky.

Unlucky Dogs

The last sentence of "Going to the ogs," David Samuels's story about reyhound racing in Florida [Febru-y], in which Bertha Lavoie says of er Class-D greyhound, "He just ves to be loved. That's his prob-m. That's what makes it so hard for im to win," is deadly accurate. Sim-ly put, the dogs who are loved and oiled do not make effective com-etitors. That leaves few guesses as how the serious contenders must e treated.

dy Kody Paulsen
irector, Greyhound Companions of New Mexico
lbuquerque, N. Mex.

Because greyhound racing is not a ort about fast dogs but a form of ming in which economic interests ill always prevail over any concern r the dogs, rather heinous abuse of ese animals is common. Approxi-ately one million greyhounds have en killed in the seventy-year his-ry of the "sport" in the United tates, and an estimated 25,000 ore will die this year. Media-docu-

Continued on page 79

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NOTEBOOK

The spring shows

By Lewis H. Lapham

If it was necessary to tolerate in other people everything that one permits in oneself, life would be unbearable.

—Georges Courteline

During the first two weeks in March, five prospective Republican presidents declared themselves available for next year's nomination, and the impression was that of runway models parading across the stage of a fashion show—walk, flounce, pause, stare (with attitude) at the important buyers of department-store political product, turn, pout, walk, and wait to see who sends money. Not surprisingly, none of the candidates—George W. Bush (governor of Texas), Lamar Alexander (former governor of Tennessee), Patrick Buchanan (renowned journalist), Steve Forbes (heir to a swell fortune), and Elizabeth Dole (faithful wife)—said anything likely to upset the editors of *Women's Wear Daily* or the *New York Times*. They chose to be seen, not heard; to exhibit, with dapper gestures and modish styles of rhetorical address, the sense of moral elegance that had been missing from the nation's banquet circuit ever since President Bill Clinton (a vulgar person and a tasteless lout) had moved into the White House with his saxophone and his bongo drum.

Together with an impressive lack of relevant experience, the five candidates brought to the spring shows their belief that under the influence of Clinton's appalling example, the American people had fallen into slovenly sexual habits, forgotten their table manners, lost respect for the rule of law. Such behavior could not be allowed to continue. The time had come for everybody in the social studies class to pay attention and look at the picture of Teddy Roosevelt, and how better to begin than by admiring the manliness of Buchanan, the piety of Alexander, the lineage of Bush, the net worth of Forbes, the gender of Dole?

Admire, not bother with questions. Forbes put up his show on the Internet (complete with a portfolio of designs from his 1996 campaign); Dole declined to speak to reporters when making her announcement to a preferred audience at a convention hall in Des Moines. Introduced by four local citizens pressed into service as allegories (a farmer, a working mother, a high-school teacher, a twelve-year-old girl), the candidate said that she had made herself manifest in human form because she wanted to combat "evil in American society." No, she didn't have any ideas, at least not yet, but very, very soon, after she had listened to the voice in the divine cloud of the opinion polls, she would know what people wanted to hear, and then she would bring them bandages and apple pies. She was no politician ("and frankly, I think that's a plus today") but just a woman, a wonderful, wonderful woman, of course, who had been appointed to all these wonderful, wonderful government offices in Washington and knew a lot of wonderfully important people, not least among them her husband, the once-upon-a-time senator and doomed presidential candidate, his image recently revived by cosmetic surgery and his Q-rating enhanced by his appearances as a television shill for penile resurrection. Maybe in a month or two Mrs. Dole would know what to say about Kosovo or welfare reform, but in the meantime, and while her speechwriters were dealing with the paperwork, here she was, the Queen of Hearts, wearing her wonderful red suit and her wonderful pearls.

In contrast to Mrs. Dole's trunk show, Mr. Bush presented his line of civic-minded sportswear in the manner of a Paris opening. Lots of flashbulbs, the splendor of the Governor's Mansion in Austin, Texas, ten testimonials instead of four, dignified Republican personages seated among the potted ferns, strong endorsements ("the best of the Republican Party," "Lincoln, Reagan—and now, George W. Bush"), an audience buzzing with the presence of New York fund-raising consultants, Hollywood voice coaches, once and future secretaries of state.

The candidate smiled for the cameras, paced back and forth on the dais to show that his tie had lost nothing of its old Episcopalian swing; but no, he didn't wish to say anything other than "It's George W. Bush that's going to be the president; any rival who criticizes my father makes a huge mistake." The bravura of the setting was sufficient to the purpose, and why spoil the effect with impromptu remarks? The brand name spoke for itself. Bush was right there in the stores with Hugo Boss—"vibrant," "conservative," "well-connected," "compassionate," in tune with the trend away from Monica and the Blowfish.

Buchanan announced in New Hampshire, the state in which he had defeated Mrs. Dole's then-unrejuvenated husband in the 1996 primary campaign; Alexander announced in Nashville, Tennessee, in the state capitol where he once had occupied the office of governor. Because neither candidate could afford the price of glamour—no balloons, no band music, no celebrities stopping by on their way to East Hampton or Brentwood, nothing to show that hadn't already been seen in Bloomingdale's or on *The McLaughlin Group*—the presentations lacked panache. The poses were outdated, the couture a little sad, and most of what was on view was the vanity of the gentlemen handing out their own press releases. Buchanan dressed his small and poorly lighted stage in Manchester with slogans instead of flags, exhorting his sparse audience (middle-aged and wary, the women wearing windbreakers, the men wearing boots and winter caps) to protect "the rights of the innocent unborn," to "call down the curtain on the sorry soap opera in the White House," to "mount up and ride to the sound of the guns." Which guns and where pointed Buchanan didn't say, possibly because he was without a cell phone and not closely enough in touch with Private Ryan. Nor did he appear to be in close touch with the shifts in the public mood since his name was last on the ballot in New Hampshire. Drawing on the furious vocabulary of late-nineteenth-century populism, he raged against the selfish greed in Wall Street; the rhetoric was as crude and as gaudily colored as a poster promoting Buffalo Bill Cody at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, but it didn't excite the passions of people comforted by the stock-market prices that in early March were reaching record highs.

Candidate Alexander at least had taken the trouble to read the papers; knowing that his image needed a thorough makeover, he had abandoned his theme as the honest man from nowhere, the outside-of-Washington teller of country truths last seen in a red plaid shirt in the 1996 primary campaign and reported missing somewhere in the mountains west of Chattanooga. Now he came Mr. Bluegrass. The governor showed up in a dark suit and red tie—a fine portrait of an inside-the-Beltway kind of guy, glad to sit in anybody's lobby, proud to say that when he walked into the White House he would know "from the first day . . . exactly what to do." His tone echoed the complacence of Steve Forbes, who had informed his friends on the Internet that whereas President Clinton had given the American people a government to be "ashamed of," President Forbes would give them a government to be "proud of."

Because the five declarations of presidential intent occurred within the short span of fifteen days, they could be seen as segments of the same montage, and the humor of the proceedings followed from the several degrees of separation between the candidates on the runway and the audiences on whom they bestowed the favor of their great good news. The would-be presidents spoke from the rostra of wealth and privilege, if not possessed of their own substantial fortunes then bankrolled by the moneyed interests who could afford to bet $60 million on the roulette table of a presidential campaign. None of them wished to change or remake the world, and nobody, not even Buchanan, was talking about revolution. Why should they? Who in his or her right mind would want to harm the system that provided them with their hairstylists and their microphones?

Absent any threatening political content or purpose, the presentations substituted style for substance, religion for government, questions of personal conduct for those of public policy. The candidates differed on narrow points of doctrine—Buchanan opposed to abortion in any and all circumstances, Dole, Bush, Alexander, and Forbes willing to grant exceptions for rape—but they were unanimous in the opinion that nothing was wrong with American society that couldn't be corrected by prompt improvements in the American character. The country was rich and happy and ripe with golden opportunity, but too many of its citizens had become careless and disruptive (also promiscuous, surly, overweight, and badly dressed); they'd been watching too much bad television, buying too many jellied condoms and anarchic rap songs, lying around too long in the Florida sun. Fortunately all was not lost. The slackers had only to behold the candidates standing before them to know that salvation was near at hand. Behold, admire, learn by example if not by rote. Civility, my friends, decency, ethics, pearls; get hold of yourselves, read the *Wall Street Journal*, and *Martha Stewart Living* and remember that one never wears cashmere in the rain.

The rendering of politics as fashion statement no doubt can be understood as proof of the country's immense prosperity and a tribute to the success of its experiments with virtual reality. A four-year lease on the White House costs a good deal less than a low-wattage radio station in Wichita, Kansas, and why begrudge a red-blooded and well-meaning American plutocrat the pleasure of playing with the Washington toys? It's still early in the season, and we have yet to hear from Rosie O'Donnell or Donald Trump. Let the Dow Jones Industrial Average approach the altitude of 15,000 points and maybe we can change politics into aesthetics and thus discover a candidate as engaging as the Roman emperor Nero, another wealthy and condescending amateur who sought to amaze his audience with the miracle of his presence.

The standard histories dwell on Nero's cruelty and sexual pathology—his murdering of his mother, the prior emperor, three wives, several hundred near or distant relatives; his dressing himself in the skins of wild animals to stimulate his lust. The old books never fail to tell the apocryphal story about his setting fire to the city of Rome, but they seldom mention his career as an artist. Nero fancied himself as a singer, also as a player of the lyre, and prior to competing for a prize, he reminded the other contestants that if they made the mistake of singing too well they could look forward to the additional honor of an early death. His voice, by all accounts, was feeble and usually out of tune, but he was fond of the Greek proverb "Unheard melodies are never sweet," and no matter how often he repeated the remark it never failed to

spire an agreeable murmur of prompt sent. The emperor almost always preferred the role of soloist, but from time time he agreed to appear in operat- tragedies, taking the part of a god or ddess improved for the occasion with mask modeled either on his own face the face of his current mistress.

When Nero took his act on tour (to orinth or Naples or Alba Longa) he ldom traveled without an escort of 000 carriages, the road before him rinkled with perfume and the by- anders instructed to shower him with ngbirds. Nor did he forget to bring the struments of sustained applause, a oop of 5,000 young men, splendidly essed, and divided into three claques nown as "Bees" (who made a loud umming noise), "Roof Tiles" (who apped with cupped hands), and "Brick ats" (who clapped flat-handed).

Sometimes the emperor sang for ven hours, and during his recitals body was allowed to leave the the- er. Centurions locked the doors and ok attendance. Suetonius speaks of women in the audience giving birth, men being so bored with the music nd the applause that they furtively ropped down from the walls at the ar, or shammed dead and were car- ed away for burial."

Judging by the broad lack of response the Republican spring show, most verybody in the audience managed to ake it safely over the walls. The five shion statements clearly were still in eed of a little work—more excite- ent, maybe satin, maybe hats, possi- ly songbirds or something in platinum mé. Between now and the important penings next winter in Iowa and New lampshire the several design studios resumably will be busy with the tissue aper and the safety pins. But in the eantime the runway models will have depend upon the Roof Tiles, the rick Bats, and the Bees, their sound mplified and their numbers much in- reased by the technological genius of he news and entertainment media. Our modern institutional forms of the ncient Roman practice developed in ineteenth-century France. The own- rs of Paris theaters employed *claque- rs* in place of publicists, photogra- hers, television talk-show hosts, uthors of celebrity interviews; being rench and therefore fond of bureau- cracy, they established formal degrees of hired praise:

The Chef de Claque—who received money from the actors and free tickets from the management. He bribed the critics and paid the lower-ranking touts.

Commissaires—who memorized the better parts of the play, which they then brought to the attention of the important theatergoers, among whom they were tactfully placed.

Rieurs—who laughed, loudly, during comedies.

Pleureuses—women who wept, copiously, during melodramas.

Bisseurs—who shouted, frantically, for encores.

The swarm of cameras following Monica Lewinsky on her progress through a Washington airport or a New York restaurant wouldn't have surprised the Roman mob familiar with the expensive claques traipsing after the magnificence of the Emperor Nero, their eager and well-fed sycophancy presumably equivalent to the breathless enthusiasms of Barbara Walters. A careful student of the contemporary media no doubt could place our own latter-day *claqueurs* within the proper categories (Cokie Roberts a *commissaire*, Jerry Springer a *bisseur*, etc.), but I expect that most of the nation's leading commentators, in both the print and broadcast press, would find themselves among the *pleureux*. They have been mourning the loss of America's moral treasure ever since President Clinton's first term in office, and what they perceived as the disappointing result of last winter's impeachment trial prompted copious weeping about the debased character of the American electorate.

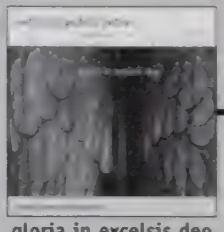
Let us hope that the new presidential-campaigning season presents them with reasons to make a joyful humming noise. The Bees enjoy giving of their best (pollinating the orchards of celebrity, supplying the buzz to *Variety* and *Newsweek*), but they like bright colors and the scent of scandalmongered sheets, and unless the politicians attract their fancy—maybe chiffon, maybe sunglasses—they might perish in the autumn frost, and then who will go to the election or dance at the Inaugural Ball? ■

You can't appreciate the future without first celebrating the past.

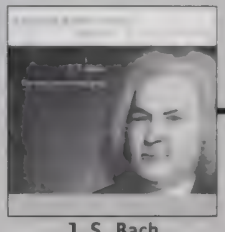
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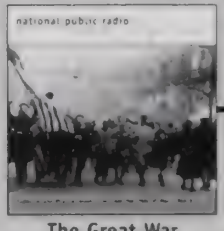
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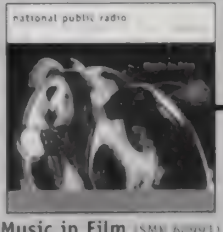
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HARPER'S INDEX

Rank of retired and housewife, among the most common "occupations" of donors to Bill Clinton's legal defense fund : 1,2

Chance that a member of the American Association of Retired Persons holds a paying job : 1 in 3

Rank of Bob Dole's 1996 e-mail list of supporters, among the largest campaign e-mail lists ever created : 1

riefing books with Al Gore's photo over Dan Quayle's bio printed for the 1999 Davos, Switzerland, economics forum : 3,100

Percentage of the 125 people included in 1999's *Flemings Who's Who in Central Banking* who list no "leisure pursuits" : 90

Number of the 15 Congress members whose net worth exceeds $19 million who are Democrats : 9

Chance that a mother of dependent children depicted on a prime-time network TV show holds a paying job : 1 in 3

Chances that a nonfictional American mother with children does : 2 in 3

Percentage of children born in New York City last year who are living in poverty : 52

Number of states in which families living at or below the federal poverty level are subject to income tax : 19

ercentage by which Jasper County, Texas, raised property taxes this year to finance the murder trial of John William King : 4.5

Number of times that a white man has been executed for killing a black man in Texas since 1860 : 0

Chance that a black woman living in the U.S. will be a victim of violence this year : 1 in 18

Chance that a Native American woman will be : 1 in 10

Rank of José, among the most popular names given boys born in California or Texas last year : 1

Percentage change since 1997 in the number of illegal immigrants deported by the U.S. : +51

Percentage change since 1997 in the annual number of people seeking asylum in Switzerland : +72

Chance that one of last year's applicants for Swiss asylum was a Turkish Kurd : 1 in 3

Estimated number of deaths for which Kurd rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan is accused of being responsible : 30,000

Estimated number for which Chile's Augusto Pinochet is accused of being responsible : 3,100

Estimated number of drug-related U.S. extradition requests to Mexico that are pending : 40

Chance that a day since December 28 has passed without U.S. or British forces bombing Iraq : 1 in 2

Value of the U.S. military equipment earmarked last year to aid Iraqi anti-Hussein groups : $97,000,000

Amount that has been used : 0

Amount Cambodia has agreed to pay a U.S. lobbying firm to "recast" Hun Sen's government "in a favorable light" : $550,000

Head of cattle that Hyundai's founder brought from South Korea last fall on a visit to North Korea's Kim Jong Il : 1,000

Number of elephants enrolled in painting schools in Thailand : 10

Average duration in hours of the stupor induced in Japanese beetles by the consumption of geraniums : 8

Number of the 25 species seriously affected by the 1989 *Exxon Valdez* Alaskan oil spill that have fully recovered : 2

Amount of the $5 billion that Exxon was ordered to pay in punitive damages in 1994 that it has paid : 0

Estimated amount that Exxon has earned by investing this money in the meantime : $5,000,000,000

Portion of the domestic oil-refining market that Standard Oil controlled prior to being broken up in 1911 : 9/10

Portion of the domestic market that the proposed merger between Exxon and Mobil will control : 1/7

Percentage change since 1997 in the number of antitrust investigations opened by the Federal Trade Commission : +234

Number of independent-counsel investigations since 1978 whose prosecutors and targets have not been made public : 2

Ranking points by which the name Monica has dropped in popularity among those given U.S. girls since 1997 : 24

Days the President should spend in jail "simply for hitting on a dog like" Paula Jones, according to O. J. Simpson : 30

Number of subscribers to PursuitWatch, an L.A. paging service that alerts customers when a high-speed chase is televised : 350

Number of subscribers to *Eternal Ink*, the official newsletter of the Christian Tattoo Association : 23

Figures cited have been adjusted for inflation and are the latest available as of March 1999. Sources are listed on page 70.

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READINGS

[E-mail]

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT: A CORRESPONDENCE

From an e-mail correspondence conducted this winter by the novelist Richard Bausch and Senator John Warner (R., Va.). Portions of the exchange appeared in the February 15 issue of the New York Observer. *Bausch is the author, most recently, of* Someone to Watch Over Me, *a collection of stories, published by HarperFlamingo.*

Date: Sat, 30 Jan 1999
Dear Senator Warner,

The impeachment of President Clinton is going to be remembered as the manner in which the radical right finally brought the Republican Party, the party of Lincoln, down. Nothing Clinton did or didn't do endangers the republic; this trial does.

I urge you to seek an end to this madness, this nearly McCarthyesque vendetta by a group of zealots who seem willing to trample everything in order to accomplish their purpose—what Senator Bumpers called "wanting to win too badly."

Sincerely,
Richard Bausch

Date: Mon, 01 Feb 1999
Dear Fellow Virginian:

It is important that you have provided me with your views concerning the impeachment of President Clinton. I share your deep concern, and I assure you that I am proceeding in a manner that aims to preserve the integrity of the United States Constitution and to provide fairness and due process to all involved parties.

I am listening carefully to the views of the people of Virginia, and I commit to you that I will reach decisions based not on politics but rather on the best interests of the nation.

Sincerely,
John Warner
United States Senator

Date: Mon, 01 Feb 1999
Dear Senator Warner,

Is it to be the contention of the party that ONLY Republicans are following the Constitution, and that the entire Democratic Party is trying to circumvent it? Americans are not the dupes some of your colleagues apparently think they are. The people, quite clearly, see this for what it is: a partisan attack on the presidency.

It is very difficult to suppose that the lines of conflict would fall so sharply along party lines if EVERYBODY were voting his conscience. I believe you are. I very much admired your refusal to support the election of Oliver North a few years back. I believe you have the courage to stand against the kind of animus toward a man that may end up changing this government against the expressed will of the people.

Sincerely,
Richard Bausch

Date: Thu, 04 Feb 1999
Dear Fellow Virginian:

It is important that you have provided me with your views concerning the impeachment of President Clinton. I share your deep concern, and I assure you that I am proceeding in a manner that aims to preserve the integrity of the United States Constitution and to provide fairness and due process to all involved parties.

I am listening carefully to the views of the people of Virginia, and I commit to you that I will reach decisions based not on politics but rather on the best interests of the nation.

Sincerely,
John Warner
United States Senator

Date: Thu, 04 Feb 1999
Dear Senator Warner,

I see from this answer that your writers have crafted a global response letter to be used in all cases. The letter THIS letter answers was the SECOND letter I sent, and was in response to THIS letter. So it is as though I am addressing one of those Chatty Cathy dolls, where you pull the string, and the same words come out, no matter what ELSE is said. In fact, I'm sure I'll get this same form letter in answer to THIS e-mail. I hope you are true to form.

Richard Bausch
(Fellow Virginian)

Date: Fri, 05 Feb 1999
Dear Fellow Virginian:

It is important that you have provided me with your views concerning the impeachment of President Clinton. I share your deep concern, and I assure you that I am proceeding in a manner that aims to preserve the integrity of the United States Constitution and to provide fairness and due process to all involved parties.

I am listening carefully to the views of the people of Virginia, and I commit to you that I will reach decisions based not on politics but rather on the best interests of the nation.

Sincerely,
John Warner
United States Senator

Date: Fri, 05 Feb 1999
Dear Senator Warner:

This is so much fun, this very direct and concerned correspondence. Let me say here that I think walla walla and didda didda and booka booka poo. Also, I think you should doola doola obla obla dip de dip dip. And it seems to me that our country badda bing badda boom badda ling ling ling, and that even so your responses show such pesty in flamma lamma ding dong.

So in these times when democracy is at breakfast, asleep in the arms of the alimentary bood, that you are certainly bendicky to the concerns of your liperamma damma fizzle foodee dingle dangle dreb of our society, and the good thing is that ordinary citizens can actually get the pring that you have their fandaglee doodily in mind as you press forward with the concerns of government.

Sincerely,
Richard Bausch

Date: Fri, 05 Feb 1999
Dear Fellow Virginian:

It is important that you have provided me with your views concerning the impeachment of President Clinton. I share your deep concern, and I assure you that I am proceeding in a manner that aims to preserve the integrity of the United States Constitution and to provide fairness and due process to all involved parties.

I am listening carefully to the views of the people of Virginia, and I commit to you that I will reach decisions based not on politics but rather on the best interests of the nation.

Sincerely,
John Warner
United States Senator

[Mission Statement]

THE REHABILITATION OF "THAT WOMAN"

From a press release issued in September by L. Mandy Stellman, a Milwaukee-based attorney and cofounder of Monicas With Attitude.

A new national support organization has been formed to help women named Monica. For months, innocent women with the name Monica or a derivative (e.g., Monique) have been heckled and ridiculed. It is hoped that Monicas will now band together, celebrate their name, and develop positive programs that will preserve and promote the good reputations that so many earlier Monicas have enjoyed (e.g., Monica Seles and St. Monica, the mother of St. Augustine). The name, historically, is derived from the Latin word meaning "adviser" or "nun."

Anyone may join, but women named Monica are needed.



"Pinocchio," a photograph by Keith Carter that was on display in March at the Howard Greenberg Gallery in New York City. Carter lives in Beaumont, Texas.

Date: Fri, 05 Feb 1999
Dear Senator Warner,

It really is time to call this off, since our relationship has moved to a state of such intimacy. When you say "Fellow Virginian," I know you mean so much more. I know this is more of your unusual reserve, your—how shall I put it?—sausage and eggs. I really am unable to continue, being married and a Catholic.

So regretfully I say farewell. One concerned citizen to a clambake; one Virginian to a baked Alaska. I remain ever faithful, ever the liver and onions, my lover, my poppyseed, my darling.

With sweat socks and deep appreciation,
Richard Bausch

Date: Mon, 08 Feb 1999
Dear Fellow Virginian:

It is important that you have provided me with your views concerning the impeachment of President Clinton. I share your deep concern, and I assure you that I am proceeding in a manner that aims to preserve the integrity of the United States Constitution and to provide fairness and due process to all involved parties.

I am listening carefully to the views of the people of Virginia, and I commit to you that I will reach decisions based not on politics but rather on the best interests of the nation.

Sincerely,
John Warner
United States Senator

Date: Mon, 08 Feb 1999
Dear Senator Warner,

May I request here, with all due respect and with full appreciation of our long-held affection for each other, that you stop harassing me with these letters. I have said that we must call this off, and I now again respectfully adjure you to cease.

I am especially troubled by your persistence in using your little endearment for me—do you mean it ironically? I only let my closest friends and associates call me "Fellow Virginian," and I

would think that, since we are going our separate ways, you would know that I wish you to revert back to your old term for me, the one that used to amuse you so much—oh, remember? You'd say it and then laugh so hard: "voter," you'd say, and then guffaw guffaw. It used to make you so silly, that word. You'd laugh and laugh. Remember? And then I'd say "representative government," and you'd have to run to the bathroom.

But that is all past. We have to move on now. Oh, well, all right, once more for you, for old times' sake, I'll use our endearment in closing.

I remain, then, trusting you to adhere to my wishes, your little "voter," your "Fellow Virginian,"

Richard Bausch

Date: Mon, 08 Feb 1999
Dear Fellow Virginian:

It is important that you have provided me with your views concerning the impeachment of President Clinton. I share your deep concern, and I assure you that I am proceeding in a manner that aims to preserve the integrity of the United States Constitution and to provide fairness and due process to all involved parties.

I am listening carefully to the views of the people of Virginia, and I commit to you that I will reach decisions based not on politics but rather on the best interests of the nation.

Sincerely,
John Warner
United States Senator

[Court Transcript]

THE BIA'S CAT-AND-MOUSE GAME

From the transcript of a November 23, 1998, hearing in a class-action suit brought against the federal government for mismanaging American Indian trust funds. Since the 1880s, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) has acted as a trustee for the Indians, leasing their lands to farmers, loggers, and oil companies; the accounts generated $400 million last year. But the BIA has no nationwide accounting system for the trusts, and in 1996, five plaintiffs sued the government on behalf of 500,000 Indian beneficiaries to repay the estimated $10 billion lost over the last century in undervalued lease payments and unsent checks. The government repeatedly failed to comply with court-ordered requests for documents, and on February 22, U.S. District Court Judge Royce C. Lamberth declared Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt and Secretary of the Treasury Robert Rubin in contempt. "I have never seen more egregious misconduct by the federal government," wrote Lamberth in his ruling. The suit is scheduled to go to trial this month. In the following transcript, attorney Lewis Wiener explains to Lamberth and plaintiff attorneys Thaddeus Holt and Dennis M. Gingold why the defense has missed a document-production deadline.

LEWIS WIENER: Your Honor, we are here to discuss how we are going to bring ourselves into compliance with the Court's order. Let me state that it was never the government's intent to willfully disregard that order. We have spent considerable time thinking about and in fact putting into motion the elements that need to be in place to allow us to produce documents for the five named plaintiffs.

We met with the plaintiffs on November 10. It was a very candid meeting. It was—I hope plaintiffs will agree—very beneficial. We cleared the air on several issues, and, more than anything else, we agreed that the kinds of disputes that led us down the wrong path last time will not recur. We discussed a great many issues, including the production of BIA documents.

It has been discovered, however, that the potential for hantavirus disease exists at the Albuquerque site [where some of the BIA documents are stored]. Hantavirus has a 50 percent mortality rate. Half the people who get it die. It's an enormously serious disease. The office cannot get to any of the documents until the facilities are cleaned up. But as soon as the facilities are accessible, the government plans to put this at the top of the list.

I'd like to call to testify Dr. Terry Yates. Good afternoon, Dr. Yates. Would you please review for the Court what you were asked to do in this case?

TERRY YATES: I was basically asked to assess the nature and extent of potential hantavirus infection in two warehouses in Albuquerque.

WIENER: What did you find?

YATES: The two facilities in Albuquerque are clearly contaminated with rodent feces. Dead mice were even found in some of the boxes. There are approximately 20,000 boxes in these warehouses, and, in my judgment, they certainly represent a potential danger. Let me point out that this kind of hantavirus is a BioSafety Level 4 virus. By comparison, AIDS is Level 2. This virus goes directly from rodents to humans, and we think the most common route is through inhalation of dust particles. The best analogy I can think of is if you ever sit in your house on a cold winter day and you see these little dust particles suspended in the air coming in with the sunlight—this virus can do that.



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So what we'll have to do is send a team wearing HEPA filter respirators into the warehouse, have them open every box, clean those boxes appropriately, transfer the material to new boxes if it's soiled or contaminated with urine or something, then shrink-wrap all those boxes with heavy plastic and put them into a hantavirus holding facility for fourteen days, just as an extra precaution to make sure that any virus particles are killed.

WIENER: As far as the individuals who would be doing this—can you just go out and get some part-time high school students to come in?

YATES: No. You have to have people that are specifically trained for doing this kind of work.

WIENER: Dr. Yates, bottom line: how long will it take to clean up the Albuquerque facilities based on the protocol you have suggested?

YATES: Well, being unaware of everything that's in all of the boxes, there may be some variation in this estimate—but we can probably take care of those facilities in two and a half to three months.

WIENER: Your Honor, if it please the Court, our next witness is Mr. Charlie Janes. Please state your name and title for the record.

CHARLES JANES: Charles Janes. I'm chief of the Division of Safety Management for the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

WIENER: Mr. Janes, have any of the other BIA document-storage facilities been inspected?

JANES: Yes. So far we've screened Crow Creek, Rosebud, Yankton, Fort Berthold, Fort Totten, Turtle Mountain. All were free of infestation, and we've let the records folks know that record retrieval could commence at those sites.

WIENER: Do you have a timetable by which at least an initial screening of the approximately seventy offices could be completed?

JANES: Thirty days or so would be a reasonable estimate.

WIENER: How long would it take to clean up any sites where infestation is identified?

JANES: Cleanup is a completely separate issue. We don't have people out there who are capable of this. There are a handful at CDC, Dr. Yates has a handful. I think there are some researchers in Bozeman, Montana, and maybe some at Yavapai College in Arizona. I just don't know what resources we can bring to the cleanup issue.

WIENER: Yield to Mr. Holt, Your Honor.

THADDEUS HOLT: Your Honor, Mr. Gingold will address briefly the question of compliance up till now with the Court's outstanding production orders.

LAMBERTH: All right.

DENNIS M. GINGOLD: Your Honor, not a single document-production order, scheduling order, or document-production request has been satisfied. On December 24, 1996, plaintiffs served the first formal request for production of documents. No documents have been provided. On June 5, 1998, a second formal request was issued. Most of these documents have been withheld as privileged. And we've received nothing with regard to our third and fourth requests of June 11 and October 19, and the original closing date for document production was November 17.

We recognize that there is a serious problem in Albuquerque, New Mexico, but not

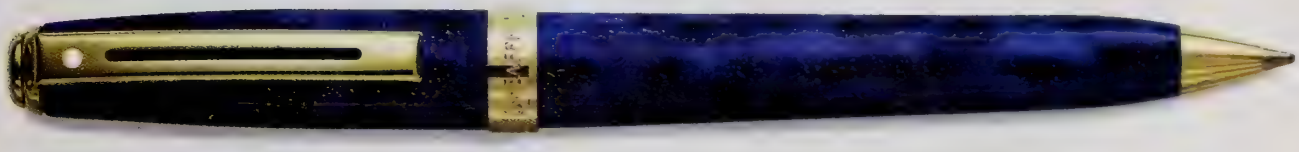
[Poster]

A PLEA FOR HERBAL RENEWAL



This poster is part of an effort by Montana's Fort Peck tribes to discourage overharvesting of the purple coneflower (Echinacea augustifolia). *In 1997, Americans spent $80 million on echinacea, an herbal remedy thought to prevent colds. In February, Dustin Solberg of* High Country News *reported that the coneflower, once abundant in the West, is growing scarce. Last summer Medicine Man Botanicals of Fort Peck paid local coneflower diggers $1.1 million; Curley Youpee, the reservation's cultural resources director, designed the poster above in response to the "gold-rush mentality." The statewide group Friends of Echinacea has proposed a bill to limit coneflower collection on which Montana's House of Representatives will vote this spring.*

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"N34°11.642'W116°06.663'," by Los Angeles artist John Divola, from his series "Isolated Houses, High Desert." His work was on display last summer at the Patricia Faure Gallery in Santa Monica, California.

one of our named plaintiffs is in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Our clients are waiting and waiting for their money. One of our named plaintiffs has died since the beginning of this litigation. What has been done? I mean, we're talking a year, two years ago this Court issued the first order of production, and today we are not much further ahead than we were back then. How many more years are we going to go?

WIENER: Your Honor, I just have to throw up my hands. I don't know why plaintiffs need these documents. They don't need the documents of the five named plaintiffs for purposes of conducting their analysis on how to fix the system. They agreed—

LAMBERTH: No, no, no. I ordered it, and you can't raise the question whether they need it.

WIENER: But that's why we came here today with a plan on how we were going to produce documents for the five named plaintiffs.

LAMBERTH: I understand.

WIENER: And we said—

LAMBERTH: And an answer for why you haven't produced things that I ordered two years ago. You can't answer that.

WIENER: Your Honor, all that I can tell you is that the department has used its best efforts.

LAMBERTH: Well, they're pretty poor, aren't they?

WIENER: Your Honor, I—that is for you to say, not me.

[Software]

A NEW TOY FOR THE WAR ROOM

From promotional material for GeoVoter, a computer program designed to help Republican candidates target potential supporters. The software was used in elections in twenty-one states last year.

The '98 elections may have been a mixed bag for some Republicans. But for others, victory was relatively easy—even in some notoriously liberal strongholds.

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Let's say you are just completing your second term. Although you've made it your business to protect your constituents from endless government encroachment on their liberties, few people realize it; the local news media are shamelessly liberal, and they are now gearing up to support an articulate challenger with a well-disguised bleeding-heart agenda.

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Avert Disaster

Imagine that your campaign for reelection is going smoothly when the bottom suddenly falls out: Your liberal opponent has done an abrupt about-face, claiming he's in favor of everything you stand for. And the news media are faithfully reporting as fact everything he says.

Luckily, you are prepared. You have painstakingly kept records on your opponent's political career—including every vote he's ever

[Campaign Ad]

STAGING BULL

From a script for a television ad that aired in Georgia last fall. The script is part of a slander lawsuit brought by Georgia's lieutenant governor, Mark Taylor, against Republican Mitch Skandalakis, whom Taylor defeated in last November's elections. According to the suit, "The ad falsely and maliciously implies that [Taylor] has been institutionalized for drug addiction at the Ridgeview Institute, a private psychiatric and drug treatment center in Smyrna, Georgia." Ridgeview confirmed that it had no record of treatment for Taylor. Skandalakis was fined in 1995 for circulating a photograph that had been altered to exaggerate an opponent's African-American features.

[Soft, sad music up. Large man shuffling slowly down a hallway in a tattered robe and slippers. The hallway could be that of an institution. No one else is visible. The image is not a touch mean. Graphic up from head: PAID FOR BY SKANDALAKIS FOR LT. GOVERNOR.]

FEMALE ANNOUNCER [*Couldn't be nicer*]: Mark Taylor has some more problems to clear up before he runs for any office. First, Taylor fought to preserve discriminatory racial quotas.

[Footage of Taylor with black Mayor Campbell.]

ANNOUNCER: Then, he was solidly endorsed by the homosexual newspaper *Southern Voice*.

[Visual of the cover of *Southern Voice*.]

ANNOUNCER: Taylor, of course, has admitted he had problems years ago.

[Shot of "Shady View Rehabilitation Hospital" (not actual name, but close), with sign that says what it is. Dissolve to visual of the man in the robe again, slowly continuing his walk.]

ANNOUNCER: And we all wish . . . those problems had been cured.

[Figure collapses. Music fades. Graphics up: MITCH SKANDALAKIS. HONEST, CONSERVATIVE.]

cast, every PAC dollar he's ever accepted, every taxpayer-financed junket he's ever taken. Now you can enlist GeoVoter's help to construct a campaign for disseminating this information. The result: Your opponent is exposed as a fraud. And while he still has his believers, you can rest easy—victory is well within your reach.

You don't have to be a computer expert to harness the power of GeoVoter. It runs on your PC and comes with instructions written in plain English. So give yourself the unfair political advantage. Put GeoVoter to work on your political future today.

[Press Conference]

NO COMMENT: THE PLAY

From "The Briefing, A Play in One Act," by Stuart Wade. The play appeared in the November 17, 1998, edition of McSweeney's Internet Tendency, *the online version of* McSweeney's Quarterly Concern, *a journal published in Brooklyn, New York. Wade lives in Austin, Texas.*

SETTING: The conference room of a large business hotel. Several dozen REPORTERS are crowded into the cramped space. Television lights illuminate the SPOKESPERSON, who stands behind a microphone-strewn lectern.

SPOKESPERSON: We all know that there's a specific piece of information in question here. And with regard to it, let me first state that I know you all would like for me to say what we all think I'm coming before you to say. I would like to make it very clear, however, that I do not intend to say it. In addition, I will neither confirm nor deny it. So now that we all understand each other, are there any questions?

REPORTER 1: Will you say what we want you to say?

SPOKESPERSON: Not exactly as you would have me say it. Yes—over there?

REPORTER 2: Is the thing we all want you to say in fact true?

SPOKESPERSON: I'm not saying if it is or it isn't. It would be premature to judge that.

REPORTER 3: Since you're not saying the precise thing we all want you to say, will you say it but in a slightly different way?

SPOKESPERSON: You mean in a way that would have the same meaning as the way you would all want me to say it?

REPORTER 3: That is correct.

SPOKESPERSON: I'm not prepared at this time to do that. [*To* REPORTER 4] Yes?

REPORTER 4: If you won't say what we all would like you to say, or if you won't say it in a slightly different way, will you at least say one or a couple of parts of what we all want you to say?

SPOKESPERSON: If there is a situation where it would become prudent for me to say part or parts of what you all want me to say, I would, yes. But now is not the time.

REPORTER 5: When will it be time?

SPOKESPERSON: I don't know the answer to that. I want to add something at this point, before we continue. There are some people involved behind the scenes with this thing who deserve to be recognized for all their hard work. This thing has been a team effort all the way and, thanks to them, a real win-win situation as well. [*To* REPORTER 6] Yes, go ahead.

REPORTER 6: Might one of us be able to trick you into divulging what we all want you to say?

SPOKESPERSON: If I am slow-witted at that moment, or if I'm not being too careful in choosing my words right then, *and* if one of you people displays extremely shrewd questioning skills, then yes, it is possible. [*Shielding his eyes*] Yes—all the way in the back there . . . you, Miss.

REPORTER 7: I think I know the information we all want you to say but that you aren't saying, and here it is. [*She says something inaudible.*] Isn't that right?

SPOKESPERSON: [*Angrily*] Do you expect me to answer that? Next question.

REPORTER 8: When can we expect you to say what we all want you to say?

SPOKESPERSON: Relatively soon.

REPORTER 8: Can you be more specific?

SPOKESPERSON: Well, we are expediting this process, so I would imagine sooner than you might think, but I don't want to mislead any of you as to exactly when. Yes, Helen?

REPORTER 9: I heard some experts giving their opinions about the information we all want you to say. Can you respond to these expert comments?

SPOKESPERSON: Well, I can't speculate on others' comments. And I'm not an expert. I have time for one more question. In the middle there—yes, you sir?

REPORTER 10: Might I interject a witty comment at this juncture to break up the tension? [*Says something inaudible*]

[*Everyone laughs*]

Curtain.

[Testimony]

MULTICULTURAL ILLITERACY

From a transcript of testimony given on February 22 by thirteen-year-old Tiana DiBari in New York State District Court. The DiBaris and two other Roman Catholic families sued the public school system in Bedford, New York, to bar it from offering programs that they claimed violated their religious freedom. Among the activities they found offensive: Earth Day ceremonies in which students offered gifts to the planet; yoga instruction during gym classes; an after-school club in which students played the card game Magic: The Gathering; a presentation on geology in which students were told to place crystals near their chests and "feel the power"; the sale of worry dolls in the school store; and history classes taught by teachers who "smuggle Eastern religions and other non-Christian forms of spirituality into the classroom under the guise of an enriched curriculum or multiculturalism." In the transcript below, James M. Bendell, an attorney with the American Catholic Lawyers Association, questioned for the plaintiffs; attorney Warren Richmond questioned for the defendants.

JAMES M. BENDELL: What grade are you in?

TIANA DIBARI: I'm in the eighth.

BENDELL: Did you go to Pound Ridge Elementary School?

DIBARI: Yes.

BENDELL: Now, at any time at Pound Ridge were you exposed to the Hindu deity Lord Ganesha or stories about Lord Ganesha?

DIBARI: Yes.

BENDELL: Could you tell me what grade that was in?

DIBARI: In the third.

BENDELL: What did your teacher tell you about Lord Ganesha?

DIBARI: She read us the story about how this boy got the elephant's head and that he's a god and that you could pray to him for wisdom and power.

BENDELL: Did the teacher suggest any follow-up activities that you could do at home?

DIBARI: You could make one of those things where you put him inside and pray to him.

BENDELL: Did the teacher ask the students to bring things to school for Lord Ganesha?

DIBARI: Yes.

BENDELL: What?

DIBARI: She said you could bring fruit and put it around him in the classroom.

BENDELL: Did any students bring fruit for Lord Ganesha?

DIBARI: Yes.

BENDELL: Was there any other dish that was brought to school for Lord Ganesha?

DIBARI: I think rice pudding.

BENDELL: A rice dish. And what was the meaning of the rice dish, if you know?

DIBARI: It was for him, because he eats it.

BENDELL: He eats rice.

DIBARI: Yes.

BENDELL: And were there any other arts and crafts done associated with Lord Ganesha?

[Tips]

LET'S GO MESHUGGE, LET'S GET NUTS

From "The Flow of the Bar Mitzvah," by Jeff Stiles in the November 1998 issue of DJ Times.

Like most wedding receptions, the typical bar mitzvah begins with a cocktail hour. After the family's grand entrance, some DJs segue into interactive games or play club music. Others perform the traditional segment—the candle-lighting ceremony, a toast by the father, and words from the honored child.

"Two minutes after the grand entrance we do the hora," says Eric Sands of Sundance Productions in San Diego. "This really sets the pace for the event and sends the message that we're here to party."

Randi Rae in Woodbridge, New Jersey, emphasizes the need to get the party started right away. "The minute you open the doors—it's pumping! There's no downtime in a bar mitzvah—you're in it! It's very common for us to play twenty to thirty minutes of solid club music before we even introduce the family."

When the doors open for BMP Entertainment's bar mitzvahs in the Philadelphia area, Bobby Morganstein's dancers are doing an opening number to get the guests motivated. "Then I bring the crowd right onto the floor, and they party for about fifteen minutes," he says. "Then we settle everybody down, and the family lines up outside for a grand entrance. After that we do a hora."

The mitzvah meal—five or six courses with interactive games between each course—involves constant work by the DJ. Says Sands: "As soon as the kids get done eating, you've got to be on the dance floor with them or else they'll destroy the place."



This photograph by London artist Chris Steele-Perkins was taken at the Great Shrine of Nachi in Wakayama, Japan, and appears in Way to Gods, *published by Kawade Shobo Shinsa.*

DIBARI: Mrs. Sharallel came in with dots for an Indian, and we put them on our heads and we sat in a circle.

BENDELL: Where did the dots go?

DIBARI: In the middle of the forehead.

BENDELL: Were these painted on or were they stickers?

DIBARI: They were stickers.

BENDELL: No further questions, Your Honor.

WARREN RICHMOND: Prior to your coming here today, did you talk to your grandmother about this testimony?

DIBARI: I was just asking her what it would be like, that's all.

RICHMOND: At any time, have you reviewed with her the questions you would be asked?

DIBARI: I think like once or twice, but that's it.

RICHMOND: And when was that?

DIBARI: I think like last week.

RICHMOND: And when was the other time?

DIBARI: Probably last week too.

RICHMOND: Now, you were in the third grade with Mrs. Reizes, right?

DIBARI: Yes.

RICHMOND: And what are some of the things you studied in that class, other than Ganesha?

DIBARI: We studied India for most of the whole year. And Ganesha was part of that.

RICHMOND: Anything else? What about math? What did you do in math?

DIBARI: I don't remember.

RICHMOND: What did you do in science?

DIBARI: I don't know.

RICHMOND: You don't remember anything you did in science?

DIBARI: No.

RICHMOND: What did you do in English? Did you read any stories? Not stories about India but other stories?

DIBARI: I think so.

RICHMOND: What were some of these?

DIBARI: I don't remember.

RICHMOND: Were there a lot of them?

DIBARI: A few of them.

RICHMOND: Can you name one?

DIBARI: No.

RICHMOND: What other type of stuff did you do in third grade?

DIBARI: All I mostly remember is about India.

RICHMOND: And particularly about Ganesha. You remember a lot of stuff about Ganesha, don't you?

DIBARI: Just that stuff. That's it really.

RICHMOND: And you remember specifically that Mrs. Reizes told you to build a shrine, right?

DIBARI: Yes.

RICHMOND: And you remember that she told you to pray to the shrine, right?

DIBARI: To Ganesha inside the shrine, yes.

RICHMOND: And you remember Mrs. Sharallel bringing in dots?

DIBARI: Yes.

RICHMOND: Other than those things, do you remember anything else that happened in your entire third-grade year, anything else that you studied in her class?

DIBARI: No.

RICHMOND: Thank you. No further questions, Your Honor.

[Consideration]

THE ARCHENEMY OF FLAVOR

From "Deliciousness," by Daniel Harris, in the Winter-Spring issue of Salmagundi. *Harris is the author of* The Rise and Fall of Gay Culture. *His essay "Plumbing the Purse" appeared in the October 1997 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

Start off with our thick 'n' crispy homestyle French fries or our tangy buffalo wings pan-seared to seal in the wholesome goodness and brought to your table on a sizzling platter of seasonal vegetables swimming in a savory, full-flavored wine sauce teeming with a generous medley of herbs and spices. Or try a bowl of our signature soup du jour or our garden-fresh house salad with five scrumptious veggies topped with the crunchiest of homemade croutons and smothered in chunky, made-from-scratch bleu-cheese dressing carefully prepared from the finest cheeses aged the old-fashioned way on the dairy farms of Wisconsin. Then sink your teeth into our colossal fish sandwich drizzled with zesty Creole-style mustard and served on a deluxe golden-brown bakery bun accompanied by a hearty portion of—*¡olé!*—authentic fresh corn-tortilla chips drenched in real melted American cheese.

The rhetoric with which advertisers make love to our tastebuds often has nothing whatsoever to do with how our Cajun McChicken sandwiches, Taco Bell MexiMelts, Eskimo Pies, and Rice-A-Roni San Francisco Treats really taste but constitutes a highly fictionalized fantasy about how processed foods would taste in a utopian world in which imaginary farmers, rising at the crack of dawn, harvest every ingredient from their own fields, picking tomatoes fresh from the vine, their boots caked with manure. The distortion of what we might call the aesthetic of deliciousness must be understood as part of an aggressive campaign, not only by chain restaurants but by food manufacturers in general, to camouflage the insipidity of packaged goods and neutralize the skepticism of a society still adjusting to its loss of control over all aspects of food production. So much of what we think of as delicious is not a description of the way food has tasted throughout history—whether it was prepared in the kitchen of a pharaoh or a pope, on the campfire of a caveman or atop the electric coils of a self-cleaning Magic Chef oven—but the way it has tasted for only the last 150 years. Or, more precisely, the way that we are convinced it should taste.

That deliciousness is an historically specific invention of the twentieth century, responding to the inadequacies of instant foods, becomes particularly clear in the prevalence of the word "freshness" in advertisements for everything from cheddar cheese Goldfish ("hand-delivered fresh to stores everyday") to the jolly Green Giant's Niblets ("fresh from the can means fresh from the fields because they are packed when dewy fresh"). "Freshness" becomes an attribute of flavor only when we cease to take it for granted, when food molders in warehouses, languishes in crates in overheated cargo holds, and goes stale on store shelves. Whereas "freshness" was once a given, since food was no sooner harvested than eaten, no sooner plucked from the branch than served on the plate, it has become nothing less than a cultural fetish in an era in which the interval between the packaging of a product and its actual consumption is prolonged for months or even years by the miracles of refrigeration, chemical preservatives, freeze-drying, irradiation, the dehydration of vegetables, and even Tupperware.

At the same time, words like "crunchy," "crispy," and "moist" actually mean "not soggy," "not stale," "not desiccated"—problems that pertain not to the intrinsic taste of food but to what happens to flavor in aluminum cans, plastic bags, and Mylar pouches, containers in which our Baby Ruths and Dipsy Doodles corn chips dry out, lose texture, or are pulverized into heaps of broken crumbs. When our foods lose their crunch, when they turn into mealy pulp on the shelves of the neighborhood bodega, when they shrivel into sapless husks in frozen-food lockers, when they are squashed flat as pancakes on lurching eighteen-wheelers, we begin to value the very qualities most endangered by the vagaries of transport and packaging and to describe flavor in terms of a product's ability to survive the grueling pilgrimage from the cattle ranch and the orchard to the dining room table.

Deliciousness, in short, is not actually deli-

...us but is closely related to its opposite, to the nauseous, the inedible, the unappetizing, to the fact that the crunchy golden crusts of that zesty frozen pizza are as jaw-breakingly tough as shoe leather, that that lusciously moist, heavenly rich, melt-in-your-mouth instant chocolate cake is so dry that choking children clutch their parched throats and cry out for milk, and that those "downright habit-forming" crispy corn curls are so brittle that they shatter into salty granules of flour and monosodium glutamate. We learn to admire, to celebrate, the formidable survival skills of these foods.

Well into the 1970s and '80s, the technological ingenuity of packaged foods was so integral to their appeal that deliciousness was often not about food at all but about containers, about the miracle of the can, about the packaging revolution that created the need for the aesthetic of deliciousness in the first place. Food advertisements from the first half of the century often consisted of blown-up images of the can itself surrounded by a spiky nimbus of light that illuminated the ecstatic faces of shopping housewives and their adoring offspring, who threw their hands into the air and made idolatrous gestures, as if they were witnessing a theophany, the arrival of the Messiah in Aisle 5. Just as computer manufacturers foster superstitious reverence for our PCs by turning the terminal into a microcosm of the universe, a black box that contains spinning galaxies and clusters of exploding stars, so food manufacturers instilled reverence for the can by portraying it as a magical device capable of trapping actual physical samples of fragrant breezes, spring showers, morning dewdrops, and the mellow rays of the Mediterranean sun. Andy Warhol was right to pay homage to its image, for it exerts the same effect on the kitchen as television exerts on culture; it levels regional cuisine, internationalizes food, and produces a kind of culinary Esperanto.

The cult of the container no longer enjoys the same zealous following as it once did. It is now the object of shame, the archenemy of flavor, the nemesis of our taste buds. Our ignorance of what goes into that Day-Glo orange cheese substitute in the convenient squeeze tube and those arterially red SpaghettiOs has led to a backlash against a type of food that is nothing more than a cocktail of chemicals, one we increasingly refuse to swallow unless manufacturers itemize its contents. The result of this distrust is what might be called a new food extroversion, a studied display of ingredients, of whole pecans, recognizable "chunks" of tomatoes, florets of broccoli, spears of asparagus—the visible evidence of real, recognizable foods that reassures the consumer that he is eating an identifiable substance and not some tainted mysterious meat concocted from chicken offal and horse giblets.

The need to know what a product is made of, to crack the code of the top secret industrial recipe, has also led to a new form of explicit food photography in which nothing is hidden: vegetables float weightlessly on the surface of

[Findings]

GARLIC THERAPY

From "The Effect of the Smell and Taste of Pepperidge Farm Garlic Bread on Family Interactions," a study by Dr. Alan R. Hirsch, the neurologic director of the Smell & Taste Treatment and Research Foundation in Chicago. The study was underwritten by the Campbell Soup Co., which makes Pepperidge Farm products.

The odor and taste of Pepperidge Farm Garlic Bread was studied with regard to its effects on the interaction of family members. Fifty families were given two identical spaghetti dinners, though some were served Pepperidge Farm Garlic Bread and some were not.

Researchers found that eating Pepperidge Farm Garlic Bread reduced the number of negative family interactions by 22.7 percent and increased the number of pleasant interactions by 7.4 percent. This suggests that, for a family of four, serving Pepperidge Farm Garlic Bread results in thirty-one fewer negative interactions and forty-five more positive interactions per dinner.

The mechanism of this may include:

1. If the family members like the taste of Pepperidge Farm Garlic Bread, they develop a more positive mood state and are thus less critical of others.

2. Pepperidge Farm Garlic Bread may induce an olfactory-evoked nostalgia response, which is usually associated with memories of childhood.

3. Pepperidge Farm Garlic Bread may decrease feelings of aggression, which can be caused by unpleasant odors. Family members are less likely to make negative comments to one another in the presence of positive odors.

Whatever the mechanism, the implications of these findings are clear: serving Pepperidge Farm Garlic Bread with a meal clearly enhances the quality of family interaction and thus leads to greater stability in the family unit.



Big James" and "Valentine," from "The Sugar Children," a series of portraits of Caribbean plantation laborers' children created with sugar and ack paper by Vik Muniz. The portraits are currently on display at the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago and appear in Seeing Believing, *a collection of Muniz's work published by Arena Editions in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Muniz lives in Brooklyn, New York.*

soup rather than sink to the bottom (a trick performed with naturally buoyant dehydrated products and, in some cases, with a subaqueous pyramid of transparent marbles); the flakes of breakfast cereals stand rigidly upright like gravestones, defying gravity, proudly displaying their crispiness and crunch, securely anchored in a sturdy, milklike foundation of sour cream mixed with Elmer's glue. Even a frontal photograph of something as straightforward as a club sandwich is now really just a sculptural inventory of ingredients, a dexterous, trompe-l'oeil feat in which each tier is slightly recessed from the one beneath it, arranged like a staircase and propped up from behind by a complex scaffolding of clamps and toothpicks that ensures that the contents of each stratum can be examined, and desired.

The equation of beauty and taste is a false one, for nothing ever tastes as good as it looks in advertisements or food magazines. It is widely known that the fantastical foods in glossies such as *Gourmet* and *Bon Appetit* are actually inedible, that the voluptuous centerfolds of these gastronomical *Playboys* and *Playhouses* have communicable diseases, that those "willowy wonton strips gracing the salad" are the equivalent of prosthetic food, toxic concoctions of varnish, hair spray, and shoe polish. Wedges of cheese have been swabbed with rubbing alcohol to bring out their color, piping-hot sauces are actually ice-cold so that they won't congeal, the grill marks on chicken have been drawn on with Magic Marker, and desserts made of gelatin have been so fortified with artificial thickeners that they are as indestructible as hockey pucks and are often tossed around among the staff, who exhibit the macabre sense of humor of medical students in the morgue.

Despite consumerism's mistaken, if expedient, attempt to conflate the beautiful and the delicious, however, the two often remain incompatible. That which appeals to the eye does not necessarily appeal to the tongue, and that which looks revolting, by the same token, might be fit for the consumption of kings. Sculptures belong in museums, not in mouths. It is one of the great ironies of the aesthetic of deliciousness that its exaggeratedly visual style cannot, in the final analysis, be eaten.

[Business Plan]

T.G.I. MAYDAY'S

From the business plan for the Crash Café, a theme-restaurant chain. The first Crash Café will open this summer in Baltimore.

As you approach the Crash Café, you're likely to feel a mixture of emotions—shock, astonishment, awe, fear . . . and then an adrenaline-pumping rush of excitement and curiosity that draws you to the building like metal to a magnet. The Crash Café is a cutting-edge concept that pushes the barriers of the theme restaurant to new levels. Some say it teeters on the verge of the unacceptable, but that is precisely its strength.

What you see as you drive up to the Crash Café is a huge DC-3 aircraft plunged headlong into the front of the restaurant. Smoke rises from the vessel's tail, sparks fly, and splintered metal is scattered everywhere. You know you should be horrified, but for some reason you find the scene strangely provocative. The Crash Café seduces you, makes you indulge your undeniable fascination with the destructive, erotic nature of crashing, colliding, and exploding objects. And so, like a driver gawking at a roadside accident, you drive forward, park your car, and walk toward the smoking building.

You enter the restaurant under the torn fuselage of the DC-3. Smoke seethes from the crashed hull. Wires spit and spark. Inside the aircraft's cockpit, torn from the rest of the plane, are sputtering fuses, futile warning lights, and broken steering mechanisms. Above you, the aircraft's landing gear spins ominously. Propellers rotate in the eerie remembrance of flight. Pieces of glass and metal pierce nearby walls. The aftermath of the crash is everywhere.

Yet in the midst of the rubble, an order emerges. In front of you is a hostess's station. To your left a brightly lit merchandising area displays T-shirts, hats, and other souvenirs. And all around you are signs of life: some customers mingle at the bar; others recline in "funky" seating areas; still others look dazed, seduced by the images of train wrecks, imploding buildings, and demolition derbies flashing on the walls around them.

You find the contrast startling—it's as if someone had climbed through the wreckage, pushed the rubble aside, and created a hip oasis. The effect is mesmerizing.

You walk through the foyer into the restaurant, where you find a beautiful, glass-topped bar featuring an array of artfully prepared tapas (Brazilian for finger food). Your eyes feast on all the different shapes, colors, and styles of cuisine. You have a hard time choosing but decide to start with the marinated bay scallops with tomato ginger, the Peking-style salmon crepes with raspberry hoi sin dipper, and the Indonesian chicken and beef sates with coconut peanut butter. The hostess leads you to your table around the crumpled motorcycles and cars crunched into corners and twisted around poles.

As you eat the delicious food, you feel as though you are at a beautifully catered dinner party, enjoying good food and drink in the most comfortable setting possible. After placing your order for dessert and port wine, you realize that the Crash Café is a restaurant you will return to soon. After all, you're enjoying your most entertaining night out in years.

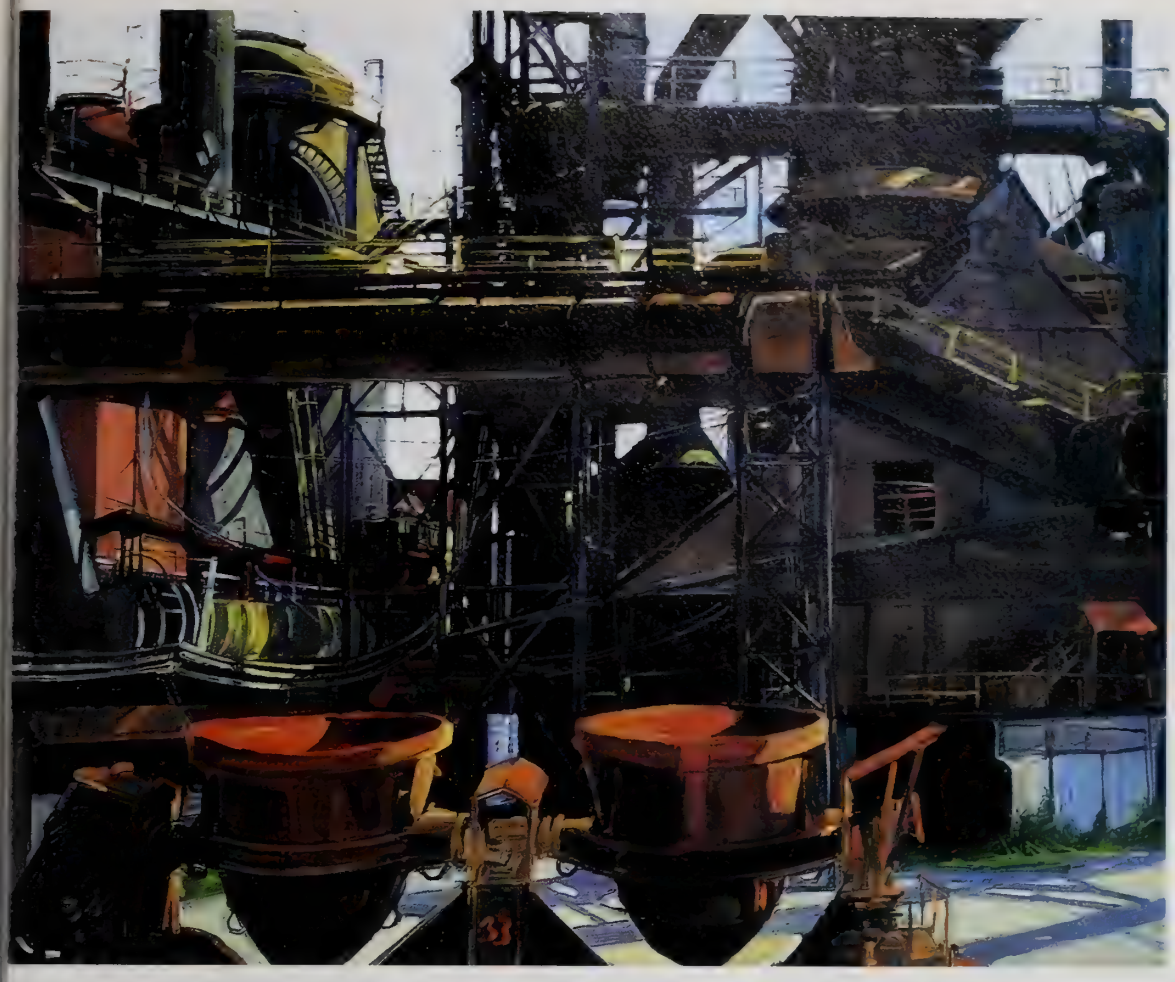
[Memoir]

A WIRE STORY

From "Manufacturing Place: Fort Wayne, the Switchroom, and Wire," by Michael Martone, in the January issue of Northwest Review. *Martone is the author, most recently, of* Seeing Eye, *a collection of stories published by Zoland Books. His monologue "Standing Firm: The Early Years" appeared in the September 1994 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

My sense of place has been generated from a particular rust-belt environment of manufacturing. I was aware, growing up in Fort Wayne, Indiana, that things were made there and that those made things contributed to the identity of the place—trucks and all their parts, pistons and axles, electric motors of all kinds, rocker valves and gasoline pumps. In Fort Wayne, as in many Midwestern industrial cities, the factories were built on the east side of town. The prevailing winds are from the west, and thus the location of a city's smokestack industry is downwind. Fort Wayne's east-end metropolis of factories and foundries informed the first conscious metaphor I remember making: factories in the east manufacturing the lovely day and sending it streaming off the assembly lines out over my city—a union-made morning, a sunset built of scrap.

I heard constantly while growing up that Fort Wayne was seventh on Hitler's bombing list. It is a folk legend of course and reflects what I recognize as a Midwestern combination of pride and inferiority. Fort Wayne, it says, was impor-



Slag Pots, *a painting by Philadelphia artist Hale Allen. His work is on display this month at the Riverside Studio in Pottersville, New Jersey.*

tant enough to be destroyed. As with many such legends, there is an element of truth in it. During World War II, Fort Wayne was a strategic target because almost all the country's magnetic copper wire was manufactured there. I played on a Little League team sponsored by Indiana Wire Die. We all used cable spools for tables on our porches and patios. In Junior Achievement we made string-art sailboats using thread-gauge surplus wire. When the prevailing wind failed to prevail, you could taste the tang of metal in the air; it coated your tongue and plated the backs of your teeth. In Fort Wayne, wire is everywhere.

Last Sunday, as I have for the last twenty years since I left, I called home. My mother and father are fine, thank you very much. Even though, on either end of the line now, there is the synaptic leap of our voices through space—we use cordless phones—I still like to think of the actual wire, the thread of insulated copper that leads the signal singularly from my home now, in Syracuse, New York, to Home with a capital "H" as simply as the analog transmission of voice via a vibrating string and two resonant tin cans.

I know, I know. I know about the microwave carriers, the towers studded with arrays of lozenge antennae. And I know about digital switching, the scrambling of our words into binary pulses and their speedy translation back to an amplified, high-fidelity proximity of our original chitchat. And I know about fiber-optic cable, data hitchhiking on a beam of bendable light. But I imagine that there still exists this physical umbilical to a physical place, an actual connection several hundred actual miles in length that conducts our conversation by the rhythmic jostling of charged metallic molecules, my weekly verbal wave, a boosted electric wave whipping through the medium of copper wire.

My father worked for forty years as a switchman, and he would take me along while he troubleshot in the various switchrooms around the city. The switchrooms were everywhere, though they were hard to see. Many of them were disguised as houses in residential neighborhoods. Others were cinder-block shacks in

back alleys or were mistaken for schools and office buildings. The main switches took up floors above the business offices of a central building downtown. They were mechanical replacements for the human operators who sat at boards and actually spliced a call by hand, lifting your one cable out of a tangled trunk line and then socketing home the connection on the panel before them.

The earlier automatic switchrooms my father took me to were noisy, a constant staccato of clicks and whirs as the switches, prompted by the ratchet of a rotary dial somewhere, counted out the number in rapid tsks, spinning, then suddenly taking hold with a crack, a kiss of bare wire leads, then the next number in a switch somewhere else in the room. The call hissed its way through the building. Hundreds of simultaneous calls being dialed mixed with the sudden release of the magnetic attraction, a cajunk of a hang-up somewhere when the circuit let go.

My father was in a switchroom when President Kennedy was shot, knew something had happened because the switches went wild, the routine stutter and pop cranking up to an unrelieved hailstorm. It was deafening, he said. He used alligator clips to tap the lines, listened in on conversations to piece together the unfolding story of the assassination.

Though noisy, the switchroom looked like the stacks of a library. The thousands of switches were dust-covered with thin brown metal shields shaped like book bindings, and were arranged in rows that ran the length of the room on floor-to-ceiling bookcase frames. Sliding the shields off—they had the heft of bound periodical volumes—was like taking a book from the shelf. There were even library ladders running on overhead tracks down the aisles with signs swinging from the eye-level step: LOOK UP BEFORE MOVING.

Often a conversation would be playing on the scratchy speakers. I remember two people talking about the weather, shooting the breeze, making plans for the kids to come home. The switchmen were checking a line, had run the bad order through the PA system. The droning human voices mingled with the voice of the murmuring and twitching room, the sighs and the tsks of the switches reacting to or commenting upon the particular conversation's own inflections and tones.

During my own weekly ritual conversations home, I imagine my voice as a plosive knot racing through the tunnel of cable, up and down over hills, buried and strung, the diffuse light as it crosses the estuary near Sandusky, the hairpin curve at Angola. Is it any wonder that I linger a bit in the switchroom as my electric signature finds its way through the nest of wire there?

For me, the switchroom, with its transparent skeletal construction, its bare and functional schema, has always seemed to be a factory furiously manufacturing this idea of place, which exists in spite of the entropy of distance, against the tendencies of our drifting apart. The vented sound of the switchroom's workings, not unlike the trill of a sewing machine, stitched together these tenuous connections. When we speak of place we often speak of our sense of it, its constant though peripheral presence. That is, there is no such thing as a place, only our own inscription of it that we carry around in our nervous systems.

By facilitating these connections between people both local and long distance, the switchroom participates in the abstraction of place; it is a cybernetic node. The switches themselves, tiny engines, churn out permutating transcriptions, address after address, of where where is. At the same time, the switchroom remains for me, by accident of my birth and my father's job, a "real" place, in my own wiring, though its function is to be transparent, a permeable membrane between here and there.

I see my father at his workbench, a broken switch disassembled before him, its voice now silent, its magic gone. I can hear the conversations too, the ones playing on the speakers, casual talk he's tapped into. This is where we are when we are in cyberspace, at this particular nexus, and the apparatus there, at least one "there," was tended and maintained by my father.

The switchroom allows meeting at an imaginary spot that seems real, places like "Fort Wayne," say, or "Indiana," creating these places out of words, strings of words, spoken or, now, typed. And in the complete and convincing virtual construction of those shared places, we forget about these little offices, the actual precincts of our connections, these little libraries of wire.

Connection to a place, for me, has never been difficult to grasp. That place, Fort Wayne, where wire is made and where my father spent his life parsing out pathways, that place is wired into my brain by its own self-produced tendrils, its gossamer of filaments and sparkling coils. For me to write about this place is to write about Place (with a capital "P") itself.

Wherever I go, wherever I am, I see wire, wire that is going someplace, wire that has come from somewhere. I have seen wire strung in ancient Attic olive trees, on the floors of oceans. And as I write, I am wire—conductive, magnetic—because even though I am here, I am also always, while writing, somewhere else. ■



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AMERICA'S ALTERED STATES

When does legal relief of pain become illegal pursuit of pleasure?

By Joshua Wolf Shenk

My soul was a burden, bruised and bleeding. It was tired of the man who carried it, but I found no place to set it down to rest. Neither the charm of the countryside nor the sweet scents of a garden could soothe it. It found no peace in song or laughter, none in the company of friends at table or in the pleasures of love, none even in books or poetry. . . . Where could my heart find refuge from itself? Where could I go, yet leave myself behind?

—St. Augustine

To suffer and long for relief is a central experience of humanity. But the absence of pain or discomfort or what Pablo Neruda called "the infinite ache" is never enough. Relief is bound up with satisfaction, pleasure, happiness—the pursuit of which is declared a right in the manifesto of our republic. I sit here with two agents of that pursuit: on my right, a bottle from Duane Reade pharmacy; on my left, a bag of plant matter, bought last night for about the same sum in an East Village bar from a group of men who would have sold me different kinds of contraband if they hadn't sniffed cop in my curiosity and eagerness. This being Rudy Giuliani's New York, I had feared *they* were undercover. But my worst-case scenario was a night or two in jail and theirs a fifteen-year minimum. As I exited the bar, I saw an empty police van idling, waiting to be filled with people like me but, mostly, people like them, who are there only because I am.

Fear and suspicion, secrecy and shame, the yearning for pleasure, and the wish to avoid men in blue uniforms. This is (in rough, incomplete terms) an emotional report from the front. The drug wars—which, having spanned more than eight decades, require the plural—are palpable in New York City. The mayor blends propaganda, brute force, and guerrilla tactics, dispatching undercover cops to call "smoke, smoke" and "bud, bud"—and to arrest those who answer. In Washington Square Park, he erected ten video cameras that sweep the environs twenty-four hours a day. Surveillance is a larger theme of these wars, as is the notion that cherished freedoms are incidental. But it is telling that such an extreme manifestation of these ideas appears in a public park, one of the very few common spaces in this city not controlled by, and an altar to, corporate commerce.

Several times a month, I walk through that park to the pharmacy, where a doctor's slip is my passport to another world. Here, altering the mind and body with powders and plants is not only legal but even patriotic. Among the souls wandering these aisles, I feel I have kin. But I am equally at home, and equally ill at ease, among the outlaws. I cross back and forth with wide eyes.

What I see is this: From 1970 to 1998, the inflation-adjusted revenue of major pharmaceutical companies more than quadrupled to $81 billion, 24 percent of that from drugs affecting the central nervous system and sense organs. Sales of herbal medicines now exceed $4 billion a year. Meanwhile, the war on Other drugs escalated dramatically. Since 1970 the federal antidrug budget has risen 3,700 percent and now exceeds $17 billion. More than one and a half million people are arrested on drug charges each year, and 400,000 are now in prison. These numbers are just a window onto an obvious truth: We take more drugs and reward those who supply them.

Joshua Wolf Shenk is a former editor of The Washington Monthly *who writes frequently on drug policy, pharmacology, and mental illness. He lives in New York City.*



'e punish more people for tak-
g drugs and especially pun-
h those who supply them. On
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There is some truth in each
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I.

Before marijuana, cocaine, or "Ecstasy," before nitrous oxide or magic mushrooms, before I had tried any of these, I poked through the foil enclosing a single capsule of fluoxetine hydrochloride. My drug story begins at this point, at the end of a devastating first year of college. For years, I had wrapped myself in an illusion that my lifelong troubles—intense despair, loneliness, anxiety, a relentless inner soundtrack of self-criticism—would dissolve if I could only please the gatekeepers of the Ivy League. By the spring of freshman year, I had been skinned of this illusion and plunged into a deep darkness. From a phone booth in a library basement, I resumed contact with a psychiatrist I'd begun seeing in high school.

I told him how awful I felt, and, after a few sessions, he suggested I consider medication. By now our exchange is a familiar one. This was 1990, three years after Prozac introduced the country to a new class of antidepressants, called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors. SSRIs were an impressive innovation chemically but a stunning innovation for the market, because, while no more effective than previous generations of antidepressants, SSRIs had fewer side effects and thus could be given to a much broader range of people. (At last count, 22 million Americans have used Prozac alone.) When my doctor suggested I take Prozac, it was with a casual tone. Although the idea of "altering my brain chemistry" unsettled me at first, I soon absorbed his attitude. When I returned home that summer, I asked him how such drugs worked. He drew a crude map of a synapse, or the junction between nerve cells. There is a neurotransmitter called serotonin, he told me, that is ordinarily released at one end of the synapse and, at the other end, absorbed by a sort of molecular pump. Prozac in-

Illustrations by Greg Spalenka

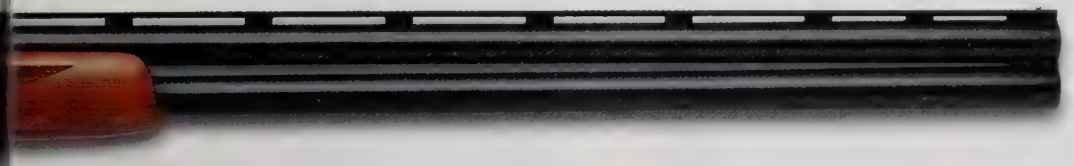
The very fact that
is what m

Shooting sports are among the safest of all sports. One reason is that huntin
and target shooting sports participants have always understood that owning
firearm is a full-time job that requires
knowing how

to use, handle and store firearms safely. Safety is our fir
and foremost priority. As a result, accidents at shooting events and gun clu
are virtually unheard of. The NSSF (National Shooting Sports Foundatio
never wants a firearm in the wrong hands. Which is why we make firear
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ty materials educating newcomers and reminding current participants about importance of safe gun storage and handling practices. We're also the



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inhibits this pumping process and therefore increases serotonin's presence in the brain. "What we don't understand," he said, looking up from his pad, "is why increased levels of serotonin alleviate depression. But that's what seems to happen."

I didn't understand the importance of this moment until years later, after I had noticed many more sentences in which the distance between the name of a drug—Prozac, heroin, Ritalin, crack cocaine—and its effects had collapsed. For example, the phrase "Prozac eases depression," properly unpacked, actually represents this more complicated thought: "Prozac influences the serotonin patterns in the brain, which for some unknown reason is found to alleviate, more often than would a placebo, a collection of symptoms referred to as depression." What gets lost in abbreviation—Prozac cures! Heroin kills!—is that drugs work because the human body works, and they fail or hurt us because the body and spirit are vulnerable. When drugs spark miracles—prolonging the lives of those with HIV, say, or dulling the edges of a potentially deadly manic depression—we should be thankful. But many of these processes are mysteries that might never yield to science. The psychiatric establishment, for example, still does not understand why serotonin affects mood. According to Michael Montagne of the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy, 42 percent of marketed drugs likewise have no proven mechanism of action. In Listening to Prozac, Peter Kramer quotes a pharmacologist explaining the problem this way: "If the human brain were simple enough for us to understand, we would be too simple to understand it." Yet pharmaceutical companies exude certainty. "Smooth and powerful depression relief," reads an ad for Effexor in a recent issue of The American Journal of Psychiatry. "Antidepressant efficacy that brings your patients back." In case this message is too subtle, the ad shows an ecstatic mother and child playing together, with a note written in crayon: "I got my mommy back."

The irony is that our faith in pharmaceuticals is based on a model of consciousness that science is slowly displacing. "Throughout history," chemist and religious scholar Daniel Perrine writes in The Chemistry of Mind-Altering Drugs, "the power that many psychoactive drugs have exerted over the behavior of human beings has been variously ascribed to gods or demons." In a sense, that continues. "We ascribe magical powers to substances," says Perrine, "as if the joy is inside the bottle. Our culture has no sacred realm, so we've assigned a sacred power to these drugs. This is what [Alfred North] Whitehead would call the 'fallacy of misplaced concreteness.' We say, 'The good is in that Prozac powder,' or 'The evil is in that cocaine powder.' But evil and good are not attributes of molecules."

This is a hard lesson to learn. In my gut, where it matters, I still haven't learned it. Back in 1990 I took the Prozac and, eventually, more than two dozen other medications: antidepressants, antipsychotics, antianxiety agents, and so on. The sample pills would be elegantly wrapped. Handing them to me, the doctors would explain the desired effect: this drug might quiet the voices in my head; this one might make me less depressed and less anxious; this combination might help my concentration and ease my repetitive, obsessive thoughts. Each time I swelled with hope. I've spent many years in therapy and have looked for redemption in literature, work, love. But nothing quite matches the expectancy of putting a capsule on my tongue and waiting to be remade.

But I was not remade. None of the promised benefits of the drugs came, and I suffered still. In 1995, I went to see Donald Klein, one of the top psychopharmacologists in the country. Klein's prestige, underscored by his precipitous fees, again set me off into fantasies of health. He peppered me with questions, listened thoughtfully. After an hour, he pushed his reading glasses onto his forehead and said, "Well, this is what I think you have." He opened the standard psychiatric reference text to a chapter on "dissociative disorders" and pointed to a subheading called depersonalization disorder: "characterized by a persistent or recurrent feeling of being detached from one's mental processes or body."

I'm still not certain that this illness best describes my experience. I can't even describe myself as "clinically ill" because clinicians don't know what the hell to do with me. But Klein gave me an entirely new way of thinking about my problems, and a grim message. "Depersonalization is very difficult to treat," he said. So I was back where I started, with one exception. During our session, Klein had asked if I used marijuana. Once, I told him, but it didn't do much. After he had given me his diagnosis, he told me the reason he had asked: "A lot of people with depersonalization say they get relief from marijuana." At that time, I happened, for the first time in my life, to be surrounded by friends who liked to smoke pot. So in addition to taking drugs alone and waiting for a

racle, I looked for solace in my own small drug
ture. And for a time, I got some. The basic
ction of antidepressants is to help people with
tered inner lives participate in the world around
m. This is what pot did for me. It helped me
nd time with others, something I have yearned
but also feared; it sparked an eagerness to write
d conjure ideas—some of which I found the
rning after to be dreamy or naive, but some of
ich were the germ of something valuable. While
h, I could enjoy life's simple pleasures in a way
t I hadn't ever been able to and still find mad-
ingly difficult. Some might see this (and people
tching me surely did) as silly and immature.
t it's also a reason to keep living.

Sad to say, I quickly found pot's limitations.
hen my spirits are lifted, pot can help punc-
ate that. If I smoke while on a downward slope
while idling, I usually experience more de-
ession or anxiety. Salvation, for me at least, is
t within that smoked plant, or the granules of
ill, or any other substance. Like I said, it's a
rd lesson to learn.

To the more sober-minded among us, it is a source of much consternation that drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes are so central to r collective social lives. It is hard, in fact, to ink of a single social ritual that does not revolve ound some consciousness-altering substance. Should we get together for coffee or drinks?") t drugs are much more than a social lubricant; ey are also the centerpiece of many individual es. When it comes to alcohol, or cigarettes, any illicit substance, this is seen as a problem. ith pharmaceuticals, it is usually considered althy. Yet the dynamic is often the same.

It begins with a drug that satisfies a particu- need or desire—maybe known to us, maybe t. So we have drinks, or a smoke, or swallow few pills. And we get something from this, a hole lot or maybe just a bit. But we often don't alize that the feeling is *inside*, perhaps some- ing that, with effort, could be experienced thout the drugs or perhaps, as in the psychi- ric equivalent of diabetes, something we will ways need help with. Yet all too often we pro- ct upon the drug a power that resides else- here. Many believe this to be a failure of char- ter. If so, it is a failure the whole culture is plicated in. A recent example came with the hrase "pure theatrical Viagra," widely used to scribe a Broadway production starring Nicole idman. Notice what's happening: Sildenafil trate is a substance that increases blood cir- lation and has the side effect of producing ections in men. As a medicine, it is intended be used as an adjunct to sexual stimulation. s received by our culture, though, the *drug* be- omes the desired effect, the "real thing" to which a naked woman onstage is compared.

Such exaltation of drugs is reinforced by the torrent of pharmaceutical ads that now stuff magazines and blanket the airwaves. Since 1994, drugmakers have increased their direct-to-consumer advertising budget sevenfold, to $1.2 billion last year. Take the ad for Meridia, a weight-loss drug. Compared with other drug ads ("We're going to change lives," says a doctor pitching acne cream. "We're going to make a lot of people happy"), it is the essence of restraint. "You do your part," it says in an allusion to exercise and diet. "We'll do ours." The specific intent here is to convince people who are overweight (or believe themselves to be) that they should ask their doctor for Meridia.[2] Like the pitch for Baby Gap that announces "INSTANT KARMA" over a child wrapped in a $44 velvet jacket, drug ads suggest—or explicitly say—that we can solve our problems through magic-bullet consumption. As the old saying goes, "Better living through chemistry."

> WE SAY PROZAC IS GOOD AND COCAINE IS EVIL, BUT GOOD AND EVIL ARE NOT ATTRIBUTES OF MOLECULES

It's the job of advertisers to try every trick to sell their products. But that's the point: drugs are a commodity designed for profit and not necessarily the best route to health and happiness. The "self help" shelves at pharmacies, the "expert only" section behind the counter, these are promised to contain remedies for all ills. But the wizards behind the curtain are fallible human beings, just like us. Professor Montagne says that despite obvious financial incentives, "there really is an overwhelming belief among pharmacists that the last thing you should do for many problems is take a drug. They'll recommend something when you ask, but there's a good chance that when you're walking out the door they'll be saying, 'Aw, that guy doesn't need a laxative every day. He just needs to eat right. They don't need Tagamet. They just need to cut back on the spicy food.'" It is hard to get worked up about these examples, but they point to the broader pattern of drug worship. With illegal drugs, we see the same pattern, again through that warped mirror.

[2] *Fifty-five percent of American adults, or 97 million people, are overweight or obese. It is no surprise, then, that at least forty-five companies have weight-loss drugs in development. But many of these drugs are creatures more of marketing than of pharmacology. Meridia is an SSRI, like Prozac. Similarly, Zyban, a Glaxo Wellcome product for smoking cessation, is chemically identical to the antidepressant Wellbutrin. Admakers exclude this information because they want their products to seem like targeted cures—not vaguely understood remedies like the "tonics" of yesteryear.*

Not long after his second inauguration, President Clinton signed a bill earmarking $195 million for an antidrug ad campaign—the first installment of a $1 billion pledge. The ads, which began running last summer, all end with the words "Partnership for a Drug Free America" and "Office of National Drug Control Policy." It is fitting that the two entities are officially joined. The Partnership emerged in 1986, the year basketball star Len Bias died with cocaine in his system and President Reagan signed a bill creating, among many other new penalties, mandatory federal prison terms for possession of an illegal substance. This was the birth of the drug wars' latest phase, in which any drug use at all—not abuse or addiction or "drug-related crime"—became the enemy.[3] Soon the words "drug-free America" began to show up regularly, in the name of a White House conference as well as in legislation that declared it the "policy of the United States Government to create a Drug-Free America by 1995."

IS IT MORALLY WRONG TO ALTER THE MIND WITH SOME DRUGS AND SALUTARY TO DO SO WITH OTHERS?

Although the work of the Partnership is spread over hundreds of ad firms, the driving force behind the organization is a man named James Burke—and he is a peculiar spokesman for a "drug free" philosophy. Burke is the former CEO of Johnson & Johnson, the maker of Tylenol and other pain-relief products; Nicotrol, a nicotine-delivery device; Pepcid AC, an antacid; and various prescription medications. When he came to the Partnership, he brought with him a crucial grant of $3 million from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, a philanthropy tied to Johnson & Johnson stock. Having granted $24 million over the last ten years, RWJ is the Partnership's single largest funder, but the philanthropic arms of Merck, Bristol-Myers Squibb, and Hoffman-La Roche have also made sizable donations.

I resist the urge to use the word "hypocrisy," from the Greek *hypókrisis*, "acting of a part on the stage." I don't believe James Burke is acting. Rather, he embodies a contradiction so common that few people even notice it—the idea that altering the body and mind is morally wrong when done with some substances and salutary when done with others.

This contradiction, on close examination, resolves into coherence. Before the Partnership, Burke was in the business of burnishing the myth of the über-drug, doing his best—as all marketers do—to make some external object the center of existence, displacing the complications of family, community, inner lives. Now, drawing on the same admakers, he does the same in reverse. (These admakers are happy to work pro bono, having been made rich by ads for pharmaceuticals, cigarettes, and alcohol. Until a few years ago, the Partnership also took money from these latter two industries.) The Partnership formula is to present a problem—urban violence, date rape, juvenile delinquency—and lay it at the feet of drugs. "Marijuana," says a remorseful-looking kid, "cost me a lot of things. I used to be a straight-A student, you know. I was liked by all the neighbors. Never really caused any trouble. I was always a good kid growing up. Before I knew it, I was getting thrown out of my house."

This kid looks to be around seventeen. The Partnership couldn't tell me his real name or anything about him except that he was interviewed through a New York drug-treatment facility. I wanted to talk to him, because I wanted to ask: "Was it *marijuana* that cost you these things? Or was it your *behavior* while using marijuana? Was that behavior caused by, or did it merely *coincide* with, your marijuana use?"

These kinds of subtleties are crucial, but it isn't a mystery why they are usually glossed over. In Texas, federal prosecutors are seeking life sentences for dealers who supplied heroin to teenagers who subsequently died of overdose. Parents praised the authorities. "We just don't want other people to die," said one, who suggested drug tests for fourth-graders on up. Another said, "I kind of wish all this had happened a year ago so whoever was able to supply Jay that night was already in jail." The desire for justice, and to protect future generations, is certainly understandable. But it is striking to note how rarely, in a story of an overdose, the survivors ask the most important question. It is not: How do we rid illegal drugs from the earth? Despite eighty years of criminal sanctions, stiffened to the point just short of summary executions, markets in this contraband flourish because supply meets demand. Had Jay's dealer been in jail that night, Jay surely would have been able to find someone else—and if not that night, then soon thereafter.

[3] *Declared Nancy Reagan, "If you're a casual drug user, you're an accomplice to murder." Los Angeles police chief Daryl Gates told the Senate that "casual drug users should be taken out and shot." And so on.*

[4] *Many people believe that this is still possible, among them House Speaker Dennis Hastert, who last year co-authored a plan to "help create a drug-free America by the year 2002." In 1995, Hastert sponsored a bill allowing herbal remedies to bypass FDA regulations, thus helping to satisfy Americans' incessant desire for improvement and consciousness alteration.*

The real question—why do kids like Jay want take heroin in the first place?—is consistent- aggressively avoided. Senator Orrin Hatch re- ntly declared that "people who are pushing gs on our kids ... I think we ought to lock them and throw away the keys." Implicit in this re- rk is the idea that kids only alter their con- ousness because it is *pushed* upon them.

Blaming the alien invader—the dealer, the g—provides some structure to chaos. Let's you are a teenager and, in the course of es- lishing your own identity or quelling inner nflicts, you start smoking a lot of pot. You rt running around with a "bad crowd." Your des suffer. Friction with your parents cres- ndos, and they throw you out of the house. er, you regret what you've done—and you're ered a magic button, a way to condense and place all your misdeeds. So, naturally, you me everything on the drug. Something mad- ningly complicated now has a single name. chologist Bruce Alexander points out that e same tendency exists among the seriously dicted. "If your life is really fucked up, you n get into heroin, and that's kind of a way of oing," he says. "You'll have friends to share nething with. You'll have an identity. You'll ve an explanation for all your troubles."

What works for individuals works for a soci- . ("Good People Go Bad in Iowa," read a 96 *New York Times* headline, "And a Drug Is ing Blamed.") Why is the wealthiest society in story also one of the most fearful and cynical? hat root of unhappiness and discontent spurs ousands of college students to join cults, mil- ns of Americans to seek therapists, gurus, and ritual advisers? Why has the rate of suicide for ople fifteen to twenty-four tripled since 1960? hy would an eleven- and a thirteen-year-old ke three rifles and seven handguns to their hool, trigger the fire alarm, and shower gunfire their schoolmates and teachers? Stop search- g for an answer. Drug Watch International, a ug "think tank" that regularly consults with ug czar Barry McCaffrey and testifies before ongress, answered the question in an April 98 press release: "MARIJUANA USED BY NESBORO KILLERS."[5]

II.

In 1912, Merck Pharmaceuticals in Germany synthesized a type of amphetamine, methyl- enedioxymethamphetamine, or MDMA. It mained largely unused until 1976, when a bio- emist at the University of California named Alexander Shulgin, curious about reports from his students, produced and swallowed 120 mil- ligrams of the compound. The result, he wrote soon afterward, was "an easily controlled altered state of consciousness with emotional and sen- sual overtones."

Shulgin's immediate thought was that the drug might be useful in psychotherapy the way LSD had been. In the two decades after its mind-altering properties were discovered in 1943 by a chemist for Sandoz Laboratories, LSD was widely used as an experimental treatment for alcoholism, depression, and various clini- cal neuroses. More than a thousand clinical pa- pers discussed the use of LSD among an esti- mated 40,000 people, and research studies of the drug led to some extraordinary advances— including the discovery of the serotonin sys- tem. When LSD experiments were restricted in 1962 and again in 1965, Senator Robert Kennedy held a congressional hearing. "If they were worthwhile six months ago, why aren't they worthwhile now?" he asked officials of the Food and Drug Administration and the Na- tional Institute of Mental Health. "Perhaps to some extent we have lost sight of the fact that [LSD] can be very, very helpful in our society if used properly."

The answer to Kennedy's question was that LSD had leaked out of the universities and clin- ics and into the hands of "recreational users." It had crossed the line that separates good drugs from bad. LSD was outlawed three years later. In 1970, when a new law devised five cate- gories, or "schedules," of controlled substances, LSD was placed in Schedule I, along with hero- in and marijuana. This is the designation for drugs with no accepted medical use and a "high potential for abuse." In 1986, MDMA would be added to that list of demon drugs. The ques- tion is: How does a substance get assigned to that category? What separates the good drugs from the bad?

In the nineteenth century, now-illegal sub- stances were commonly used in medicine, tonics, and consumer products. (The Illi- nois asylum that housed Mary Todd Lincoln in the 1870s offered its patients morphine, cannabis, whiskey, beer, and ale. Sigmund Freud treated himself with cocaine—and, for a time at least, praised it effusively—as did William McKinley and Thomas Edison.) A new era be- gan with the federal Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906, which required the listing of ingredients in medical products. Then, the 1914 Harrison Narcotic Act, ostensibly a tax measure, assert- ed legal control over distributors and users of opi- um and cocaine.

On the surface, this might seem progressive,

The release describes Andrew Golden and Mitchell John- n as "reputed marijuana smokers." No reference to olden and pot could be found in the Nexis database. The ashington Post reports that Johnson "said he smoked arijuana. None of his classmates believed him."

the story of a still-young nation establishing commercial and medical standards. And there was genuine uneasiness about drugs that were intoxicating or that produced dependence; with the disclosure required by the 1906 act, sales of patent medicines containing opium dropped by a third. But the movement for prohibition drew much of its power from a far less savory motive. "Cocaine," warned Theodore Roosevelt's drug adviser, "is often a direct incentive to the crime of rape by the Negroes."[6] As David Musto reports in *The American Disease*, the prohibitions of the early part of the century were all, in part, a reaction to inflamed fears of foreigners or minority groups. Opium was associated with the Chinese. In 1937, the Marihuana Tax Act targeted Mexican immigrants. "I wish I could show you what a small marijuana cigarette can do to one of our degenerate Spanish-speaking residents," a Colorado newspaper editor wrote to federal officials in 1936. Even the prohibition of alcohol was underlined by fears of immigrants and exaggerations of the effects of drinking. On the eve of its ban in 1919, a radio preacher told his audience, "The reign of tears is over. The slums will soon be a memory. We will turn our prisons into factories, our jails into storehouses and corncribs. Men will walk upright now, women will smile and the children will laugh. Hell will be forever for rent."



But the federal authorities, temperance advocates, and bigots had reached too far. Whereas alcohol (like coffee and tobacco) has been a demon drug in other cultures, in Western societies its use in medicine, recreation, and religious ceremonies stretches back thousands of years. Most Americans had personal experience with drink and could measure the benefits of Prohibition against the violence (by gangsters and by Prohibition agents, who, according to one estimate, killed 1,000 Americans between 1920 and 1930) and the deaths by "overdose."[7] After Franklin Roosevelt lifted Prohibition, subsequent generations knew that the drug, though often abused and often implicated in crimes, violence, and accidents, differs in its effects depending on the person using it. With outlawed drugs, no such reality check is available. People who use illegal drugs without great harm generally stay quiet.

Alcohol also can be legally used in medicines such as Nyquil, or used medicinally in a casual way—say, to calm shattered nerves. Demon drugs, on the other hand, are prohibited or seriously limited even in cases of exceptional need. Forty percent of pain specialists admit that they undermedicate patients to avoid the suspicion of the Drug Enforcement Administration. Their fear is justified: every year about 100 doctors who prescribe narcotics lose their licenses, including in 1996, Dr. William Hurwitz, a Virginia internist whose more than 200 patients were left with no one to treat them. One of these patients committed suicide, saying in a videotaped message, "Dr. Hurwitz isn't the only doctor that can help. He's the only doctor that will help." Chronic pain, mind you, doesn't mean dull throbbing. "I can't shower," one patient explained to *U.S. News & World Report*, "because the water feels like molten lava. Every time someone turns on a ceiling fan, it feels like razor blades are cutting through my legs." To ease such pain can require massive doses of narcotics. This is what Hurwitz prescribed. This is why he lost his license.

But at least narcotics are acknowledged as a legitimate medical tool. Marijuana is not, despite overwhelming evidence that smoking the cannabis plant is a powerful treatment for glaucoma and seizures, mollifies the effects of AIDS or cancer chemotherapy, and eases anxiety. The editors of *The New England Journal of Medicine*, the American Bar Association, the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, and the majority of voters in California and six other states (plus the District of Columbia) are among those who believe that these uses of marijuana are legitimate. So does the eminent geologist Stephen Jay Gould. He developed abdominal cancer in the 1980s and suffered such intense nausea from intravenous chemotherapy that he came to dread it with an "almost perverse intensity." "The treatment," he remembers, "seem[ed] worse than the disease itself." Gould was reluctant to smoke marijuana, which, as thousands of cancer patients have found, is a powerful

[6] *Such propaganda was crucial in convincing the South to allow the Harrison Act's unprecedented extension of federal power. It would be comforting to view this as a sad moment in history, but a prohibition with racist origins continues to have a racist effect: Blacks account for 12 percent of the U.S. population and 15 percent of regular drug users. But they make up 35 percent of arrests for drug possession and 60 percent of the people in state prison on drug offenses.*

[7] *Overdoses always increase in a black market, because drugs are of unknown purity and often include contaminants. Although drug use declined between 1978 and 1994, overdose deaths increased by 400 percent.*

tiemetic. When he did, he found it "the greatt boost I received in all my years of treatment." t is beyond my comprehension," Gould conuded, "and I fancy myself able to comprehend lot, including much nonsense—that any huane person would withhold such a beneficial bstance from people in such great need simply cause others use it for different purposes."

This distinction between "people in great need" nd those with "different purposes" is crucial to e argument for the medical use of marijuana.[8] ke Gould, many who use marijuana for medical asons dislike the "high." Many others don't en feel it. But it is a mistake to think that the ason these people can't legally use marijuana is mply that other people use it for purposes oth- than traditional medical need. Because the ery idea of "medical need" is constantly shifting eneath our feet.

I do not have cancer or epilepsy, or a disabling ental disorder such as schizophrenia. The "oth- purposes" Gould refers to are, in many ways, ine. The qualities of my suffering are (to simplify) nxiety, numbness, and anhedonia. If these were lieved by a legal drug—in other words, if a pharaceutical helped me relax, feel more alive, have n—I would be firmly in the mainstream of Amerian medicine. This is my strong preference. But hen I returned to see Donald Klein this past mmer, hoping that new medications might have merged in the last five years, he told me that here are lots of things to try but there's only arginal evidence that any of them would do any od." He also made it clear that I shouldn't get my opes up. "What you have," he said, "is not a comon condition, and it's almost impossible [for harmaceutical companies] to do a systematic udy, let alone make money, on a condition that's ot common." And so, yes, I turn sometimes to arijuana and other illicit substances for the (limed) relief they offer. I don't merely feel justified doing so; I feel entitled, particularly since, every ear, the pharmaceutical industry rolls out new roducts for pleasure, vanity, convenience.

When Viagra emerged, it was not frowned upn by the authorities that lead the drug wars. Instead, President Clinton ordered Medicaid to cover the drug, and the Pentagon budgeted $50 million for fiscal 1999 to supply it to soldiers, veterans, and civilian employees. Pfizer hired Bob Dole to instruct the nation that "it may take a little courage" to use Viagra. This is a medicine whose sole purpose is to allow for sexual pleasure; it was embraced by the black market and is easily available from doctors, including some who perform "examinations" via a three-question form on the Internet. But Viagra's legitimacy was never questioned, because it treats a disease—erectile dysfunction. Before Viagra, when the only treatment options were less-effective pills and awkward injection-based therapies, this condition was referred to as impotence. The change in language is interesting. The "dys" sits on the front of dysfunction like a streak of dirt on a pane of glass. At a level more primal than cognitive, we want it removed. This is what we do with dysfunctions: we fix them. Impotence, on the other hand, meaning "weakness" or "helplessness," is something we all experience at one time or another. Applied to men "incapable of sexual intercourse, often because of an inability to achieve or sustain an erection," the word carries a sense of something unfortunate but part of living, and particularly of growing older.

I DON'T MERELY FEEL JUSTIFIED IN USING ILLEGAL DRUGS TO FIND RELIEF; I FEEL ENTITLED

Thus the advent of Viagra does not simply treat a disease. It changes our conception of disease. This paradigm shift is a common occurrence but is below our radar. Hair loss becomes a disease, not a fact of life. Acid indigestion becomes a disease, not a matter of eating poorly. If these examples seem to make light of the broadening of disease, the ascent of psychopharmaceuticals makes the issue urgent. Outside the realm of the tangibly physical, the power of drugs and drugmakers is far greater. What we now know as "anxiety disorder," for example, existed only in theory from Freud's time through World War II. In the early 1950s, a drug company polled doctors and found that most had no interest in a medication that treated anxiety. But by 1970, one woman in five and one man in thirteen were using a tranquilizer or sedative, and anxiety was a mainstay of psychiatry. The change could be directly attributed to two drugs, Miltown and Valium, which were released in 1955 and 1963, respectively. The successor to these drugs, Xanax, introduced in 1981, virtually created a disease itself. Donald Klein had already proposed the existence of something called "panic disorder," as opposed to generalized [illegible] twenty years before. But his theo-

A popular argument against medical marijuana is that it a ruse for the "real" goal of unrestricted use, but this arument is itself a ruse. We put aside disagreements over imigration to allow amnesty for victims of political torture. 'e—at least most of us—put aside disagreements over bortion in cases of rape. Medical marijuana use for the seously ill has the same unambiguous claim to legitimacy. et sick people face arrest and punishment. In 1997, there ere 606,519 arrests for marijuana possession and 88,682 rrests for sale/manufacture; in the latter category fell an klahoma man with severe rheumatoid arthritis who reeived ninety-three years in prison for growing marijuana his basement. The prosecutor had told the jury that, in entencing, they should "pick a number and add two or three eros to it."

ry was widely refuted, and in practice panic anxiety was treated only in the context of a larger problem. Xanax changed that. "With a convenient, effective drug available," writes Peter Kramer, "doctors saw panic anxiety everywhere." Xanax has also become the litmus test for generalized anxiety disorder. "If Xanax doesn't work," instructs *The Essential Guide to Psychiatric Drugs*, "usually the original diagnosis was wrong."[9]

This is not to say that all specific disorders are arbitrary, just that there is a delicate line to be drawn. "The term 'disease'—and the border between health and disease—is a social construct," says Steven Hyman, director of the National Institute of Mental Health. "There are some things we would never argue about, like cancer. But do we call it a disease if you have a few foci of abnormal cells in your body, something that you could live with without any problem? There is a gray zone. With behavior and the brain, the gray zone is much larger." To Hyman's observation, it must be added that, whereas vague dissatisfactions make money for psychic hot lines and interior decorators, diseases make money for pharmaceutical companies. What Peter Kramer calls psychiatric diagnostic creep is not an accident of history but a movement engineered for profit.

VIAGRA FALLS ON THE SIDE OF LEGITIMACY; A DRUG THAT DIRECTLY INDUCED ORGASM WOULD NOT

We have only begun to grapple with the consequences. The example of Prozac has been chewed over, but it's worth chewing still more—because it is so typical of a new generation of drugs, which are being used to treat debilitating conditions and also by people with far less serious problems. With Lauren Slater, author of the fine memoir *Prozac Diary*, we have a case anyone would regard as serious. Suffering from obsessive-compulsive disorder, severe depression, and anorexia, she had been hospitalized five times, attempted suicide twice, and cut herself with razors. Prescribed Prozac in 1988, she found the drug a reprieve from a lifetime sentence of serious illness—"a blessing, pure and simple," she writes. The patients described in Peter Kramer's *Listening to Prozac* are quite unlike Lauren Slater. They share, he writes, "something very much like 'neurosis,' psychoanalysis's umbrella term for the mildly disturbed, the near-normal, and those with very little wrong at all." The use of Prozac for these patients is not incidental; they make up a large portion, probably a wide majority, of people on the drug. (One good indication is that only 31 percent of antidepressant prescriptions are written by psychiatrists.)

Throughout his book, Kramer flirts with "unsettling" comparisons between Prozac and illegal drugs. Since Prozac can "lend social ease, command, even brilliance," for example, he wonders how its use for this purpose can "be distinguished from, say, the street use of amphetamine as a way of overcoming inhibitions and inspiring zest." The better comparison, I suggested in a conversation with Kramer, is between Prozac and MDMA. Both drugs work by increasing the presence of serotonin in the brain. (Whereas Prozac inhibits serotonin's reuptake, MDMA stimulates its release.) Both can be helpful to the seriously ill as well as to people with more common problems. Most of the objections to MDMA—that it distorts "real" personality, that it rids people of anxiety that may be personally or socially useful, that it induces more pleasure than is natural—have also been marshaled against Prozac. Both these drugs challenge our definitions of normalcy and of the legitimate uses of a mind-altering substance. Yet Kramer rejects the comparison. "The distinction we make," he told me, "is between drugs that give pleasure directly and the drugs that give people the ability to function in society, which can indirectly lead to pleasure. If the medication can make you work well or parent well, and then through your work or parenting you get pleasure, that's fine. But if the drug gives you pleasure by taking it directly, that's not a legitimate use." (Viagra, because it allows men to experience sexual pleasure, falls on the side of legitimacy. But, Kramer said, a drug that directly induced an orgasm would not.)

The line between therapeutic and hedonistic pleasure, however, is awfully hard to draw. I think of a friend of mine who uses MDMA a few times a month. His is a textbook case of "recreational" use. He takes MDMA on weekends, in clubs, for fun. He is not ill and is not in psychotherapy. But he will live for the rest of his life in the shadow of a traumatic experience, which is that for more than two decades he hid his homosexuality. Some might say the drug is an unhealthy escape from "the real world," that the relaxation and intimacy he experiences are illusory. But these experiences give him a point of reference he can use in a "sober" state. His pleasure from the drug is *entirely* social—being and sharing and loving with other people. Is this hedonistic? "I found it astonishing," Kramer writes of Prozac, "that a pill could do in a matter of days what psychiatrists hope, and often fail, to accomplish by other means over a course of years:

[9] *Defining diseases around medication pleases drug companies as well as HMOs. From 1988 to 1997, as general health-care benefits declined 7 percent, mental-health benefits fell 54 percent. Substituting pills for psychotherapy helps cut costs.*

estore to a person robbed of it in childhood capacity to play."

erhaps I would find restrictions on MDMA e reasonable if they at least carved out an ex- ion for therapeutic use. Keep in mind, that's re this drug started. After Shulgin's experiment d spread, and thousands of doses were taken in nical setting. As with LSD, MDMA was seen as a medicine but as a catalyst to be taken just w times—or perhaps only once—in the pres- of a therapist or "guide." The effects were im- sive. Many users found their artifice and de- es stripped away and long-buried emotions g to the surface. The drug also had the unusual ct of increasing empathy, which helped users t their therapist—a crucial characteristic of ef- ive healing—and also made it useful in cou- therapy. In a collection of first-person ac- nts of therapeutic MDMA use, *Through the eway of the Heart*, published in 1985, a rape vic- described working through her fears. Anoth- voman described revelations about her son, weight problems, and "why angry men are at- ted to me."

can hear the skeptics shuffling their feet, want- data from double-blind controlled trials. But)MA research never reached that stage. Mind- of what had happened with LSD, the therapists, ntists, and other adults experimenting with)MA tried to keep it quiet. Inevitably, though, d spread, and a new mode of use sprang up— aves, in dance clubs, in dorm rooms. An astute tributor of the drug renamed it Ecstasy to em- size its pleasurable effects. ("'Empathy' would more appropriate," he said later. "But how ny people know what that means?")[10]

As the DEA moved to restrict MDMA, ad- cates of its medical use flooded the agency h testimony, pleading for a chance to subject drug to methodical study. The agency's ad- nistrative-law judge, Francis Young, saw mer- n this argument. In a ninety-page decision nded down in 1986, he recommended that drug be placed in Schedule III, which would w for it to be prescribed by doctors and test- further. Young cited its history of "current- accepted medical use in treatment in the nited States" and argued that "the evidence of record does not establish that . . . MDMA has a 'high potential' for abuse."

DEA officials overruled Young and placed MDMA in Schedule I, with the assurance that its decision would be self-fulfilling. A Schedule I substance cannot be used clinically and can be studied only with great difficulty. So medical use is essentially forever impossible. That leaves illicit use, which, by one common definition, *is* the abuse for which Schedule I drugs have a "high potential." Since then, government-funded researchers have sought to document MDMA's dangers. Here we come to the truth about the line and how it is maintained.



With rare exceptions, everything we know about legal drugs comes from research sponsored by the pharmaceutical industry. Naturally, this work emphasizes the benefits and downplays the accompanying risks. On the other hand, the National Institute on Drug Abuse, which funds more than 85 percent of the world's health research on illegal drugs, emphasizes the dangers and all but ignores potential benefits.

One recent NIDA-funded study on MDMA was widely reported last fall. Dr. George Ricaurte found, in fourteen men and women who had used MDMA 70 to 400 times in the previous six years, "long-lasting nerve cell damage in the brain." Specifically, Ricaurte found decreases in the number of serotonin-reuptake sites. The study begs three major questions. First, do its conclusions really reflect the experience of heavy MDMA users? British physician Karl Jansen reports that he referred MDMA users who had taken more than 1,000 doses and that "they were told by Ricaurte that they had a clean bill of health" but were excluded from his study. Second, should the brain changes Ricaurte found be called "damage," given that a number of psychiatric medications, Prozac and Zoloft among them, decrease the number of serotonin receptors by blockading them? As psychopharmacologist Julie Holland writes, "This could be interpreted as an adaptive response as opposed to a toxic or 'damaged' response." Third, do Ricaurte's findings have any bearing on the use of MDMA in therapy, which calls for a handful of doses over many months?

In this climate, it's hard to know. Charles Grob, a psychiatrist at Harbor–UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles, has been trying to restart MDMA research for eight years. He received FDA ap-

With a street name like Ecstasy, it is hard to take)MA seriously as a medicine, especially compared with rds like painKILLERS, or ANTIdepressants, which sig- y the elimination of a problem as opposed to the creation pleasure. But the faux-Latin pharmaceutical names are designed to suggest the drugs' wonders. David Wood, o used to run the firm that came up with the name zac, explains it this way: "It's short and aggressive, the o' is positive, and the Z indicates efficacy." One of od's employees elaborated on good drug names: "Sounds h as 'ah,' or 'ay,' which require that the mouth be open, ke a feeling of expansiveness and openness." As in eridia, Viagra, Propecia.

proval to conduct Phase I trials on human volunteers, to see if MDMA is safe enough to be used as a medicine. But even with his impeccable credentials, the backing of a prestigious research hospital, and an extremely conservative protocol—involving terminal patients—Grob has faced a seemingly interminable wait for permission to begin Phase II, in which he would study efficacy. Grob's struggle explains why he has little company in the research community. "When you have a drug that's popular among young people," Grob says, "that's the kiss of death when it comes to exploring its potential utility in a medical context."

There is another "kiss of death": lack of interest from industry. I asked Lester Grinspoon, a professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, who led the legal challenge to the DEA's scheduling decision, whether he had approached drug companies about supporting the effort. "We didn't even consider it," he said. "No drug company is going to be interested in a drug that's therapeutically useful only once or twice a year. That's a no-brainer for them." When you see the feel-good ads from the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturer's Association with the tag line "Leading the way in the search for cures," keep in mind that cures—conditions in which medication is no longer required—are not particularly high on the pharmaceutical companies' priority list.

Market potential isn't the only factor explaining the status of drugs, but its power shouldn't be underestimated. The principal psychoactive ingredient of marijuana, THC, is available in pill form and can be legally prescribed as Marinol. A "new" creation, it was patented by Unimed Pharmaceutical and is sold for about $15 per 10-mg pill. Marinol is considered by patients to be a poor substitute for marijuana, because doses cannot be titrated as precisely and because THC is only one of 460 known compounds in cannabis smoke, among other reasons. But Marinol's profit potential—necessary to justify the up-front research and testing, which can cost upward of $500 million per medication—brought it to market. Opponents of medical marijuana claim that they simply want all medicines to be approved by the FDA, but they know that drug companies have little incentive to overcome the regulatory and financial obstacles for a plant that can't be patented. The FDA is the tail, not the dog.

The market must be taken seriously as an explanation of drugs' status. The reason is that the explanations usually given fall so far short. Take the idea "Bad drugs induce violence." First, violence is demonstrably not a pharmacological effect of marijuana, heroin, and the psychedelics. Of cocaine, in some cases. (Of alcohol, in many.) But if it was violence we feared, then wouldn't we punish that act with the greatest severity? Drug sellers, even people marginally involved in a "conspiracy to distribute," consistently receive longer sentences than rapists and murderers.

Nor can the explanation be the danger of illegal drugs. Marijuana, though not harmless, has never been shown to have caused a single death. Heroin, in long-term "maintenance" use, is safer than habitual heavy drinking. Of course, illegal drugs can do the body great harm. All drugs have some risk, including many legal ones. Because of Viagra's novelty, the 130 deaths it has caused (as of last November) have received a fair amount of attention. But each year, anti-inflammatory agents such as Advil, Tylenol, and aspirin cause an estimated 7,000 deaths and 70,000 hospitalizations. Legal medications are the principal cause of between 45,000 and 200,000 American deaths each year, between 1 and 5.5 million hospitalizations. It is telling that we have only estimates. As Thomas J. Moore notes in *Prescription for Disaster*, the government calculates the annual deaths due to railway accidents and falls of less than one sixtieth, among hundreds of categories. But no federal agency collects information on deaths related to legal drugs. (The $30 million spent investigating the crash of TWA Flight 800, in which 230 people died, is six times larger than the FDA's budget for monitoring the safety of approved drugs.) Psychoactive drugs can be particularly toxic. In 1997, according to Moore, nearly 100,000 persons were diagnosed with "poisoning" by psychological active drugs, 90 percent of the cases due to benzodiazepine tranquilizers and antidepressants. It is simply a myth that legal drugs have been proved "safe." According to one government estimate, 15 percent of children are on Ritalin. But the long-term effects of Ritalin—or antidepressants, which are also commonly prescribed—on your kids isn't known. "I feel in between a rock and a hard place," says NIMH director Hyman. "I know that untreated depression is bad and that we better not just let kids be depressed. But by the same token we don't know what the effects of antidepressants are on the developing brain. . . . We should have humility and be a bit frightened."

These risks are striking, given that protecting children is the cornerstone of the drug wars. We forbid the use of medical marijuana, worrying that it will send a bad message. What message is sent by the long row of pills laid out by the school nurse—or by "educational" visits to high schools by drugmakers? But, you might object, these are medicines—and illegal drug use is purely hedonistic. What, then, about illegal drug use that clearly falls under the category of self-medication? One physician I know who treats women heroin users tells me that each of them suffered sexual abuse as children. According to University of Texas pharmacologist Kathryn Cunnin

n, 40 to 70 percent of cocaine users have pre-ting depressive conditions.

This is not to suggest that depressed people uld use cocaine. The risks of dependence and pulsive use, and the roller-coaster experi-e of cocaine highs and lows, make for a tox-ombination with intense suffering. Given e risks, not to mention the risk of arrest, why ldn't a depressed person opt for legal treat-nt? The most obvious answers are economic ny cocaine users lack access to health care) chemical. Cocaine is a formidable mood el-tor and acts immediately, as opposed to the to four weeks of most prescription anti-ressants. Perhaps the most important factor, ugh, is cultural. Using a "pleasure drug" like aine does not signal weakness or vulnerabil-Self-medication can be a way of avoiding the ma of admitting to oneself and others that re is a problem to be treated.

Calling illegal drug use a disease is popular these s, and it is done, I believe, with a compassion-purpose: pushing treatment over incarcera-n. It also seems clear that drug abuse can be a inct pathology. But isn't the "disease" whatever drug users are trying to find relief from (or)? According to the Pharmaceutical Research Manufacturer's Association, nineteen med-ions are in development for "substance use dis-ers." This includes six products for "smoking ces-on" that contain nicotine. Are these treatments a disease or competitors in the market for long-m nicotine maintenance?

Perhaps the most damning charge against ille-drugs is that they're addictive. Again, the l story is considerably more complicated. Many gal drugs, like marijuana and cocaine, do not oduce physical dependence. Some, like heroin, In any case, the most important factor in de-uctive use is the craving people experience—ving that leads them to continue a behavior de-te serious adverse effects. Legal drugs preclude tain behaviors we associate with addiction—e stealing for dope money—but that doesn't an people don't become addicted to them. By ir own admissions, Betty Ford was addicted to lium and William Rehnquist to the sleeping pill cidyl, for nine years. Ritalin shares the addic-e qualities of all the amphetamines. "For many ople," says NIMH director Hyman, explaining y many psychiatrists will not prescribe one ss of drugs, "stopping short-acting high-poten-benzodiazepines, such as Xanax, is sheer hell. they try to stop they develop rebound anxiety mptoms (or insomnia) that seem worse than e original symptoms they were treating." Even tidepressants, although they certainly don't oduce the intense craving of classic addiction, n be habit forming. Lauren Slater was first made ll by one pill per day, then required more to feel the same effect, then found that even three would not return her to the miraculous health that she had at first experienced. This is called tolerance. She has also been unable to stop taking the drug without "breaking up." This is called dependence. "'There are plenty of addicts who lead perfectly respectable lives,'" Slater's boyfriend tells her. To which she replies, "'An addict.... You think so?'"

III.

In the late 1980s, in black communities, the Partnership for a Drug Free America placed billboards showing an outstretched hand filled with vials of crack cocaine. It read: "YO, SLAVE! The dealer is selling you something you don't want.... Addiction is slavery." The ad was obviously designed to resonate in the black neighborhoods most visibly affected by the wave of crack use. But its idea has a broader significance in a country for which independence of mind and spirit is a primary value.

In *Brave New World,* Aldous Huxley created the archetype of drug-as-enemy-of-freedom: soma. "A really efficient totalitarian state," he wrote in the book's foreword, is one in which the "slaves ... do not have to be coerced, because they love their servitude." Soma—"euphoric, narcotic, pleasantly hallucinant," with "all the advantages of Christianity and alcohol; none of their defects," and a way to "take a holiday from reality whenever you like, and come back without so much as a headache or a mythology"—is one of the key agents of that voluntary slavery.

> WE'VE HAD A WAR ON DRUGS AS LONG AS WE'VE HATED OURSELVES FOR WANTING TO GET HIGH

In the spring of 1953, two decades after he published this book, Huxley offered himself as a guinea pig in the experiments of a British psychiatrist studying mescaline. What followed was a second masterpiece on drugs and man, *The Doors of Perception.* The title is from William Blake: "If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite—/For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern." Huxley found his mescaline experience to be "without question the most extraordinary and significant experience this side of the Beatific vision ... [I]t opens up a host of philosophical problems, throws intense light and raises all manner of questions in the field of aesthetics, religion, theory of knowledge."

Taken together, these two works frame the dual, contradictory nature of mind-altering substances: they can be agents of servitude or of freedom. Though we are deathly afraid of the first pos-

sibility, we are drawn like moths to the light of the second. "The urge to transcend self-conscious selfhood is," Huxley writes, "a principal appetite of the soul. When, for whatever reason, men and women fail to transcend themselves by means of worship, good works and spiritual exercises, they are apt to resort to religion's chemical surrogates."

One might think, as mind diseases are broadened and the substances that alter consciousness take their place beside toothpaste and breakfast cereal, that users of other "surrogates" might receive more understanding and sympathy. You might think the executive taking Xanax before a speech, or the college student on BuSpar, or any of the recipients of 65 million annual antidepressant prescriptions, would have second thoughts about punishing the depressed user of cocaine, or even the person who is not seriously depressed, just, as the Prozac ad says, "feeling blue." In trying to imagine why the opposite has happened, I think of the people I know who use psychopharmaceuticals. Because I've always been up-front about my experiences, friends often approach me when they're thinking of doing so. Every year there are more of them. And yet, in their hushed tones, I hear shame mixed with fear. I think we don't know quite what to make of our own brave new world. The more fixes that become available, the more we realize we're vulnerable. We solve some problems, but add new and perplexing ones.

In the *Odyssey*, when three of his crew are lured by the lotus-eaters and "lost all desire to send a message back, much less return," Odysseus responds decisively. "I brought them back . . . dragged them under the rowing benches, lashed them fast." "Already," writes David Lenson in *On Drugs*, "the high is unspeakable, and already the official response is arrest and restraint." The pattern is set: since people lose their freedom from drugs, we take their freedom to keep them from drugs.[11] Odysseus' frantic response, though, seems more than just a practical measure. Perhaps he fears his own desire to retire amidst the lotus-eaters. Perhaps he fears what underlies that desire. If we even feel the *lure* of drugs, we acknowledge that we are not satisfied by what is good and productive and healthy. And that is a frightening thought. "The War on Drugs has been with us," writes Lenson, "for as long as we have despised the part of ourselves that wants to get high."

[11] *In the 1992 campaign, Bill Clinton said, "I don't think my brother would be alive today if it wasn't for the criminal justice system." Roger served sixteen months in Arkansas State Prison for conspiracy to distribute cocaine. Had he been convicted three years later, he would have faced a five-year mandatory minimum sentence, without the possibility of parole. If he had had a prior felony or had sold the same amount of cocaine in crack form, he would have automatically received ten years.*

As Lenson points out, "It is a peculiar featu
of history, that peoples with strong historica
physical, and cultural affinities tend to detest eac
other with the most venom." In the America
drug wars, too, animosity runs in both directio
Many users of illegal drugs—particularly kids—c
so not just because they like the feeling but becau
it sets them apart from "straight" society, allo
them (without any effort or thought) to join
culture of dissent. On the other side, "straight s
ciety" sees a hated version of itself in the dr
users. This is not just the 11 percent of America
using psychotropic medications, or the 6 milli
who admit to "nonmedical" use of legal dru
but anyone who fears and desires pleasure, wh
fears and desires loss of control, who fears an
desires chemically enhanced living.

Straight society has remarkable power: it can a
rest the enemy, seize assets without judicial revie
withdraw public housing or assistance. But th
real power of prohibition is that it *creates* the fo
bidden world of danger and hedonism that th
straights want to distinguish themselves from.
black market spawns violence, thievery, and il
nesses—all can be blamed on the demon drugs. F
a reminder, we need only go to the movies (
which drug dealers are the stock villains). C
watch *Cops*, in which, one by one, the bedraggl
junkies, fearsome crack dealers, and hapless do
smokers are led away in chains. For anyone wh
is secretly ashamed, or confused, about the e
plosion in legal drug-taking, here is reassuranc
the people in handcuffs are the bad ones. Anythi
the rest of us do is saintly by comparison.

We are like Robert Louis Stevenson's Dr. Jeky
longing that we might be divided in two, th
"the unjust might go his way . . . and the just cou
walk steadfastly and securely on his upward pat
doing the good things in which he found his ple
sure, and no longer exposed to disgrace and pe
itence by the hands of this extraneous evil." In h
laboratory, Jekyll creates the "foul soul" of E
ward Hyde, whose presence heightens the rep
tation of the esteemed doctor. But Jekyll's drea
cannot last. Just before his suicide, he confesses
having become "a creature eaten up and empti
by fever, languidly weak both in body and min
and solely occupied by one thought: the horror
my other self." To react to an unpleasant truth
separating from it is a fundamental human i
stinct. Usually, though, what is denied only gro
in injurious power. We believe that lashing
the illegal drug user will purify us. We try to se
arate the "evil" from the "good" of drugs, what
love and what we fear about them, to enforce
drug-free America with handcuffs and jail ce
while legal drugs grow in popularity and variet
But we cannot separate the inseparable. We kn
the truth about ourselves. It is time to begin li
ing with that horror, and that blessing.

THE OLD MAN AND THE MANUSCRIPT

Hemingway, in his last book, writes his own sad epitaph

By Tom Jenks

In his lifetime, Ernest Hemingway published more than a dozen books, averaging one every couple of years from 1925 to 1952, a productive quarter century for a writer who worked slowly and often complained how hard it was to write. Many of his readers imagine his life as a steady progression of accomplishment from youth to midlife and into old age—a notion reinforced by the many compelling photographs of the robust, white-haired, bearded Papa moving to ever greater literary heights. His elevation to fame coincided with America's growth as a superpower and the rise of *Time*, *Life*, and other periodicals whose popularity rested on photojournalism, topicality, and sensation. Hemingway running with the bulls at Pamplona, the war correspondent raising money for ambulances for Loyalist Spain, Papa divorcing one wife for another and then another, the Old Man marlin fishing in the Gulf Stream, the greatest American author big-game hunting in Africa—he was never far out of the news. And as Hemingway readied each book for publication, excerpts appeared in the large-circulation magazines. He demanded and received record-breaking sums from publishers and film studios. Reviewers and critics could say what they liked—and they did—but so successful was Hemingway's command of his audience that he could gloat, "If the book is good, is about something you know, and is truly written, and reading it over you see that this is so, you can let the boys yip and the noise will have that pleasant sound coyotes make on a very cold night when they are out in the snow and you are in your cabin."



As an icon of mid-century American masculinity, Hemingway lives on everywhere, reinforcing the perception of his vitality and success: My local bookstore in San Francisco is named A Clean Well-Lighted Place, after the famous story. Mont Blanc offers a Hemingway pen. Travelers can take the Tanzania Hemingway African Safari. Consumers can order Hemingway photos from the J. Peterman catalogue and Hemingway furniture from Thomasville. Branches of one of Hemingway's favorite European hangouts, Harry's Bar, proliferate in many cities. Two of his granddaughters have been movie stars, and his novels continue to be popular, handily outselling those of many well-known contemporary writers.

In reality, however, the second half of Hemingway's life, particularly the late period of his popular veneration, was a startling foreclosure on the promise of his talents. Emblematic as he was for his era, pervasive an icon as he remains today, his literary importance is equivocal—inspiring yet cautionary

Tom Jenks, formerly an editor at Scribner and Esquire, *is the author of* Our Happiness, *a novel. He was the editor, with Carol Edgarian, of* The Writer's Life.

Ernest Hemingway, 1959. Photograph by Mary Hemingway, courtesy of the John F. Kennedy Library, Boston

to anyone interested in the filaments of reason and passion that connect a life to art. In July 1961, weeks short of his sixty-second birthday, worn out by his efforts, his drinking, and the physical bravado that had caused him many injuries and illnesses, Hemingway put a double-barreled shotgun to his head and took his own life, an act he had contemplated off and on from his youth and preferred to a future in which he could neither write nor summon the physical strength that had always characterized him. His death, initially reported by his wife as an accident, shocked the world. He was the best-known writer of the time, a Nobel laureate. Why had he done it? As the news sunk in, his readers were left with the mystery of his character and a desire to know more of him.

Since then, from the thousands of pages of incomplete, unpublished manuscripts Hemingway left behind, his heirs and publishers have brought forth five book-length works, beginning with *A Moveable Feast* (1964) and followed by *Islands in the Stream* (1970), *The Dangerous Summer* (1985), *The Garden of Eden* (1986), which I edited, and currently *True at First Light*, an uncertain blend of fiction and memoir, released to coincide with the hundredth anniversary of the author's birth in July.

Certain to be an international best-seller (publishers in most European countries have paid record sums for a posthumous Hemingway), *True at First Light* in no way resembles anything like Hemingway's best work. In fact, it can't be viewed as a book in the usual sense but only as a published rough draft whose claim to our attention lies not in its characters or story per se but in an author whose failing effort at writing the book presents an unfortunate self-portrait of the deterioration behind the surface of his heroic image. A *New York Times* article announcing the book's publication predictably featured a four-column color photograph of Hemingway and wife Mary looking glamorous on safari in Kenya in 1953. In the photo, as in the book, the players are the characters: there is the famous author, Papa, set against a picturesque background of native huts, stoutly obeying himself to full height and gazing importantly into the distance while his wife, Miss Mary, beams properly up at him. Billed as "A Fictional Memoir of His Last African Safari," *True at First Light* is intimately narrated in the first person by a character named Papa and titillates by inviting speculation on what is fact and what is fiction, particularly with regard to Papa's lust for a young African woman.

The events that inspired the book are colorful, if decadent in a familiar Hemingway vein. In 1953–54, Hemingway attempted to re-create the idyllic African safari he had taken with his second wife, Pauline, whose uncle paid for the trip and whose wealth was one of the attractions that led Hemingway to abandon his first wife, Hadley. Twenty years later, peripatetically independent and married twice more, Hemingway paid for his safari with Mary by agreeing to write a series of articles for *Look*, which sent along a photographer. The Kenyan authorities, eager to popularize big-game hunting and to dispel tourists' anxieties over the recent Mau Mau uprisings, in which armed freedom fighters from the Kikuyu tribe attacked white landowners, granted Hemingway honorary game-warden status, effectively setting him up as head man on his own preserve, an irresistibly flattering position to Hemingway, though he was well aware that he was being used to glamorize a sport already ruined by its popularity. As the safari proceeded, the ideal photo opportunity failed to materialize, and finally the *Look* photographer took a set-up shot of Hemingway, rifle in hand, on one knee beside a leopard someone else had killed. Hemingway made the photographer promise not to run the picture until he got a leopard of his own. Later, while Mary was off Christmas shopping in Nairobi, Hemingway went native, shaving his head, wearing Masai clothes, and hunting with a spear. Ultimately, he speared a leopard, followed it into heavy brush, and finished the job with six blasts from a shotgun. In the celebration that followed, a group of local women, including one whom Hemingway wanted, caroused and cavorted with him in his tent, breaking Mary's bed. One of the local men cautioned Hemingway that things were becoming unseemly, and Hemingway sent the women home, later tactfully replacing Mary's bed. In letters written the time, Hemingway extols the virt of "African girls"—their impuden cheerfulness, beauty, and ability to g him "a hardon." He boastfully refers his African "fiancée" and suggest sexual liaison that Mary knows ab and condones. The letters are jocu though not absolutely tongue in che and so the door is open for gossip. Sc ner, in publicizing the "fictional me oir," has counted heavily on the wl of safari sex to draw readers.

True at First Light opens with a p longed movement in which Papa a his retainers are long-suffering in serv of Miss Mary, who insists on killin lion of her own, though she's a p shot and tends to flinch from the k Papa will have to do it for her while ing to give her credit and bearing l resentment. When not busy look after her, Papa has plenty of time play Bwana. He's the local arbiter disputes, a medicine man, and a qu military leader charged with defe ing the area in case of Mau Mau tack. These roles afford the old m plenty of opportunities to swagger yield trivial dramas, barely integrate subplots to the story of Miss Ma Papa, and his African "fiancée." T intrigue, in fact, offers scant satisfact to readers looking for sensationali much less meaningful drama. The duction between Papa and his Waka ba "bride," Debba, occurs in vag mutely couched passages of Papa's s serving reflections and, too frequen in solemn, unwittingly risible bits sh ing Papa's gun as his penis and his nis as his gun: "When we rode toge er in the front seat she liked to feel embossing on the old leather holste my pistol. It was a flowered design a very old and worn and she would tr the design very carefully with her gers and then take her hand away a press the pistol and its holster cl against her thigh." The attraction le to a scene in which they tryst o riverbank while waiting for a troop marauding baboons Papa must k Debba and Papa caress, and Papa clares his love: "I told her in Span that I loved her very much and th loved every thing about her from feet to her head and we counted the things that were loved and she

y and very happy and I was happy
and I did not think I lied about
one of them nor about all of them."
cue, the baboons arrive, Papa
ngs to action, and in rapid fire kills
ee as the others run off. Debba
es forward and asks to hold the ri-
"It was so cold,'" she says. "'Now
so hot.'" A local woman holding
ana's gun is a breech of protocol,
the villagers are troubled. Later,
n Papa beds Debba (in an amaz-
y convoluted, oblique passage that
little of the characters in it), there
rther concern among the retainers
Bwana has forgotten himself. Petu-
ly, Papa gives up the girl and re-
ts, "This was the beginning of the
of the day in my life which offered
most chances of happiness."
ether we're intended to take his as-
ion seriously or as an exaggerated
ression of disappointment is un-
r, but from that point on *True at t Light* pursues a drawn-out conclu-
in which Papa and Mary go on, as
ontentedly, with their marriage.
eted from the book is further man-
ript material showing Papa awake
ile Mary sleeps.* He reflects un-
ily on his life, then dreams that the
fe I had loved first and best and who
s the mother of my oldest son was
h me and we were sleeping close
gether. . . ." This clear reminiscence
Hemingway's own first wife, Hadley,
om he never forgave himself for be-
ying and whose memory he senti-
ntally held as an image of his lost in-
cence, makes a similar appearance at
end of *A Moveable Feast* and, more
n a repudiation of his subsequent
ee wives, suggests misery and de-
ir over the outcome of his life.
Hemingway' s seventy-year-old son,
rick, who agreed to the publication

The manuscript, 850 pages of typescript holograph, housed (like previous unpubed Hemingway manuscripts) at the nedy Library in Boston, has long been led from public scrutiny but, with the plication of True at First Light, *will be sealed for readers. In 1986, I received a prising number of calls from pay phones he library by individuals who had gone to k at the manuscript of* The Garden of en *and, having made the pilgrimage, nted to share their experience with some- who might understand an attraction that y themselves couldn't quite explain. In ng to the author's manuscript, they had ped to reach the man.*



"Excuse me waiter, there's the blood and misery of a thousand small farmers in my coffee."

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of the African book on the condition that he be the one to edit it, is the son of Hemingway's second wife, Pauline, and has refrained from deleting potentially unfavorable references to his mother as well as apparent slurs on Hemingway's third wife, Martha Gellhorn, and on Adriana Ivancich, a young Italian woman for whom Hemingway unsuccessfully lusted during several years preceding the Kenyan safari with Mary. Apparent in Papa's lust for Debba and in his impatience with Mary is more than a little transference from the failed seduction of Adriana. Throughout *True at First Light*, Papa is hard on women unless they are subservient and adoring; among his criteria for a satisfactory woman are beauty, docility, work, and discipline. In harsh passages that Patrick cut from the published version of the book, Papa recalls an early girlfriend: "Her greatest asset was that she couldn't go out, not only in society but at all." In a fit of distemper he reflects, "I remembered that more than half my life had been spent, at night, which should be the best time, with women who could not come enough or who could come too easily and who were always stubbing out cigarette butts and commencing their sentences with the word, 'Darling.'" Patrick, who was living in Africa at the time of the safari, believes his father wanted to end the marriage with Mary, but she was domineering enough to force him back into it. Her primary drawback as Hemingway's wife, Patrick relates, "was physiology. She kept him company drinking, and it killed her." Hemingway was, by comparison, Patrick believes, "the product of very heavy natural selection—a five-bottle-a-day man, like Churchill."

Patrick told me he was impressed by his father's total recall of the backdrop of the story, but the amazing thing is that Hemingway was writing the manuscript at all, given that the safari ended in two plane crashes. The first occurred when the Hemingways' plane clipped an abandoned telegraph wire. In a forced landing, Hemingway dislocated his right shoulder, but no one was seriously hurt. Stranded overnight, they were reported in the press as dead, then rescued and taken to Butiaba, where another pilot was engaged to take them to Entebbe. On takeoff, the plane faltered, bumped down, lifted again, then crashed and burst into flames. Mary and the pilot escaped through a window too small for Hemingway's bulk. The door frame had buckled, and Hemingway, unable to push the door open with his dislocated arm, used his head as a battering ram and butted the door open. He emerged, bleeding from the scalp and with first-degree burns on his face and arms. After a long car trip to town and cursory medical attention, celebration and drinking ensued. The next morning, Hemingway found his pillow soaked with cranial fluid.

During the following week, while meeting the press and exulting over premature obituaries and congratulatory cables from around the world, Hemingway struck a familiar pose of invincibility, though he was seriously injured—a suppurating wound in his skull; a collapsed intestine; a ruptured liver, spleen, and kidney; crushed vertebrae; a temporary loss of vision in one eye; dislocated bones; and severe burns. In the years that followed, though he continued to write and drink heavily and take foolish physical risks, he was in pain and ailing. He had difficulty keeping his weight and blood pressure down, and he grew anemic. By November 1955, the manuscript of the African book approached 700 pages, and Hemingway was bedridden with nephritis and hepatitis. And, though there were later intervals of relative well-being, he never fully recovered. By 1957, he was struggling with depression, and the African book had been put aside, first in favor of a series of turgid short stories and then in favor of "the Paris sketches," which appeared posthumously as *A Moveable Feast*.

He never worked on the African book again. After 1957, Hemingway's labor on the sketches was periodically interrupted by other writing, including a 10,000-word article on bullfighting for *Life*. The assignment took him on a grueling tour of Spain in the summer of 1959, and, after he had gone home and spent a year producing a bloated manuscript of 120,000 words, he irrationally decided he had to return to Spain for more material. He was in no shape to go and suffered a collapse. He grew sleepless, paranoid, delusional. His memory failed him. Back in the States, he became suicidal and was hospitaliz twice and given electroshock trea ments. Some of the most painful imag of Hemingway from this time are him at his desk day after day trying arrange the Paris sketches into a sati factory sequence and, later, trying u successfully to write a single senten for a presentation volume of his wo for President Kennedy. From the tin of the African plane crashes on, Her ingway, in spite of sheer grit, produc nothing to rank with the work th came before. The critical consensus that his early work—a number of sho stories and two novels, *A Farewell Arms* and *The Sun Also Rises*, produc in a five-year period from 1924 1929—is his best, though his statu survived the publications of his mi dle years and continued grow.

Inevitably, the publication of posthumous Hemingway brings r newed attacks on the motives of Her ingway's publishers and heirs. In t *Washington Post*, Jonathan Yardl cholerically opined, "If Hemingw had wanted any of this material pu lished during his lifetime, he cou have arranged it in a trice. . . . B something in Hemingway—litera judgment? dignity? fear?—told hi that this unpublished stuff ought stay that way. . . ."

In *The New Yorker*, Joan Didi wrote more coolly but with simil concern: "In the case of the 'Afric novel' or *True at First Light*, eight hu dred and fifty [manuscript] pages r duced by half by someone other th their author can go nowhere the auth intended them to go, but they can pr vide the occasion for a chat-sh hook, a faux controversy over whet the part of the manuscript in whi the writer on safari takes a Wakam bride does or does not reflect a 're event. The increasing inability of ma readers to construe fiction as anythi other than roman à clef, or the r material of biography, is both indulg and encouraged. . . ."

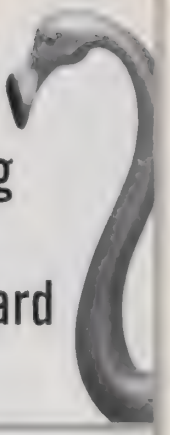
Charles Scribner III, grandson Hemingway's original publisher, is charge of seeing *True at First Light* i to print. Braced for a critical onslaug he's quick to dispel the impropriety posthumous publishing and likens th

o oppose it to "reactionaries who osed the cleaning of the Sistine ing because they were used to see it dirty." Scribner also argues that ompleted works—Mozart's *Requiem* Michelangelo's dying slaves, for ance—have always come to light that humankind is culturally rich- not poorer, for their revelation. Un- unately, the aptness of the analogy ween the dying slaves and the new ningway book bears no scrutiny if quality of the work is a criterion.

The primary argument against thumous publishing, apart from its ng a violation of the author's wish- if, in fact, they can be known, and Hemingway's case there's evidence both sides of the question), is that release of unfinished or substan- d work damages the author's repu- on and, by implication, all of liter- re. In announcing *True at First Light*, ibner enticingly reported, "This is it; re are no more books." It was an biguous statement in that, although re are no more book-length, un- blished manuscripts, we can still ex- t to see more posthumous Hem- way. There remain a number of -very-good unpublished short stories well as a thin novella-length begin- ng of a father/son narrative reminis- nt of the Nick Adams stories, and re will undoubtedly be further Hem- way correspondence to follow Car- Baker's edition of the "Selected" t not complete letters. It is unrealis- to think that the extant work of a at writer will go unpublished or that relative merits can safely be assayed ly by specialists—scholars, biogra- ers, other writers—rather than by neral readers, who are, after all, the es in whom the author chiefly lives. aders who enjoy Hemingway take n with his contradictions and are isfied to find good in the not-so- od. Hemingway's own belief was that a writer's lifetime his reputation de- nded on the quantity and median of work, but that after his death he uld be remembered only for his best. At the time I edited *The Garden of len*, Charles Scribner Jr., the current ribner's father, related that Hem- way had on more than one occasion asted that he had a box of manu ripts that would go on being pub- hed long after his death. It is exact- ly the kind of thing Hemingway would have bragged about, though he would have had his doubts as well. He specifically asked that his letters not be published, and after his death they were published anyway. He left written indications that he considered the Paris sketches publishable, in spite of previous reservations about the harshness of the book. Some of the murkiness and conjecture with regard to his final wishes derive from his own extremes of overexposure and intense privacy as well as from the vacillating hope and despair of a man increasingly infirm.

My initial reluctance toward editing *The Garden of Eden* (before reading it, I twice declined it, believing that there was enough bad Hemingway in the world and that my time would be better spent on contemporary writers) was overcome when I finally read it. Substantial portions *were* embarrassingly flimsy, but other parts had been successfully revised by the author, and, in working on the book, I had the advantageous prospects of a highly developed, presentable story line as well as an awareness that it contained significant, unrevealed aspects of Hemingway that would fascinate readers and show him to advantage, trying to transcend his previous work, his celebrity, and his sometimes reckless habits. In particular, Hemingway effectively dramatized his hero, David Bourne, as androgynous and as rejecting the role of big-game hunter characterized by his father. Much of the writing was masterly, and I had but to follow Hemingway's inspiration to bring the book into form. Patrick, in working from the manuscript of the African book, had fewer advantages and concedes that he did not use literary excellence as a criterion in his edit. Yet it's unlikely that publication of the African book will diminish Hemingway. In 1971 and 1972, *Sports Illustrated* published most of the material now in *True at First Light*. Scholars and many Hemingway fans have already read it. John Updike, writing about *The Garden of Eden* in 1986, noted that "Hemingway, after a semi-eclipse in the sixties, when his fascination with violence and war seemed desperately unworthy, now stands as a classic as surely as Hawthorne. . . ." And in a critical volume on Hemingway published in 1996

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by Cambridge University Press, the editor of *The Hemingway Review*, Susan Beegel, offered a study of Hemingway scholarship, which concluded, "His critical reputation today is stronger than at any time since his death."

Hemingway's character is manifest in everything he wrote, yet for all his books, and for the hundreds of books and thousands of articles written about him, he remains somehow unrevealed, undiscovered. In the foremost biography, Carlos Baker meticulously supplies the external facts of the life to assess Hemingway on his own terms, with a minimum of analysis, which is probably just as well, given that Hemingway biographers and scholars often fall into unsparing and tangled speculations on the writer's hidden nature. There has long been a proliferation of analyses of Hemingway's character disorders, said to stem variously from his mother having dressed him as a girl when he was a toddler, her domination of his father, her moral rejection of his writing, post-traumatic stress from his war wounds, his father's suicide, Hemingway' s insecurities about his masculinity, his need and fear of women. The endless theorizing spun mostly by literary academics operating as amateur psychologists fails to satisfy, merely adds complexities rather than penetrates them. Hemingway's own testimony and self-interpretations were reluctant, conflicted, and intentionally murky. He was determined not to be analyzed. He once commented that after he died his life would be worth only as much as his body, a statement that rings ironically given all the industry now founded on that stout, bearded, safari-clad hero, the man's man, the indomitable writer.

It can be said that in both his life and work Hemingway never reached very far beyond his body. He was an intensely physical individual and a writer of few ideas. By his own admission, he was often unable to articulate what he knew and too "stupid" to think life out. The fact that writing was hard for him didn't stop him. His stamina was legendary, and writing was like physical exertion—he sweated a lot and produced reams of often redundant prose, which he would hone thoroughly. Plotting, which depends on thinking, was never his strong point. His famous dicta for writing—write one true sentence and then go on from there; never empty the well but always stop when there is still something in the deep part of the well and let it refill at night from the springs that feed it; you can omit anything if you know what you omit, and the omitted part will strengthen the story and make people feel more than they understand—describe his efforts but have none of the intellectual rigor and brilliance of James Joyce's incursions on the fortress of Aristotle's *Poetics* or the persistent expansion of insight into the art of writing that one finds in Henry James and Virginia Woolf. Nor did Hemingway ever achieve the conscious development of expression Eudora Welty went on to display in the course of her individuation as a writer. There tend to be two types of writers: those who are trapped inside their own stories and keep retelling them (John P. Marquand was a famous example in Hemingway's own time), and those who are able to encompass and transcend their own stories and are thus free to take whatever experiences come to them, from whatever quarter, and use them on wholly invented story lines whose emotional truths are not overdetermined by the writer's personality (in this category I would place Zora Neale Hurston and William Maxwell). Great work can be accomplished by either type of writer, but whereas the former primarily conveys the experience of life, the latter offers illumination, an increased clarity and connection to the meanings of life. The result is an enhancement of life's possibilities that comes when the unrecognized (or only semi-recognized) elements of experience are fully delivered in a revealing dramatic pattern and through an authorial presence that moves toward definitive interpretation. It is axiomatic that when the characters in a story make accurate recognitions, those connections are open to the reader, but when characters mislead themselves and miss the turn in the road, the reader's destination greatly depends on the author knowing the way home. Life is full of experience, much of it apparently random and confusing, and if we begin reading a story for diversion and to find out what literally happened, our pleasure is in

creased and sustained by the perceptio
of how and why it happened (the met
physical aspect of storytelling, in whic
life's paradoxes are set in relief).

Experience was terrifically attra
tive to Hemingway. His manner of b
ing in the world was certainly throug
his sensations, even more, if anythin
than his legend conveyed. His pursu
of hunting, fishing, boxing, bullfigh
ing, war, sex, eating, and drinking a
peared again and again in his fictio
and his gifts of perception and d
scription were sensory, as is the muc
admired opening of *A Farewell to Arm*
"In the bed of the river there were pe
bles and boulders, dry and white
the sun, and the water was clear ar
swiftly moving and blue in the cha
nels. Troops went by the house ar
down the road and the dust they rais
powdered the leaves of the trees. Th
trunks of the trees too were dusty ar
the leaves fell early that year and w
saw the troops marching along th
road and the dust rising and leave
stirred by the breeze, falling and th
soldiers marching and afterward th
road bare and white except f
the leaves." The surface of the writi
is pure physical description as it is e
perienced by someone with a genius f
picking up this kind of detail. But
keen as Hemingway's ability to pi
up sensations was, his primary geni
lay in his lyricism. He could, almo
musically, convey the sense of someo
not only registering it all but evalua
ing, according to a developed feelin
what he's experiencing. It's this gi
that underlies his words, giving the
their on-key integrity and power.

The basic range of evaluations
matters of feeling is from good to ba
and these were the cardinal judgmer
Hemingway applied to his own exp
rience and that of his characters. Th
words "good" and "bad" and the phra
"truly good" have become hallmar
of the numerous parodies and "B
Hemingway" writing-contest entri
published each year. True to form,
his African book, Hemingway divid
his cast of characters into two typ
"the good ones" and "the bad one
The latter are adherents of a new re
gion Papa casually leads, a religion
timately and self-pityingly revealed
that of the damned, for whom the u

ying question is: What can you be- e in when there's nothing left to ve in? In the African book, as in ingway's other work, the response ostalgia and narcissistic remorse the lost Edenic past.

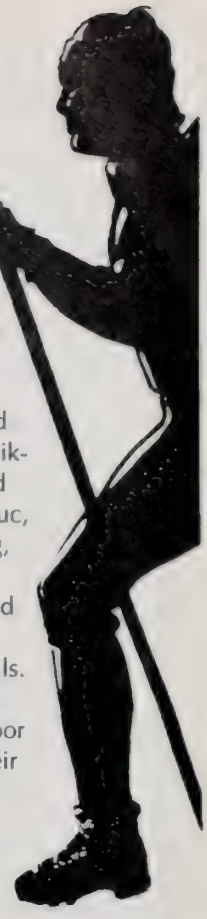
f all the writers who have sought to lain" Hemingway without undoing , Reynolds Price came closest to ruth in his 1972 essay "For Ernest ingway," which proposes that 's lifelong subject was *saintliness*. e wondered if that theme wasn't erally as secret from him (a lapsing never quite lost Christian) as from eaders? And doesn't that refusal, or ility, to identify and then attempt erstanding of his central concern stitute the forced end of his work— our failure as his readers, collusive is blindness? Hasn't the enormous repetitive critical literature de- d to dissecting his obsession with es and rituals, which may permit f happiness in a meaningless world, overed only a small (and unrealis- intellectually jejune) portion of his search?" Price's argument suggests Hemingway's search was not for ival or techniques of survival but for dness, and thus what his own fore- ers would have called victory.

believe Hemingway might have ffed at Price's ideas and still felt se- ly tempted by them—the kind of ptation he would have *felt* honor- nd to resist. Hemingway's attitude not essentially religious, though ometimes ambivalently held him- as if it were. Rather, he reached for *relation* in the world of values he ldn't stop caring about, and reli- n offered an approximation. Reli- n is the provider of images and ns for the self in search of value. But gion can also cause self-devalua- n. Hemingway suffered because he ld not live up to the ideal of those ages. He repudiated interpretations t found Christian symbolism (or symbolism) in his work, especial- n *The Old Man and the Sea*, but his se of martyrdom to life accords with ce's assessment that he was netheless in search of saintliness d willing to sacrifice himself to find Hemingway's torment proceeded m a desire for perfection (ideal feel- g) combined with the knowledge t what he desired most intimately could not be attained, except perhaps briefly. His titles tell the story—*To Have and Have Not*, *Men Without Women*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *Winner Take Nothing*—the last of these ostensibly drawn from an old book on gaming, though Hemingway had written the passage himself in biblical imitation of seventeenth-century style: "... the conditions are that the winner shall take nothing; neither his ease, nor his pleasure, nor any notions of glory; nor, if he win far enough, shall there be any reward within himself."

His pleasures naturally led to hedonism and then to gluttony. He countered his excesses with quasi-military disciplines that were alternately self-punishing and self-indulgent. Likewise, in the best of his work he offset his exaggerations by deleting them and by a laconic style in which his feeling found an expressive restraint. But in midlife he found it increasingly difficult to bring proportion and coherence into either the work or the life. He boasted that he lived well, a debatable assertion given his divorces, self-inflicted injuries, and early death, but certainly he achieved a level of wealth that enabled him to do whatever he wanted without much regard for anyone else. He chose his friends for their admiration and loyalty over their honesty or equality with him. His kindnesses were generally reserved for his social inferiors or those whose luster added to his own or served his advantage.

Hemingway's chief discovery, hardly an original one, though he felt it more strongly than some, was pain and *lagraeme rerum*—tears in the nature of things—to which he responded not with sympathy toward himself or others but with rage. His temper was violent, volcanic. Throughout his life, he successfully portrayed himself as a durable stoic whose esteem was the ultimate worth. He lived in his own world and managed to bring readers wholly into the darkness with him. That infantile darkness is one of the greatest attractions/seductions of his work. He appeals especially to the young, or to that which remains adolescent in readers—the inchoate, inarticulate confusion of feeling in a world indifferent to feeling, and the spite that attends that recognition. He faced the world with a grievance, and for all

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ROUTLEDGE

his apparent enjoyments, and his *fiesta* concept of life, his primary literary mode was world-weariness.

True at First Light candidly shows Papa at his worst: self-conscious, self-pitying, self-indulgent, self-aggrandizing. The book is so unformed, fragmentary, digressive, and anecdotal that no one can say what Hemingway's intention might eventually have been. There are numerous themes he seems to have wanted to explore; however, it seems clear that the existence of the book owes more to a determined habit of writing than to any clarity of purpose. I think it is reasonable to say that in drafting the manuscript, Hemingway was, more or less, just writing. There's little tension in the book except the knowledge that it is Hemingway doing the writing, aimlessly, for the most part, yet with hope—his occasional successes must have tantalized him, as they do the reader, but he's clearly very tired. Too much of the dialogue between characters reads like the author talking to himself.

And here is the crux: for the most part, Hemingway had only one character—himself. He had always worked directly from life experience, modifying it as needed for the sake of story. His dictum of not thinking about his work when he wasn't doing it guarded his unconscious. Yet without reflection there's little growth, certainly none past one's own original character. Hemingway's dictum of telling a story by leaving things out involved his leaving out literal and often melodramatic elements as well as aspects unfavorable to himself, a method reinforced by his posthumous editors, who have carefully excised the worst of his anti-Semitism, misogyny, homophobia, and other unflattering traits. Hemingway tended, as well, to leave out character development and the naming of insights. Crucially, for those of us who came after him, he has left out not what he knew (which was his claim) but what he didn't know. In much of his early work, there was an effective tension between the emotional impotence of the Hemingway hero and the harsh attacks on others (the beginning of *The Sun Also Rises*, for instance, is notable for its extreme ugliness toward Robert Cohn). By the time of the African book, Hemingway's Herculean ability to sustain a hermetic world—a punishing one—was gone, and out of the broken vessel leaked petulance, sarcasm, fatuity, and puerile venom.

Among the book's many promising, though ultimately desultory, themes—the problems of a primitive soul in a modern age, for instance, or the paradoxes that world religions place on local cultures—the dominant one is marriage. Papa's attitude toward Miss Mary is paternal, complected with a desire for the sort of grace a woman might bestow on a child or a servant. And in his ambivalence there is his hatred of being old, tied to Mary, and unable to regain potency as reflected in his young African "fiancée."

It is painful to watch him pretend to himself to paint Miss Mary with affection and respect while actually showing her as an unsatisfiable, competitive bitch. "I wished that I could make her happy," Papa says, but in fact it's himself he wishes he could make happy. The vulnerability that informed the young Hemingway voice—need underlying the hard masculine pose—ultimately found no accommodation in his characters' relations. They end in failure and brutality or in sentimentality but never in intimacy. Such vulnerability was too dangerous.

It has been proposed, by Charles Scribner III and others, that the intent in the African book is comedic, or at least ironic. As Patrick Hemingway puts it, "Tragedy supposes characters of some consequence. People want to believe themselves tragic, but really they're very funny." In other words, Hemingway was intentionally parodying himself. This interpretation stretches Hemingway's capacity for irony. The book at times does attempt a comic tone and, in its mix of genres—fiction, memoir, and theatricality—takes abrupt turns along a gloomy path. We see a fat old man disporting himself, and it seems ridiculous, silly, fantastical, but not funny. Hemingway was not gifted with humor. As a fictional memoir, the book can be understood as neither fiction nor memoir but as the record of an already ill and failing man's attempt to keep his grip on the thing that was his life, trying by any means and falling into mawkish, adolescent efforts at humor. Moreover, it is impossible to tell if he understood how unflattering the self-portrait was, or, if he did understand, how he might have modified it had he been able. The African book seems to show an author aggressively, helplessly bent on participating in his own undoing. It is an unpleasant read, painful not so much in its particular failures of art but in the raw exposure of deadness—the descent from religion to *nada*, codes that fail, love that fails. And these are not, Hemingway frequently portrayed the inevitabilities but the results of life-long choices.

Ernest Hemingway's story is, essentially, that of an exceptionally gifted and sensitive boy, very different from his family and surroundings, who cut himself off from them and staked his life on his wits and his writing—a daring, resolute, and lonely act of self-invention. In *True at First Light*, Miss Mary says of Papa, "My husband is a delicate and sensitive man. . . . He hides it carefully." She delivers the line with a good deal of vindictiveness, irony, but the truth of the assertion remains, indicating what Hemingway's maturity might have been had he not been caught, self-trapped, in a disintegrating pose of manhood. Patrick Hemingway should perhaps be commended for his courage in letting his father's confusion show, or for loving his father sufficiently to find beauty in the confusion. In any event, Patrick has not protected Papa from himself, nor could the story of the African safari have been brought out at more than slim novella length if it had been diligently edited to protect Papa. At best, his unpublished novels were partial attempts to find a way out of the box he'd put himself in—his public myth and artistic franchise—without, however, relinquishing the box. If the business of life is to know how to live with oneself, know how to live with others, and know on what level to understand things, Hemingway's work reflects the dilemma of an author/character who prefers to remain a mystery because he is unable to reveal his subject. Much of what he wrote demonstrates a denial of love, or the fear of needing love, carried all the way to complete self-destruction. As his heirs we're constantly challenged to read more auspicious conclusions.

LAB NOTES

Experiments in chemistry and jazz

By Don Asher

ad silicon been a gas I ould have been a major neral.

—James McNeill Whistler, *oking back from the van- ge of celebrity on his parture from West Point 1854, after flunking emistry*



When I graduated om high school the Big nd era was in full swing. he pop tunes of the day ere "Full Moon and Emp- Arms," "How Are hings in Glocca Mora?" nd the lovely "Stella by arlight." The male mem- rs of my family—cousins nd uncles included—had l gone (or were on their ay) to college and pre- ared for suitable profes- ons, so I was feeling that eat. But I had no mission nd heard no suitable clarion calls. What I dearly wanted to be was a ightclub piano player, which hardly quired a college degree. In the For- es the scions of middle-class Jewish milies did not become ivory push- rs. Lacking socially acceptable goals, we followed in designated footsteps. My father had an artistic soul but earned his living as a chemist with the Worcester (Mass.) Water Works. A brilliant, troubled, melancholic man, he committed suicide when I was three. Through childhood, close watch was kept on me for the malign strain; my mother considered me the more emotionally vulnerable of her two sons and, by extension, the more likely to inherit my father's fragile psyche. Older brother Herbie, a sturdy straight-arrow, had followed my father to Worcester Polytech and accepted a chemical engineering position with a plastics company in Framingham.

Dutiful son and kid brother, I enrolled at Cornell with a major in organic chemistry. The school's main campus was truly impressive, situated on a broad promontory overlooking Cayuga Lake and carved by roaring gorges, its ivied stone halls shaded by majestic elms. The chemistry department, housed in massive Baker Lab, was considered world-class, and I set out in an optimistic, even visionary mode, Einsteinian stars in my eyes, contemplating future major addresses before eminent scientific bodies. *Gentlemen: I should like to propose a structure for the potassium salt of ribonucleic acid with a view toward explaining certain aspects of growing genetic interest . . .*

Baker Lab was a museum, an exploratorium of exotic effluvia; scents clung like damp, like incense, slipping around doorjambs, seeding corridors. Sweetish perfume of unsaturated ester; head-snapping ethers

on Asher is a jazz pianist and the author, ost recently, of Notes from a Battered rand. *His last piece for* Harper's agazine, *"Confessions of a Name Drop- r," appeared in the August 1994 issue.*

oto courtesy of the author. Illustration by Jennifer Pastunoff

and amines; the vinegary (and glacial) acetic acid; essence of almonds, cinnamon, camphor; fragrances redolent of fresh linoleum varnish, the sun-warm pinewoods of childhood; other scents more stringent, insidious—decaying-fruit exhalation of ketone, sting of aldehyde, the fuming and corrosive acids. Amid the cool, slippery soapstone counters, the gleaming glassware and furiously bubbling flasks, one could believe the choice wasn't all that bad; there were worse ways to spend one's life if one lacked the lineage and finesse for the diplomatic corps, the cold nerve of a surgeon, the chutzpah of a lawyer. Small magic shows daily: flocculent lavender-white-rose precipitates materialized from the mixture of two spring-clear liquids. Release a glittering pearl drop into a murky solution and *sha-boom!* all clear, Tinkers to Evers to Chance, the dear little molecules reacting on cue with one another, punctiliously, according to law; acetone, all-purpose voodoo elixir, reagent, solvent, cleaner of delicate glassware; thin-lipped beakers, reflux condensers—proud erect sentinels clamped to their iron stands; the graduated burettes and androgynous one-, two-, and three-necked flasks. . . . A luxurious chromatograph of colors: white-on-white silver chloride, cool green of copper salts, the sable-black of certain sulfides. Pass a slender wire dipped in potassium salt solution through the spurting blue flame of a Bunsen burner and *whooomm*, violet-blue light flashed and crackled like lightning off a space-probe antenna. Formidable challenges loomed, exhilarating years ahead, probing the secrets of a staggering array of sinuous, branching, crook-back molecules. *Gentlemen, I am pleased to inform you of my decision to accept the position of assistant research director at your Wilmington plant. . . .*

Occasionally experiments just plain didn't work out. Pristine fluffy-white precipitates would turn out to be worthless salt; cheerfully simmering ponds of liquid would grow inexplicably surly and bilious within their flasks, and without warning, goaded to a sudden boil-like soreness, spew a stream of foaming liquid out the top of the condenser like a hot-spring geyser.

During preadolescence—I was a loopy kid, a nebbish, afraid of shadows (relatives attributed this to fallout from my father's early death, the shock of abandonment and absence of a paternal rudder, though I can't say I felt abandoned; I scarcely remembered him)—I habitually kicked the houses of neighborhood kids I was mad at and cravenly avoided fistfights, protecting the hands that were just beginning to explore the keyboard's mysteries. These impulses attenuated over the years but never completely vanished, and I'd now find myself kicking the foundation of the soapstone counter as if to jolt the balky molecules, visions of scientific eminence gone glimmering, so much dry-ice smoke. But just when I'd grow really disheartened, the future as murky as a mill-town sky, an experiment would work out with undeserved felicity, the vile and noxious sulfides suddenly smelling like night-blooming jasmine. Joy!

"Very neat, Mr. Asher." Gangly Dr. Rodman, my patient mentor, leaning over my shoulder.

"When you're hot you're hot, Professor," I murmured modestly.

I joined a fraternity. One of my brothers was a jazz-freak amateur drummer. We spent our weekend nights hanging out at the Green Lantern, a funky cellar dive by the railroad tracks in downtown Ithaca that featured a gutty trumpet-sax-piano-drums combo and a beanpole stripper, Cherry Picker (six feet two in spike heels and silver tiara), who strutted and peeled her way across the board floor to medium-tempo Fats Waller and an obbligato of pounding beer mugs and crazed rebel yells from polluted locals. The band let us sit in one at a time during dance sets, allowing me to expand the fledgling improvisational skills I'd picked up in Worcester's lakeside saloons on the sly during high school. I loved that fragrant joint, mingled aromas of spilt lager, sawdust, and cigarettes, the slow-drag dancers and statuesque stripper gliding through smoky gin-mill light. Seduced by the good vibes and dow and-dirty music, I began to drink fair amount: draft brew, an occasic al boilermaker, and an evil conc tion of my own design—Southe Comfort and root beer.

Furthering my education in t regard was good-time Charlie Sol sky, a doctoral candidate in physi chemistry. Charlie had his own p vate lab on the top floor of Bal and presided over biweekly cock parties for favored grad and und grad students. We chipped in munchies and took turns doub distilling C_2H_5OH (ethyl alcoh straight from the reagent shelf, th mixing it with cranberry or gra fruit juice. These libations, iced a sipped sweetly from 250-cc. beake could be hairy indeed, depending who was in charge of the distillery.

It was on a morning following o of these crapulous sessions that I fi began to question my career choi In the small lab I shared with a cla mate I'll call Eunice, an ingenio built-from-scratch apparatus burst the seams, liberally spattering E nice's open lab coat and cotton dr with sulfuric acid. I saw her tot backward, walleyed, and freeze. I r around the counter, pushed her ir the open shower stall—a provisi of most labs—and pulled the li chain. Through the tumultuo downpour I watched her smoki garments dissolve. Spluttering, fa crumpled, she stood sopping wet b unscathed in tattered dress, slip, a brassiere, arms crossed over her me ger chest, beseeching me with h eyes to leave her a shred of privacy

Two weeks later, I found mys falling to the concrete floor as poleaxed—I can still hear the d tant library-tower chimes peeling as I dropped—and lay there thras ing and gasping like a fish in a skif knew instantly why I was down had mindlessly stuck my nose ir flask collecting distillate—a treac erous, highly volatile, low-molec lar-weight amine—which closed my oxygen supply as efficiently a down pillow. No one else w around; Eunice had left a half h earlier for the building's library. A though physically incapacitated, oxygen-deprived brain still whirr



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The culprit molecule was a base; what I desperately needed in order to survive was a quick whiff of a mild acid to neutralize it. The antidote and my passport to life, a glass-stoppered bottle of glacial acetic acid, sat on the reagent shelf above my head. Arms flailing, sucking what I felt were my final breaths, I could neither rise nor cry out. What unreeled before my eyes now was not a swift synopsis of my nineteen years of life but Cherry Picker shimmying across the boards, naked but for tiara and spike heels. A shadow loomed in the lab doorway. Oxygen-starved, I hallucinated the Angel of Death. My sights were too high: it was Eunice, resurfacing like a vision of the Virgin Mary.

Her mouth gaped as I flopped, blue-faced, on the floor. With my penultimate breath I pointed soundlessly to the reagent shelf. She grabbed a bottle of acetone. *No, no.* One hand clawing my throat, I pointed *left, one over.* She moved tentatively for the acetic acid—I nodded violently *yes.* Dear intelligent Eunice unstoppered the bottle and brought it to my nose. Extract of the gods, *elixir vita.* Sinuses and contiguous passages magically cleared. I grasped the counter and feebly pulled myself to my knees. Wheezing, I clasped diminutive, homely, lab-coated Eunice to me as if she were Veronica Lake in a polka-dot bikini.

It wasn't all fume and doom. As an upperclassman I lured many a house-party date to my top-floor room at Alpha Epsilon Pi with a promise of simulated atomic fission—a kind of pyrotechnic showbiz foreplay—making good my commitment by raising the window and dropping a punctured can packed with metallic sodium into the boiling waters of Cascadilla Gorge 150 feet below. Have you ever watched metallic sodium hit water? *Kaboom.* Krakatau revisited, shades of Los Alamos in upstate New York. A hard act to follow. As much as a school could swing during the Truman years, Cornell swung. Nearly a hundred fraternities and sororities held an endless succession of weekend blasts, campus wetter than Cayuga's waters thanks to enlightened New York legislators. I have fervent memories of pounding many a parlor grand into submission in the wee hours (they were painted peach, pink, and powder blue in the tonier sororities), fueled by orange blossoms and daiquiris. Skoal! Halycon days, Cornell!

My brother Herbie had recently changed jobs and was now working at the famed Corning Glass Works, an hour's drive from Cornell. On a Saturday morning in May, near the close of my junior year, he came to check on me. He'd had a flat tire on the way and arrived at my room flushed and sweaty, a dark greasy stain on one knee of his wide tan slacks.

"I've got just the stuff to clean that," I told him. "Take 'em off."

"Hold your horses, let's try rubbing alcohol first. If that doesn't—"

"Herbie, I've got the right stuff, trust me. Gimme the pants and I'll be right back." I left him sitting plumply in his jockey shorts and hurried down the hall to the can, where I had stored in my corner of the communal cabinet a bottle of acetone appropriated from Baker Lab. I'd become enamored of this super solvent: dump 100 cc. in a gunk-caked flask, swirl it around, and *shazaam!*—clear as a swami's crystal ball. Using a rough-textured hand towel, I ministered to bro's pants, returned to the room, and hung them on the inside hook of the closet door.

"This stuff in quantity could've dissolved the La Brea tarpits. It'll dry in no time. Then I'll show you the campus."

"Are you eating okay? You're skinny as a nail."

"Always have been." I glanced at his thighs bursting from the jockey shorts.

"If you're tight for money just say the word."

"I'm straight. I've been making extra loot playing two nights a week at a town bar." I'd temporarily replaced the Green Lantern's pianist, who'd sprained a couple of fingers in an after-hours brawl with an excitable patron.

"I hope it's safer than some of th Worcester joints you—"

Herbie's attention had bee drawn to his pants, visible in th open closet door. Now he abrupt pushed out of the chair and walke over to inspect them.

"For Christ sake, kid . . ."

"What?" I came up behind him.

"What'd you use, fuming hydrofl oric acid?" Where I had applied t solvent was a moldering threadba patch the size of a drink coaster. Th fabric was disintegrating before o eyes.

"Acetone," I said weakly.

Herbie squeezed his eyes shut an blew out his breath. "You dumb bur ny, those slacks are a soluble aceta rayon!"

"Ah."

"Jesus, kid, where's your heac Couldn't you see what the fabri was? A clerk in a clothing store wit rudimentary knowledge of synthet materials knows you don't use— mean this doesn't bode great f your future." He lifted the savage pants tenderly between thumb an forefinger.

"You can use a pair of mine."

"How do you propose I squeeze it to them—with scissors and a sho horn?"

I furtively kicked the base of th wall. "Listen, I'll pay for the pants."

"What're you talking, they' cheapo—ten, twelve bucks. Th point is—" He blew out his breat again, slowly. "Your chem depar ment here is supposed to be top notch. I mean, isn't anything rubbi off? Ah . . . never mind, let it go." H lightly patted my shoulder. "Com on, show me your campus. So I'll loo like a slob, won't be the first time He sat down and pulled on the disi tegrating slacks, shaking his hea "But if I were you, kid"—his tongu had popped into his cheek; I cou hear the soft laughter huffing in h throat—"I'd keep right c practicing the piano."

Graduation day (not a ba tune). Corporate interviewers by th dozens infiltrated the various can puses. It was a seller's market; I ente tained unreasonably high hope *Gentlemen: This is to inform you of m*

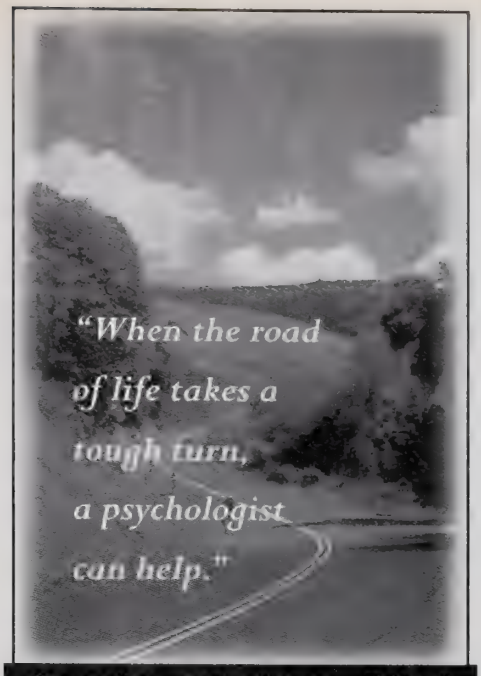
ion to accept the challenging offer of ector ship at the High-Polymer Lab- ory of your Vancouver facility. . . .

nice, savior and soul buddy, af- uggling several offers chose Du t. Other classmates went to nsanto, Geigy, Dow, Upjohn, erican Cyanamid. I was tendered ngle offer from Rohm & Mar- es—industrial detergents and ing agents (read *soap factory*)— ranston, R.I. With the job went A deferment, no mean consider- n. The Korean War was unfold- not one of America's best or st adventures. Tales of corpses ng on stark baking hillsides were ulating stateside.

You'll start out making aryl sul- tes from benzyl mercaptan," said arch director Melvin Franks. "I me you're acquainted with the captan family?"

ly stomach hollowed out. "Just in sing . . . not intimately." Dr. ks looked at me hard and long. blaze of black eyes and gleam of per skin against the open-neck ki shirt conveyed the aspect of a eotype player in an old Jeff ndler movie: an indomitable but or kibbutz character in the shad- of the Golan Heights. The mer- tans—Jesus God, I remembered se sulfur-based mothers from Ad- ced Organic Synthesis: oily, cious, singularly foul liquids.

Over the next four weeks I would ome increasingly, reluctantly t with the mercaptan family—a ty, unrelenting brood, penetrat- the pores, clinging to the skin cat hair to crinoline. Despite ntly scouring with the harshest ellow laundry soaps, followed by expensive pine-scented cake, the ky fragrance trailed after me like cloud of gloom following Joe plk, the Al Capp cartoon char- er with the unpronounceable name. Empty seats materialized ide me at lunch counters, on es; half rows became vacant fore l aft in movie theaters. Karen, a kled blonde from Analytical, a ent Brown graduate, fled my pad our second date, trampling the enities: "Sorry, and please don't e it personally, but it'd be like ping with a dead mouse." I was



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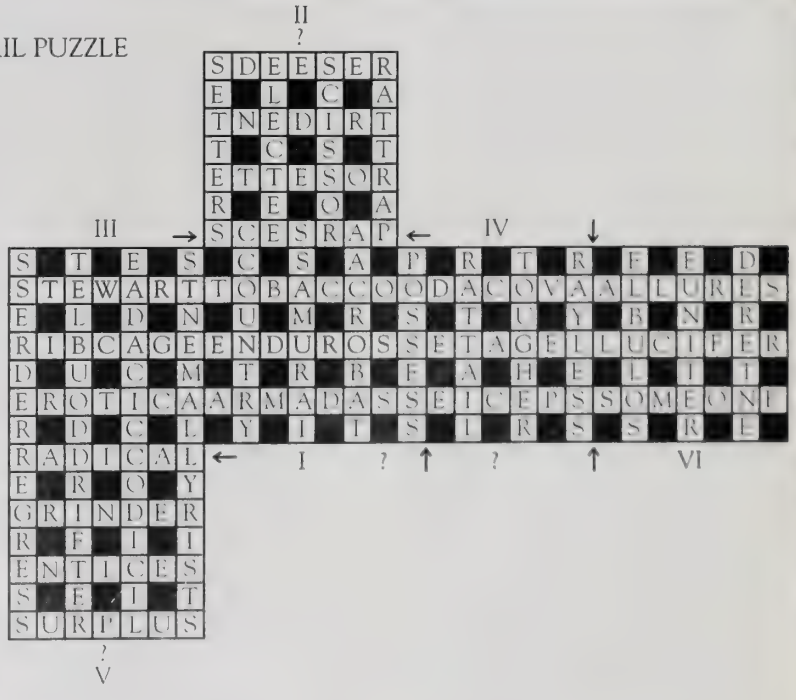
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NOTES FOR
"FACES":

Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*)

FACE I: 1. comm(t)y; 2. r(a-rum-a)s, rev.; 3. acrob* at; 4. Oc(cab)(O)t., rev.; 5. end uro* S.; 6. a(cadam-)[rev.]s. FACE II: ID. *; 2. hidden in reverse; 3. *; 4. art* part(rev.); 1A. homonym; 5. T(ride)NT; 6. ro(set)te; 7. *. FACE III: 1. *; 2. double-T; 3. c(ICA*)dae*; 4. lame-NT's; 5. [illegible]t, 6. rib Cage; 7. ac(it or)e, rev. FACE IV: 1. posses-(ye)s; 2. r(ATT)al; 3. r(O)ugher*; 4. [illegible]; 5. (h)avoc ado; 6. le(gat)es; 7. two rings. FACE V: ID. regress; 2. "rift" in "Red", rev.; 3. C(OD)ico-l; 4. st(sn)y[e], rev.; 1A. two rings; 5. G(rind)er; 6. ent(ice)s*; 7. sur(e)-plus FACE VI: 1. marital letters; 2. *; 3. (C)entered; 4. *; 5. *; 6. some-one.

Winners of the March Double Acrostic (No. 194) are Linda Fitos, Fairview Park, Ohio; J. J. McKin- [illegible], Texas; and Glen Smotherman, Norcross, Georgia.

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beginning to understand why I'd had no competition for this gig.

Dr. Franks called me in for a conference. "I'd like to see more results on the sulfonates. Margulies will be back this weekend, and all I'll have to show him is a month's salary expended on the synthesis and identification of a couple of molecules that a high school senior with no particular scientific bent could have accomplished with a Woolworth set in a basement washtub." The kibbutz veteran had a variety of smiles to go with the sardonic hyperbole, but the smiles were growing less genial of late.

Christ almighty, all this hassle over a system of molecules whose concerted odors would rout a covey of skunks from a garbage dump, whose main functions included the emulsification of insecticides and the cleaning of diapers. My mistake had been panicking in the face of a few rejections, grabbing the first farm-club cracker outfit that vouchsafed an overture. Should have held out for one of the giant impersonal combines, a billet deep in the bowels of Monsanto or Geigy; at least I'd be a member of a team: less emphasis on immediate results, moratorium on anxiety and swamp-water reactants; the prospect of working on something with a shade more social relevance. Yet from Franks's perspective I had to admit that the success rate of my experiments was abysmally low, and whether it was my basic unsuitability for the field or the frigging molecules balking for no logical reason was anybody's guess.

"I think I know where the bottleneck is. I'll—"

"Let me look at your experimental procedures before you leave tonight. From what I read in your reports you're not seeing your analysis through, just whacking off and coming quick."

Whew. Choice rhetoric from a research head and Princeton Ph.D. My options were limited. To jump ship so soon would create problems of professional references, generate a possible fatal interim of unemployment during which my 2-A occupational deferment would evaporate like a beaker of ether on a steam bath. Two decades later kids wo dodge the draft, flee the country, desert the field of battle and be plauded in some quarters. Corpor executives would drop out, choos deflect coronaries and colitis by ving hacks or teaching at commu ty colleges; M.D.'s would join c munes, Ph.D.'s become carpenter hog farmers in East Dandelion, they'd be respected for their tra gressions. But I was walled into man-Eisenhower country, and ramparts were sturdy.

I badly needed a haven and fo it at Club Trocadero, a lively ce dive on the outskirts of Provide (to which Cranston attaches lik tick to a mangy Great Dane). I h out there a couple of nights a we sitting in with a very decent pia guitar-bass trio playing old gold f the Ellington-Arlen-Gershwin so books. I had found an industri strength cologne to mask the p gent mercaptans and now reeke mint. Ladies passing the pia smiled and fanned themsel ("Puh-leeze") and the bartender t me I smelled like "a goddamn fru (It's mill-town New England, fo 1951; I didn't take it personally.) I was making music in lieu of so and the joint was jum ing!

Two grinding hours spent try to replace one infinitesimal, tractable, *invisible* hydrogen at with an ethyl group, consoling r self with reveries of struggles o grander scale: polio vaccine, M hattan Project (as Oppenheim indispensable assistant and trus confidant). If only I could *see* connective carbon-carbon bon some manner of optical dev clamped to the face like a scuba d er's mask, which would render vital ligaments visible. . . . Undig ed reactants sat in the three-nec flask like a revolting bowl of we old bean soup, various unseen components layering out. Misera no-count molecules just lying th crapped out, like winos in the libr shade. I felt the immemorial urge elemental as hunger: a couple swift kicks to the counter, loosen gears—*unh! unh!* An icy tingle at

of my neck, a half-sensed shad-
n the doorway. Who lurks?
What gives?" Over the shoulder I
psed Franks smiling one of his
cipherable smiles, staring at the
ed shoe encasing the foot as-
ing the base of the counter.
faced full around, thoughts
ling, formulating hopeless, un-
ble explanations. A nervous el-
jarred the dropping funnel feed-
alkylating agent through the
's middle neck. The turncock
ened, fell, smashed on the
ıter, simultaneously releasing a
ing stream of ethyl bromide.
hoot. . . . Sorry, Doctor."
n again, out again, Hooligan."
rabbing a beaker and a scrap of
secloth, I attempted to collect
abominable liquid dripping off
soapstone, watching coolly (with
ntific detachment, if you will)
hand holding the beaker tremble
an old man's. With so many
le loathing or laboring vainly in
chosen professions you'd think
e'd be thousands running amok
he corridors, tearing at one an-
r's throat.
The stuff goes for two eighty-
a liter. And it shouldn't smell
rank if you've been double dis-
ng." Gnawing a corner of his lip,
haracteristically contemplative,
-black eyes gleaming like pitch-
e. "One of the plant workmen
he saw you tinkling the piano at
loon on Broad Street the other
t. Beer bottles were lined up on
like clay ducks, he said."
set the stinking beaker carefully
the counter, the arrow at my
rt. "The working day was over.
beer bottles weren't all mine."
If I've got the right joint it's
wling with two-dollar whores.
be that's why you've been drag-
g your ass around here like a
bie."
A lot of things drifted through my
d. Bivouacking in Pusan, my
d mama and hard-toiling broth-
my fragile father in his grave.
ssmates and cousins preparing for
dicine, law, engineering. Not a
rehouse piano player in the lot.
aped high on the far wall of the
was a sign presumably appropri-
d from a roadside dump, the

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whimsical handiwork of a previous tenant: DO NOT DUMP GARBAGE, REFUSE. (The scintilla of humor resides in pronouncing the last word as a verb.) In the waning gray afternoon light of this reeking lab in Hellhole, R.I., under the anthracite gaze of my superior, the sign seemed to resonate, to send me an irresistible message. With an audible sigh I peeled off my grungy lab coat of many colors and tossed it on the counter.

There's a shock that comes with the recognition that your talent in a field you've spent four years preparing for is irremediably minor, and with the shock comes the impulse to deflect it with whatever antic or frivolous weapon is at hand.

"Well, I tried. Soap was never my bag. I'm awful tired of the mercaptan family and tired of stinking up the whole state of Rhode Island, so I'm going to split. But I'm no jack-off artist."

"If that's your decision, I can live with it," Franks said. "*Meshuggener.*"

The following afternoon, in one of the cubbyhole offices of the Paramount Agency for Professional Personnel in Boston—the third such agency visited that day—I faced a sallow red-haired man in a short-sleeve white shirt and rep tie; the brass-on-wood nameplate read, WM. MARIGOLD, JR.

"B.A. Organic chemistry, Cornell. Shouldn't be too hard to place." He flipped over the application. "You've put down 2-A for marital status."

"Marital . . ."

"Not martial."

"Ah—Single. MacArthur slip." The chills were beginning to take over.

"Rohm and Margulies . . . work not suited. . . . What kind of work was this?"

"Synthetic detergents and wetting agents. Basically we made soap."

"Doesn't sound terribly stimulat-

[illegible] as dishwater." A wry drop of [illegible] from a shriveled heart.

Oblivious, Marigold riffled through a card file; his narrow wedge-shaped face made me think of an arrowhead I had uncovered as a kid on the muddy bank of Lake Quinsigamond. "American Cyanamid has two openings for recent graduates—involves a six-month training program. They're in Providence."

The fetid aroma of mercaptan hung in the heated air. "I'd prefer not to return so soon to that locale."

"Union Carbide—two years' experience. Would you be interested in something in New Bedford?"

"New Bedford . . ."

"Seacol Company. They make various agents from sea plants. Involves some knowledge of polymers and hydrocolloids, experience unnecessary. Pay is quite good—four hundred and fifty to four seventy-five, depending on qualifications."

I ransacked my muddled memory. "I did take a course in colloid chemistry. And a senior-year seminar in polymers . . ."

"Are you interested?"

"Would this, ah, involve a 2-A deferment?"

"That depends on the individual employer and community conditions. In this line of work it's always a likelihood. If you're interested I'll get right on it."

"Interested."

Marigold lifted the phone, dialing without taking his eyes from the file card, and remarked flatly while waiting out the connection, "I have a son at Fort Ord shipping out next week."

He spoke for a minute or two, mostly reading from my application, then covered the mouthpiece. "Can you go to New Bedford for an interview tomorrow afternoon?"

New Bedford. Not too bad a haul, a lot closer than Pusan. I nodded, the activity of least resistance.

I departed Paramount in a woolly funk. Sea *plants*, the man said. Was that the same as sea*weed*? Kelp, algae, the polysaccharides—I began to remember. Nothing about this gig felt right, not my forte at all, as they say in the music biz. New Bedford: all that came to mind was *Down to the Sea in Ships*, Richard Widmark; mudflats, gulls, tall masts in the mist. I spent the rest of the afternoon and early evening in the Boston Public Library wadi[illegible] through *Natural Plant Hydrocolloi[illegible] Polysaccharide Chemistry*, and *S[illegible] weed at Ebb Tide*.

Sleepless, sweat-bathed on an ir[illegible] frame bed in a fleabag hotel[illegible] thought of phoning Herbie in Co[illegible] ing, getting his take on the situati[illegible] I hadn't yet told him (or my moth[illegible] about the fiasco in Cranston[illegible] thought I knew what he'd say. [illegible] breath would kind of explode on [illegible] phone the way it does when h[illegible] stressed or thinking of a next mo[illegible] "I don't see that you have any choi[illegible] kid. You don't want to be futzi[illegible] around looking for work with [illegible] draft board breathing on your ne[illegible] The last I heard they weren't pass[illegible] out 2-A's to saloon ivory tinklers, [illegible] bite the bullet, bozo. Welcome to [illegible] big bad world." *Of seaweed?* I watch[illegible] traffic lights drift across the fissu[illegible] ceiling, thoughts tangling [illegible] windrows of kelp and its gelatin[illegible] extracts: algin, agar, carrageen[illegible] floridean starch. . . . Suddenly I kn[illegible] I'd pass that interview tomorr[illegible] (contingent on Franks, if contac[illegible] for a reference, having the heretof[illegible] unobserved decency and compass[illegible] to remain noncommittal). Two[illegible] status secured, I'd accept the of[illegible] find a room in a shingled weath[illegible] beaten house facing the waterfro[illegible] which would smell of decaying [illegible] valves and gull guano. The prosp[illegible] of a return session with Marigold[illegible] counterpart, more phone calls, in[illegible] views, libraries, fleabags, filled [illegible] with dread. I was being transpor[illegible] willy-nilly to the southeastern co[illegible] of Massachusetts, boneless, unres[illegible] ing, will paralyzed by chloral hydr[illegible] or one of the more ins[illegible] ous psychic drugs.

If you look closely—the[illegible] halfway to the domed white ceil[illegible] of the cavernous, shuddering pl[illegible] —you can spot a forlorn figure, [illegible] former apprentice pants cleaner [illegible] Rohm & Margulies screw-[illegible] bizarrely attired in rubber boots [illegible] long flapping khaki coat. Climb[illegible] a slender metal ladder affixed to [illegible] side of a cylindrical extraction t[illegible] the size of a Great Plains water to[illegible] er. Carrying up with him stopwat[illegible] clipboard, tubes of litmus paper, [illegible]

ee-foot-long thermometer. At dizzying height the biosphere is vy with a wild rank odor of shland and rotting fish, and for second time in three months he ns to understand why there has n little competition for the gig. er figures are perched on scaf- ling surrounding similar tanks, great dank enclosure vibrating n the din of rotary dryers, pres- filters, centrifuges. (He senses plant director, stationed some- re below in the wet bowels of building, watching him.) His s have a haunted look—he has t very little, wading through mpy and arcane texts into the hours—and his limbs feel as if y are attached to invisible wires he mechanically plunges the rmometer into the roiling tank sh with ungainly skeins of scar- seaweed, tests with litmus, and down figures on the clipboard. ckish steam rises in his face, but hands are raw with cold. If the h Ness monster had reared its hery head from the seaweed he uld not have been startled; nor uld the creature's emergent ashing have had any effect on data.

When the boxes on the clipboard et are all filled he descends the der. The cement floor, fair- unds-broad and sloping toward merous drains, still manages to lect sizable pools of brine. He has iced that no one bothers to cir- nvent the pools; all take the di- t transatlantic route, sloshing aight through in their boots ough without any visible atten- t childhood pleasure), as does the nt manager now, looking up from nsultation at the base of a sedi- ntation tank to catch him stand- idle and lost at the foot of the der. The director's soft uninflect- voice advises, as he scans the clip- rd, "I'm afraid these figures won't very useful. Your time intervals too erratic." He deigns no an- er; a response could only be obtuse jocular. Cockamamie tank might well have been stocked with sea rses and bluepoint oysters. The chinery's throbbing grows distant w, as if beachhouse storm win- dows have been closed on a pound- ing surf. He feels the director's hand on his shoulder. ". . . bound to be confusing the first week or so. We'll let this ride for now. I suggest you spend the rest of the day in the li- brary reacquainting yourself with the packet of materials you have. Give particular focus to the thixotropic- flow charts."

Thixotropic flow? That one wasn't in the Boston stacks.

Gentle monarch of the sea still touching his shoulder (it is in part the gentleness that will undo him), regarding him with a slight frown; thick lenses lend his eyes a distorted, silverish, fishy cast. "Do you remem- ber where the library is?"

"Not really."

"Second landing behind cen- trifuge D-4, southwest corner."

"Can I borrow your compass?" In- again, out-again Hooligan turning tail with a cunning smile that breaks into introspective laughter as he heads straight for the first magnum- size pool and splashes on through, sa- voring the frolicking spray, shedding all burden and responsibil- ity. *Hey, this is fun. . . .*

Every family, it has been said, is entitled to one nervous breakdown. All indicators pointed this way. I didn't disappoint; the psychological chickens of a loopy childhood and later bad choices came home to roost. Supine and mostly mute day in, day out (*not a bad tune*) through end- less indistinguishable weeks, blankets pulled up to a white tip of nose. Anxious mama peering down, trying to wheedle an explanation from a post, doubtless contemplating the malign paternal legacy—manifest in the trembling smile, dark-circled eyes flooded with apprehension and rue; you could drown in those eyes. Even in his detached state the kid could tell you something about collapse, deserting the field, whatever name you care to put on it. It's unrelieved stupor, vile brass coating the tongue, an infant's involuntarily clenched fingers and toes; the least goddamn thing irritates. It's night sweats; it's sodium's cemetery light at dawn that ices the bones, plants invisible spi- ders on the skin, sleet in the heart.

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"What the hell's going on?" Dark-suited big bro, summoned reluctantly from Corning, filling the doorway like a fireplug.

"As you can plainly see, not a blessed thing." Herbie's solid, comforting presence spurring him to arch articulation.

"Pull the blanket off your face, I can't hear."

"They wanted me to dump garbage. I refused."

"I take off from work, fly five hundred miles, and you talk gibberish to me."

"What basically happened—I got drowned in a vat of seaweed."

"Will you for Christ sake get out of bed? You're scaring Ma and making me sick."

"Up yours."

"Great. This I fly across two states for."

Dr. Harry Fine, old-line house-call family sawbones arrives, is brought up to date and makes a cursory physical examination.

"What I believe we're looking at here is a temporary failing of courage shading into a mild breakdown. Which can occur with sensitive individuals"—*sensitive* accorded a disdainful equal stressing of all syllables—"when we cut too severely against the grain or batter our heads too often against an unforgiving wall."

"You're sure it's nothing more? He just lies there day after day. Whatever I do seems—Harry, I can't get through to him." Stricken mama clutching her hands, the fear in her eyes tearing at him.

"Sophie, I know this one from way back. I delivered him, remember? What's going on here has nothing to do with his father's problems, so put that out of your head."

They're talking about him as if he's not there at all—and it's true, he's not all there but is experiencing the first flush of shame and restlessness that will eventually uncurl the baby toes and fingers, brush the daddy longlegs from the skin. Later will come self-revulsion and remorse for putting Sophie and Herbie through this ringer.

"He might be talking to the draft board's after him." Herbie puts in, recounting the substance of a recent bureaucratic communiqué—*According to our information your employment with Seacol Company terminated on October 21. You are required by law to notify your local draft board within ten days of any change of employment. Please contact this board immediately to schedule a pre-introduction physical examination*—leaving the beleaguered kid, as if he hasn't enough crap to contend with, envisioning his corpse exposed on a frozen hillside in a dumb war 10,000 miles from home that no one in his right mind gives a good goddamn about.

"Draft board," Dr. Harry snorts. "Your brother's temporarily a basket case. He'd be as much use to Uncle Sam as a fly swatter against a panzer division."

The next morning, perceiving his usefulness at an end, Herbie prepared to depart. "Enough's enough, okay?" He hung in the doorway, ill at ease. "Get up and make your bed, give Ma a break. I'll be in touch, you know, if you need me."

"Tubbo." A way-back nickname unused for fifteen years. Half out the door, he turned warily. "What the hell is thixotropic flow?"

Tubbo started to reply and broke off, staring in consternation at the tears swarming in kid brother's eyes.

A month later, having predictably failed my pre-induction physical (*Kind of shaky there, aren't you, son? What's this about? Fear or something else?*), I took off like a singed cat for the Lake Quinsigamond dives on the Worcester-Shrewsbury line and found refuge at the Jolly Roger. It was a dump, but a convivial dump: the piano a jangling drink-stained relic, the decor barebones nautical (tattered fish netting slung from ceiling beams, hurricane lamps and seashell ashtrays, bogus portholes), the pay sweatshop ($4/night), the clientele working-class in-your-face ("When my chick gets back from the toilet, start 'You Are My Sunshine' and keep playin' it till I signal you"). The family didn't begrudge me the lowlife gig. They were happy to see me back on my feet, however unsteadily, pulling it together. The shame was still fres they'd seen me raw and mewlir helpless as an infant. The interi employment, they felt, would be more permanent than an Ace ba dage. They were wrong.

From my lakeside sanctuar cranked out the tunes of the day "Autumn Leaves," "A Kiss to Buil Dream On," "While We're Youn —breathing hungrily the heali balm of smoke, cheap rye, a spilled brew (displacing the fadi reek of kelp and rotting fish); swi ing like a creaky garden gate but g ing with the grain, willing myself forgetfulness. The dinky ruins o scientific career that barely got the gound strewn like seaweed at e tide seventy miles south in a barn cle-encrusted whaling port. Let say *Kaddish*.

May Index Sources

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TWILIGHT

By Lynn Freed



oming to an island
e this was Alice's idea.
e should spend our old
together," she said, "you
l me and Eva and who
?" I had several sugges-
ns. And soon there was a
ole network of us talking
oss the phone lines of
erica—my friends, their
nds, like a tree full of
ds. We'd buy a place
newhere without winter,
said, and we'd each live
a separate house, and
te our novels, because
o isn't writing a novel
se days? And the men
uld come and visit, but
y'd go away again, ha ha,
children as well.
joined in. But the idea never real-
appealed. Living among women
ms like a dangerous thing to do.
oner or later, we'd be getting on
h other's nerves. Eva's laugh, for
tance, like a strangling chicken,
ich is what I'd find myself saying to
ice: *Don't say anything, but—*

Anyway, the life would be barren without men. And with men we'd be back where we started, talking on the phone when the men were out of earshot. In all the talk, we never admitted that we were one way with each other and another with our men. But that's how we are, every one of us.

And now here I am without them, without my man either. He was becoming a shadow, robe and slippers in the spare-room closet, and the TV remote next to his chair. My chair. One day, I walked in as he was watching the news, and decided to sell both chairs and the couch that went with them. After that it was easy—piano, clocks, pictures, the house itself. It was a kind of intoxication, selling my life like that, and all the friends watching, holding their breath as I jumped.

"Perhaps," says Dr. Weimann, "it takes a shock to shake one free of one's fears?"

He is guessing, but he is wrong. The shock only came the day I arrived on this island. That night, and every night since, I've been shaken out of sleep by the old questions coming to the surface. What will become of me? Who will I find to love?

Weimann lives in the annex at the back of the hotel. He has two rooms there, one of which is his office. Every morning, we go down to the water together. He swims straight out, stroke after stroke, right

n Freed is the author of four novels. Her
story for Harper's Magazine, *"The Mir*
." appeared in the October 1994 issue

stration by Susan Saas

up to the reef, and then back again. I float just beyond the waves, and even then I look down to see what might be swimming below me.

"The sharks have quite enough to eat without considering you," he says. But still, I don't venture any farther.

Every evening at six, he comes down to the bar, which is really an old veranda, glassed in. The new veranda has been built around it like a fan, and doubles as the dining room. The whole hotel is built like that, rooms beyond rooms. It must once have been a house, plain and modest. The guest rooms themselves are plain and modest. They are spread along the front road like barracks, with each door opening onto a narrow veranda.

Before I came here, I thought I'd find a cottage on the beach to live in, two rooms with tiled floors, perhaps, a hammock slung across one corner of the veranda. There would be morning trips to the local market, fish just caught, island spices. And sometimes I might stroll over to the hotel for dinner. I might meet someone there or I might not. It wouldn't matter. It has always been easy to see things this way before seeing them, easy to write them too.

But now three months have passed, and I'm still here in my little room at the end of the barracks. Except for the hotel beach, the coast on this side of the island is wild and steep and rough. Most of the locals live in squalid little shacks up in the hills. There are no cottages to rent.

"Shall we dine together tonight?" Weimann says.

People stand around us, a few of the more affluent natives, a couple of expats and their wives, who run a yacht for hire. It sits out in the bay like a castle. No doubt Weimann has slept with one of the wives. I can see from the way she avoids catching his eye and then listens as he asks me about dinner.

When I thought up this idyll, I might have considered dinners, and the long nights afterwards. All I had to do was remember Crete, or Mauritius, or Papeete: sitting at a table for two, my bottle of wine corked for tomorrow, waiters offering themselves with a wink. But I never remember loneliness. From a distance, it always seems like peace.

The first week here, I sat in the hotel dining room with a book, or I walked down to the Harbour Café and ordered curried chicken. I thought I might walk along the beach afterwards, have a swim, perhaps, or sit out on the veranda to watch the last of the sun. But who could have imagined the evenings here? Half an hour of twilight, and then the dark comes right in.

Dearest E—

This hotel must once have been very grand, with its foyer and ballroom and balustrades and nymphs around the pool. I love that pool, halfway down the cliff, cracked, green with algae, overgrown. I go down there in the afternoons, when the wind picks up on the beach. This afternoon I saw a snake slither into the vines, brighter green than anything around it. I watched the vine, hoping it would come out again, and wind itself around my wrist or my ankle, and bite. This isn't morbid, it's languid. It's content with the present at last. Which is what I am.

Weimann's skin is hairless, even the backs of his hands. And the fingernails are strangely convex, strangely purple. When he makes love to me, I have to shut my eyes against him. I try not to hear the moans he makes. He is moaning for me, not for himself. They are moans of encouragement, sound effects. And they revolt me.

So why go through with it? Alice would be the first to ask this. "What's in it for you?" she'd say.

I've never been able to answer Alice's questions. She wouldn't understand the sight of an old woman with a basket at the market this morning. Even as a young girl, I saw that old woman everywhere before me. She stood beside every man who raised a glass to me across a restaurant, beside Weimann himself, sending the waiter over with his card.

Eva would be easier. She'd say, "It makes one feel alive." And I'd be grateful for that. Eva is too beautiful to survive among women without such generosity. And anyway, s
loves a daring act, she who is s
one foot in and one foot out of n
riage. Not that sleeping with a n
like Weimann is daring, but that
trip itself delights her. She counts
me for daring.

Dearest E—

*The boatman came from the ma
land about twenty years ago, they
me, using his hands to say that he w
ed work. To me, his hands are
beauty—large-boned, lovelier tha
face. I watch them smoothing
smoothing the satin edge of the blan
as if he's finding the words to say he
to leave me, leave the island for go
He could play that part, Odysseus
Wanderer. Without speech, he co
play any part I give him. His vo
would be buoyant and lyrical, like
the others on this island. Weimann s
it's unusual, being able to hear but
to speak. He seems to pose this a
question, leaning across the bar. "Th
people are clever with words," he s
"and also without them." He thinks
tire of the mute and come over to h
But I have a dull time with words w
I talk to Weimann. I need to go look
for them, and, when I do, they hide.*

At dinner, Weimann does
ordering, but he makes sure t
the waiter charges the orders to
separate accounts. Even if he
pay for me, would this tiny act
gallantry have me walking to
room with a lighter heart? I do
think so. It would take some le
of deceit to pull me along that c
ridor, quick and sharp, like t
woman at the bar. I have been t
woman, I know the appeal of roo
darkened in the afternoon, a n
to leave behind and another to
back to.

"Weimann," I say, "I find y
moaning in bed revolting."

He arches an eyebrow, contin
shelling his prawns with his kn
and fork, laying the shells nea
around the edge of the plate.

"What is appealing in a ma
real desire," I say.

He looks up.

"Animal desire."

"And in a woman too," he says

Alice was right. She was the

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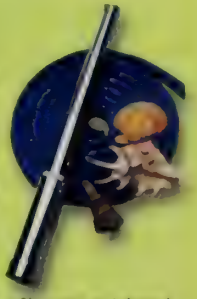
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who came up with the quote I pinned above my desk: "The less you invest emotionally, the more you stand to lose."

I turn to look out at the last of the light over the sea. Down on the beach, a family is pulling in their catch. The father stands in the surf, the mother at the water's edge with a boy on either side.

"They seem happy," I say to Weimann. What I mean is that everything from which I've constructed a life seems like the baggage of nomads. Men, children, house, work. And yet, had I started out here, like those boys in the water, I'd have gone north as soon as I could. As they will too.

"You feel at home with this sort of happiness?" Weimann asks. He knows the answer, the old Nazi. Leave home long enough, and you find it again only in moments.

The dining room has the slightly sickish smell of seafood and sweet island fruits. Except for us and a Brazilian couple on honeymoon, the hotel is empty. Only the bar seems to keep it alive.

The main port is on the other side of the island. Cruise ships stop there, and there are shops and nightclubs and petty criminals. You have to take a boat to reach this town, or drive for eight hours over rough mountain roads. I chose it for this reason. I wanted to replenish, I said. Only Alice rolled her eyes. "Languish is more like it," she said. And even then I knew I should have chosen the port, and stayed in the grand hotel, and gone down to the shops in the afternoons.

But if I were to pack up now and take the boat back around, I'd fly out for good. And if I flew out, where would I go, unreplenished? These are the questions I ask myself every morning after a night with Weimann.

Eva—

Weimann knows that the boatman comes up to my room by the back stairs. Everyone here knows, I suppose. There was never a question of his coming in through the front door, wiping his feet on the mat, smoothing down his hair. He arrives like a cat, like a leopard. I hardly hear the door handle, and then there he is, smelling of a day in the boat. He's older than I thought, probably forty-five or so, the body thick with muscle. Unless he's taking the boat out, he never hangs around the dock. There must be a woman in the hills, children too, probably. The delightful thing is, he's not interested in leaving the island. That's not what he's after.

Tonight, Weimann doesn't undress, nor does he invite me to take my own clothes off. He sits in his armchair, smoking, and I am grateful for this. His room gives nothing away. Double bed, wardrobe, two armchairs, stereo, TV, VCR. Only his medical instruments seem specific to him. Clean, spare, misshapen to a purpose. When he removed the sea-urchin spine from my foot, his face lost all its mockery, its boredom, its lust.

"I have a surprise," he says. He gets up to pour us each a whiskey, stands waiting as I drink mine down like medicine, refills the glass. Suddenly I suspect he's been reading my e-mail, that he has the boatman hidden somewhere. That the boatman is to be my punishment. I begin to stand, but no, he's slipping a cassette into the VCR, switching off the lamps, coming back to his chair with the remote.

The show starts with a woman, facedown on a lawn, naked. At first she looks dead, but really she's sunbathing, she's sleeping. Weimann has the sound turned off. All I can hear is the buzz of the TV, the surf outside.

A Great Dane comes up to her and starts licking her buttocks, licking and licking until she wakes up. She turns, annoyed, a hopeless actress. But then she opens her legs a little, and the licking continues. She raises herself in the air, rises on all fours, and he mounts her, trying to find the way in, ducking and thrusting the way dogs do. The camera is underneath them now, you can see the pinkness of the dog, and of her too.

Weimann cannot know how I go about making his smooth, womanish skin desirable, the dead weight of his flesh on top of me. And yet here it is, this dog ducking and thrus this baboon, this donkey, this of desire. Helpless with it, b deaf, mute.

But now I have seen the dog it is as sad as a circus lion. Wh saw the hotel for the first t when the boatman carried i suitcases, and stared at me in way of his until I gave him a when I stood at the front wondering what I would do in heat of the afternoon, and al afternoons that lay ahead—I the peace of those two rooms tiled floors, and the hammock, the little desk in one corner w view out over the water, eve the water itself, the way it ha ways seemed to stretch one life another.

"Weimann," I say, standing "I'm not your woman for this."

Alicia Preciosa—

Would you remind me what u boring about Peter? He made me l didn't he? I need you on this, my don't let me down. And don't u about the boatman. It was safe. it's over.

The day after the Great Da woman arrives at the hotel. S thick and gray and spectacled, her clothes are too heavy for th mate: socks and lace-up sh slacks, a jacket. I watch the boat stand behind her, waiting for hi But there's an argument with manager. She won't abandon passport, not even overnight.

The manager looks at me for l

And so I step up and tell her it's all right, it's the law, she'l her passport back tomorrow. T was worried too, but it was all ri

She hands it over then, and to me, and says, "I don't know w came here."

"Tip the boatman," I whisper.

"What? Ah! Yes! Here—"

"Would you like to come dow the beach this afternoon?" I say.

"Ah. Well. I work in the a noons. See you later, then?"

But I don't see her again fo days. Even though it is impos to disappear in this place, she done it. She is not in the di

in the evenings, nor is she at Harbour Café, nor on the h. At one point I think nann must have her roped to ed. At least, this is what I write a. The arrival and disappear- of this woman has cheered me mehow. Why don't we all at the port in April? I suggest a. I'll book us into the hotel . It'll be like a trial run.

the time I see the new woman ing along the hotel front one noon, I've found out from the ger that she has her meals sent r room, and that she moved to annex because of the noise the front. "Always, always," ys, making typing motions with ngers.

urry to catch up to her. She is ning along in a pair of native als and a lurid muslin beach she must have bought at the et. "Hello!" I say.

e stops dead. "Oh! You! Hi!" holds out a hand. "Letty," she "Hi."

e's wearing a baseball cap with sequins on it, and there's a litoustache, wide nostrils, sallow

Want something cold to drink?" I ahead to the cold-drink stand e she can answer. "Let's go out the jetty."

t she stops at the bottom of the , staring into the surf. "I can't ," she says.

ou won't have to. You'll be safe. e on."

nd she does. She climbs the and walks close behind, obedilike a child. I find a place for us it, and she takes the Fanta, ks it greedily. The sun on the r is blinding. No one except the man is out, and even he is trawlbout lazily in the dinghy.

What do you write, Letty?"

Gothic. Like my name: Letitia. teries mostly. You?"

Me?"

Oh. I saw you with the laptop, I thought, oh, you know, you t be at it too, and I can't talk t it, specially when I'm in the dle. Anytime, really."

've been writing e-mail," I say. "I it in at the office."

"Oh. E-mail. Can't cope with any of that."

I'd planned the e-mails even before I came here. Calypso on her island. Or Scylla and Charybdis, both as men. Or Persephone. Or something. Every day I print them out, thinking that sooner or later I'll be ready, I'll want to start. Every night a story seems possible, and every morning I go down to the beach for a swim. And then, when I come back, the words are nothing, they are less than nothing. They cheat and they lie. And now, sitting here with Letty, I don't want anything to do with them anymore.

"Met our Goebbels yet?" I ask.

She stares at me.

"The doctor. Weimann."

She throws her head back in a roaring laugh. "Oh! Dr. Weimann!" She swings her legs over the water, peers to one side, then to the other, as if she's having a conversation with herself. "Keep a secret? I'm putting him into the novel. Well, not him so much as that glove collection."

"*Glove* collection?" I am back at school now, laughter at the far end of the hockey field that stops when I walk up. "What sort of gloves?" I say.

"Haven't you *seen*? *Dozens* of them, all wrapped in blue tissue! Beautiful ones with fur, and lace ones, and lots of long kid gloves. Oh, and a tiny pair of children's gloves with the fingertips cut off. And a gauntlet with the blood marks still on it. And one with no thumb on one hand. Wouldn't you say Göring? Rather than Goebbels?" Another roar.

Weimann and I still dine together, though I don't go back to his room anymore and he's never on the beach when I am. When I asked him about the new woman, he shrugged. "Perhaps she's at home with her own happiness?" he said.

I throw my straw into the water and watch it float in, up, over. "What about the boatman?" I say.

"Huh?"

"For the novel. The mute. Out there in the dinghy. He carried your bags up?"

She seems to consider this for a moment, sucking in the last of her Fanta. "Na. No blacks, no Jews, no Germans. I had to make the doctor Danish, a Danish count."

"Has he shown you his porn?"

"Pornography? Really? Oh, goody!"

"Letty," I say, "wouldn't you like to come to the dining room tonight?"

She cocks her head. "Would I not, no? Or would I not, yes? Yes, I think I would, yes. Why not? I can take a little break now."

That evening, she arrives at the bar in a dirndl with a frilly white blouse underneath. She has parted her hair in the middle and tied it into a ponytail. People turn to watch her, to watch us as I lead her out to the dining room. I have chosen a table next to the window, far from Weimann's. When the waiter comes to take our orders, I tell him to charge them both to my account. I glance quickly at Weimann, who is still at the bar. The yacht people have brought in some tourists, and they are all drinking together. I order a bottle of claret and, when it arrives, send a glass over to him.

She tells me that she came here because she was stuck, and she had read an article—warm places where you won't find tourists. "Everything in it was wrong," she says, "except about the tourists. But so what, hey? Here I am. Unstuck." She lifts her glass and slugs back the wine.

I don't tell her that it was I who wrote that article, wrote it without even coming here. That I often did that, and no one seemed to know the difference.

"Let's go swimming after dinner," I say. "I'll teach you." A full moon hangs low over the water. The night is bright with it, the water is brilliant.

But she shakes her head.

"We can stay in the shallows."

"No, it's hopeless. It's like horses. I'm terrified of them too, doesn't matter how many times I try. I write about them, but I can't go near them."

"In the e-mail, I write about an affair I'm not having," I say. "I write

Continued on page 78

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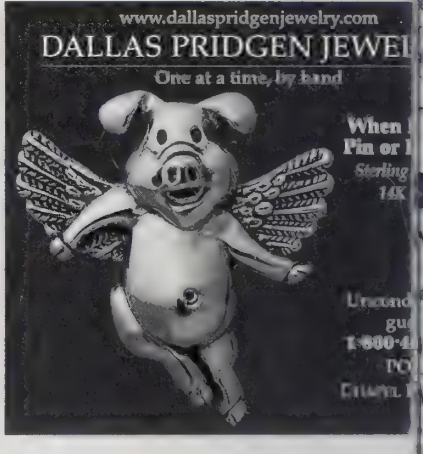
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STORY

Continued from page 75

about a hotel I'm not staying at too. And about happiness I'm not feeling. It's easier than the other way around."

"You see," she says. "I knew we'd be talking about it sooner or later."

There are no waves, just swells, the way I love it. And the water is warm, black as ink under the moon, perfect. With her on the beach to watch, I plunge straight in, swim out without stopping. With her shouting "Careful!" I swim farther than I've ever been before. I dive under and stay there for a while. When I come up, she is at the water's edge, waving both arms. I wave back. I start to sing. The water makes me happy, it has always made me happy. "That's because you're a water sign," Alice would say, she holds with that sort of thing.

But this is more than just the water. An old happiness is lifting my heart and voice and spirit all at once, all with the lovely water, with the lovely hymn I begin to sing. "Praise my soul the King of Heaven, to His feet thy tribute bring." I am singing for a future still to be had, and glorious things that will happen, places to go, and, oh, people to come back to.

I am out near the reef now, I can hear the water breaking there. And something is swimming with me, it brushes against my arm, light, almost liquid, a jellyfish perhaps, a ripple in the water. I stop singing and watch the water, but it is full of shapes, silver and black, a few ripples beginning to crest with the tide coming in. Whatever it is—even finned, even toothed—it feels like a lover. And if it came and took me down with it, down and down right to the bottom, that would be perfect too. I would be happy.

But then it is gone, and the tide is carrying me in, easy. There is Letty, still waving. I'd forgotten her for a moment. I swim in, swell after swell. And that's when I see Weimann on the sand with her, waving too. Both of them are in their shoes. Standing side side, they look like one of those German couples who take bus t around Europe, and sleep in cu holes under the bus, and live o a backpack.

As I come out of the water, runs at me, flaps her arms. She w to embrace me, perhaps, but I'm

"Did you not notice that no has been swimming all d Weimann says. His voice is shrill sistent. It has lost its slippery e the dip and rise over a question.

I prance a little before him, b her too, and go off to find my t so that they have to follow.

"Are you not aware of the m ray out there?" he demands. " you quite mad?" He considers body as if he's never seen it, eyes very pale in the light. "Y boatman has been trying to spe all day."

"My boatman?"

"Oh," says Letty. "I told him. know. Your idea for the novel."

Alice of my heart—

Goebbels collects gloves! He in me to see them this afternoon. An off I went, thinking, "Etchings," no, my dear, nothing of the sort. room is separate from the hotel, rig the back, and Gothic has a room too. Coming down the passage, I h a sort of moaning, man or wom hard to tell which, and I stopped, just then his door opened, and G tripped out, all dainty in her size down to her own door and slipped i

They are coming in April, A and Eva and a few of the others We will meet at the port and st the big hotel. Until then, I'll on here, it's not long. And af wards, we'll all go back toget Already, they're looking out f condominium for me, one bedr with a gardening service incl and a lovely view of the wa There'll be lunches just for us, asparagus and salmon and laugh And, on the weekends, we'l with our men as usual, men ou the patio with drinks in the summer evenings. Men watchin laugh. Watching for danger.

TERS

nued from page 11

ed methods of disposal of these
e dogs have included bludgeon-
electrocution, poisoning, and
o interested laboratories.
at the addicted gambler, the in-
gible dreamer, and the stoic in-
member all refuse to acknowl-
that dog racing is a dying
try is sad, yes, but I would argue
it is not, as the author alleges,
ruelest aspect of the sport.

ni Nardone
hound Protection League
nwich, Conn.

n interesting postscript to David
uels's chronicle of greyhound
g is that O. P. Smith, the in-
or of the mechanical rabbit, was
tly responsible for the imprison-
of Al Capone for income-tax
on. Intimidated by the Capone
into sharing an interest in a
da dog track, Smith talked his
kkeeper, who had formerly
ed for Capone, into going to
FBI with information on how
ne had doctored his tax report-
This led to the indictment that
y ended Capone's career.
P. Smith was my mother's un-
nd the rabbit was just one of his
ntions. Another was a toothpick
nser that used to be seen in al-
every restaurant in the country.

horn
nta

avid Samuels took long odds
n he referred to the habitués of
rack as a "population of retirees,
le mothers, deadbeats, scam
ts, and liars." As a single mother
doesn't even own dogs, much
bet on them, I would wager that
of us are too busy working and
ng our kids to be at the track
ing out of our tank tops and por-
over the racing forms. From what
ve seen, most single mothers
not gone to the dogs. They on-
nade the mistake of marrying
e of them.

ie Game
onto, Ontario

You deserve a factual look at...

Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank")

Can Israel survive without it?

There is incessant agitation for Israel to turn over most or perhaps even all of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") to the PLO. Such a move would inevitably lead to the creation of a Palestinian State—perhaps even with Jerusalem as its capital. Can Israel survive this dismemberment? Is it in the best interests of the United States?

What are the facts?

The Root of the conflict. The conflict between Israel and the Arabs is not about borders and not about the Palestinians. It is about Israel's very existence. The PLO still adheres to its infamous "phased plan." It calls for first creating a Palestinian state on any territory vacated by Israel and then using that state to foment a final allied Arab assault against the truncated Jewish state.

The Importance of territory. Many believe that in this age of missiles, territory is of little importance. But this is not the case. The Arab states have acquired over $50 billion of the most advanced armaments since the end of the Gulf War. And those are not just "conventional" weapons—enormous quantities of tanks, aircraft and much more. The Arab state possess large arsenals of chemical and biological weapons, and all of them work feverishly on the development of their nuclear potential. All of those weapons have only one single target and one single purpose: the destruction of the state of Israel. And that goal is not being cancelled for any agreements between Israel and the Palestinians.

"Without Judea/Samaria (the 'West Bank') Israel would be totally indefensible; therefore, neither the purposes of Israel nor those of the United States are served by Israel's relinquishing control of the 'West Bank'."

For both "conventional" war and for war of mass destruction, territory and topography are critical for self-defense and deterrence. The mountainous territory of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") is an indispensable line of defense. It totally controls access to Israel's heartland from the east. Israel needs this high ground for defense and to be able to peer deeply into enemy territory. The high ground allows Israel to detect missiles while they are still in the launch stage and to destroy them.

Would the "West Bank" be demilitarized? Even those who want Israel to retreat to her pre-1967 borders are agreed that the evacuated areas must be demilitarized. But that would be useless. Because the Palestinians will have thousands of trained soldiers, camouflaged as their police force. In case of war against Israel, these troops could be helicoptered in minutes to their positions, with armored forces reaching them within the same night. In any case, it is highly doubtful that the surrounding hostile Arab nations would allow such a military vacuum to exist. And finally, there is the matter of terrorism. There are over fifteen Palestinian terror organizations that neither Yassir Arafat nor any other Palestinian authority can control. There would be a constant rain of Katyusha rockets launched into the Tel Aviv area and into the entire coastal plain, which contains 80% of Israel's population and of its industrial and military potential. Ben Gurion airport, every incoming and outgoing flight, would be subject to mortar fire or shoulder-held Stinger attack. Does anybody doubt that the Arabs would not exploit that irresistible opportunity?

Without the "West Bank" Israel would be totally indefensible. That is the professional opinion of over 100 U.S. generals and admirals. Israel's strong defensive posture makes it most inadvisable for Israel's enemies to attack her. But once this defensive strength is removed, a coordinated war against Israel can only be a matter of time. The example and fate of Czechoslovakia, which preparatory to the Second World War was dismantled and shorn of its defensive capacity, insistently come to mind. What does all this mean to the United States? In a part of the world in which our country has the most far-reaching geopolitical stakes, Israel is the guarantor of American interests in the area. With Israel in a position of weakness, the role of the United States in the area would collapse and radical states such as Syria, Iraq and Iran would dominate. That is why, despite the heady prospect of "peace in our time," neither the purposes of Israel nor those of the United States would be served by Israel's relinquishing control over the "West Bank."

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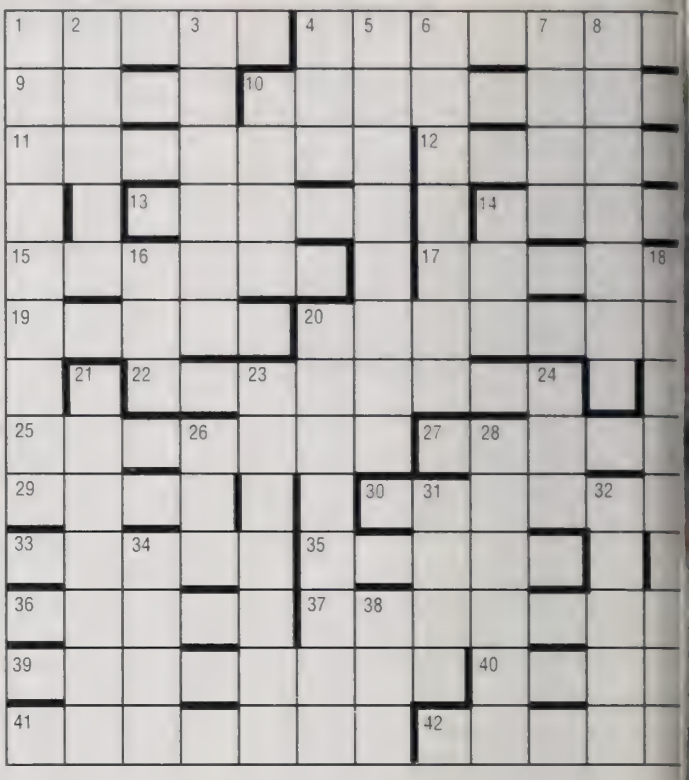
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47B

PUZZLE



"A" For Effort

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.

Ten clue answers are not to be entered normally in the diagram, which is why word lengths have been omitted. The changed forms are to be entered in 22 Across.

Clue answers include seven proper names (one of which is a brand name), two foreign words, and one suffix. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 65.

ACROSS

1. Get answer back from stage headliner playing himself?
4. Porter, kind of strong
9. Hear, not see, a real bad guy
10. It's unmet, gone at least
11. Mere lad goes gaga for one of the Stones
12. Vandals go after this? I forgot—quite the opposite!
13. European doctor, stewed, taking time out
14. Hazards in racing best gotten around
15. Charge after block material
17. Way to get adjusted in utero
19. Wines with no head but green lights
20. Is he a drape-maker who sells cheap goods?
22. *(See instructions.)*
25. Small-time aspect of aviatrices
27. More like old-time comedian Eddie Hall?
29. Appalachia produces toy with locks?
30. Red Cross loses a "Friend" with release of mimeo
33. What an only child has, moving to West Buffalo?
35. Apply engineering to forge runner
36. Gave out the answer to you, Jane, at the Turners?
37. Picture a soldier in an abandoned mine
39. Bird place, quickly finished
40. Aid for a live thing, initially
41. TV sporting events broadcast sparely
42. Do they do lines while online?

DOWN

1. Once I'd act out, now it's just talked about
2. South American wannabe in business dance
3. You and I embrace the lady at what place
4. To ease the way, head off work
5. Muse that's a terrible downer
6. Tower can make, for example, a tender stomach upset at first
7. French bean, raised by aliens?
8. Refuse to precipitate nothing being removed
10. Puzzle called out West—and others
14. Fly up in background
16. Mother and father don't have a way to go
18. Not quite a seductress? You can say that again!
20. Sallying out, in the vernacular
21. To get to cave, bats hurry inside
23. Big bill half-paid for family member
24. Big Apple mayor's first name, as an end in itself
26. Raised grain, got out of the way
28. They are the last word in games played with a ringleader
31. Message sent around University. Unreal
32. Private meal never starts
34. Makes out, getting a rise, makes a move
38. The opposite of pops up—like, almost

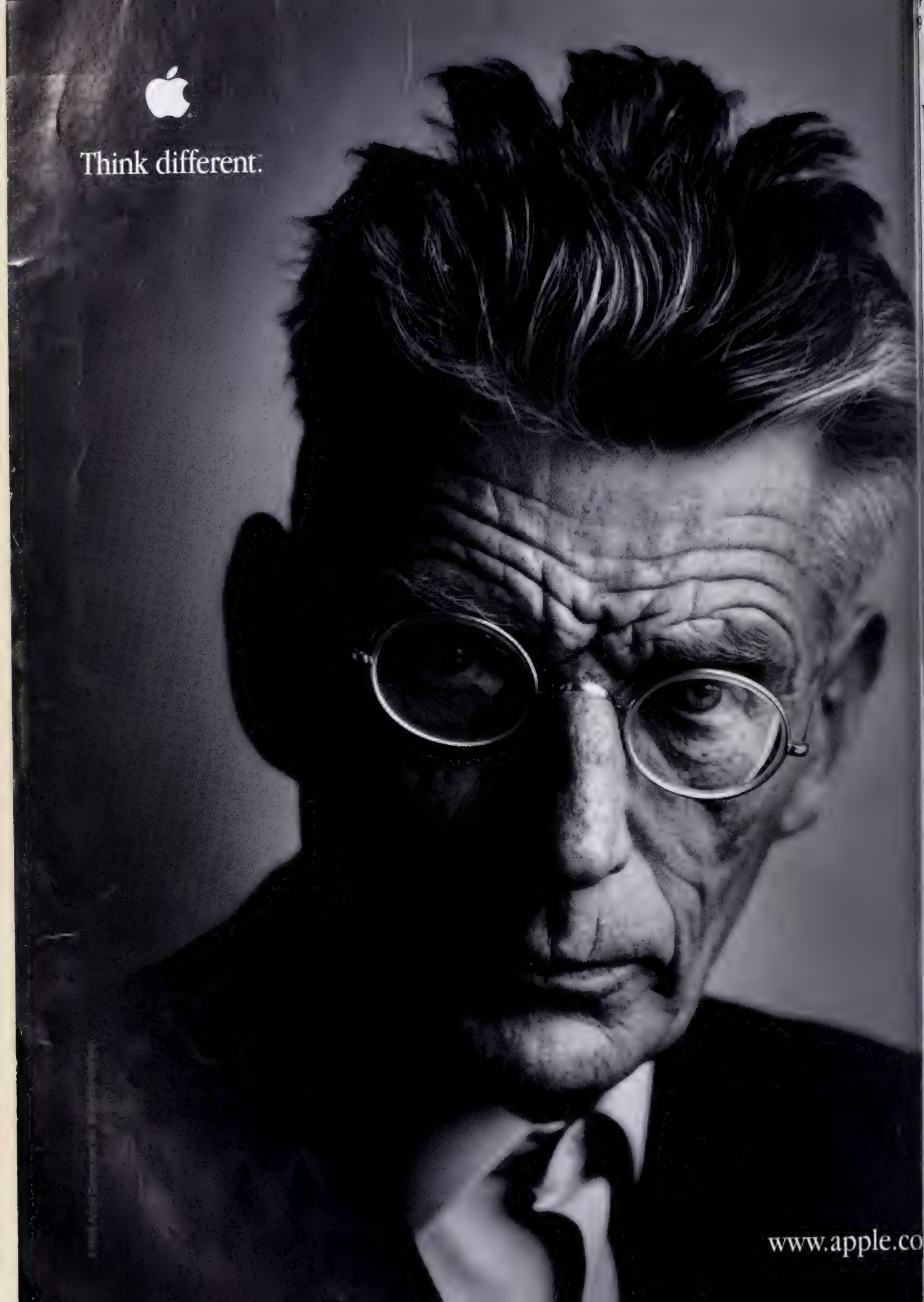
Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "'A' For Effort," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by May 10. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the July issue. Winners of the March puzzle, "Short Stories," are Jeff Folts, Hatfield, Massachusetts; John McKay, Ottawa, Ontario; and Sue Untermann, Northridge, California.



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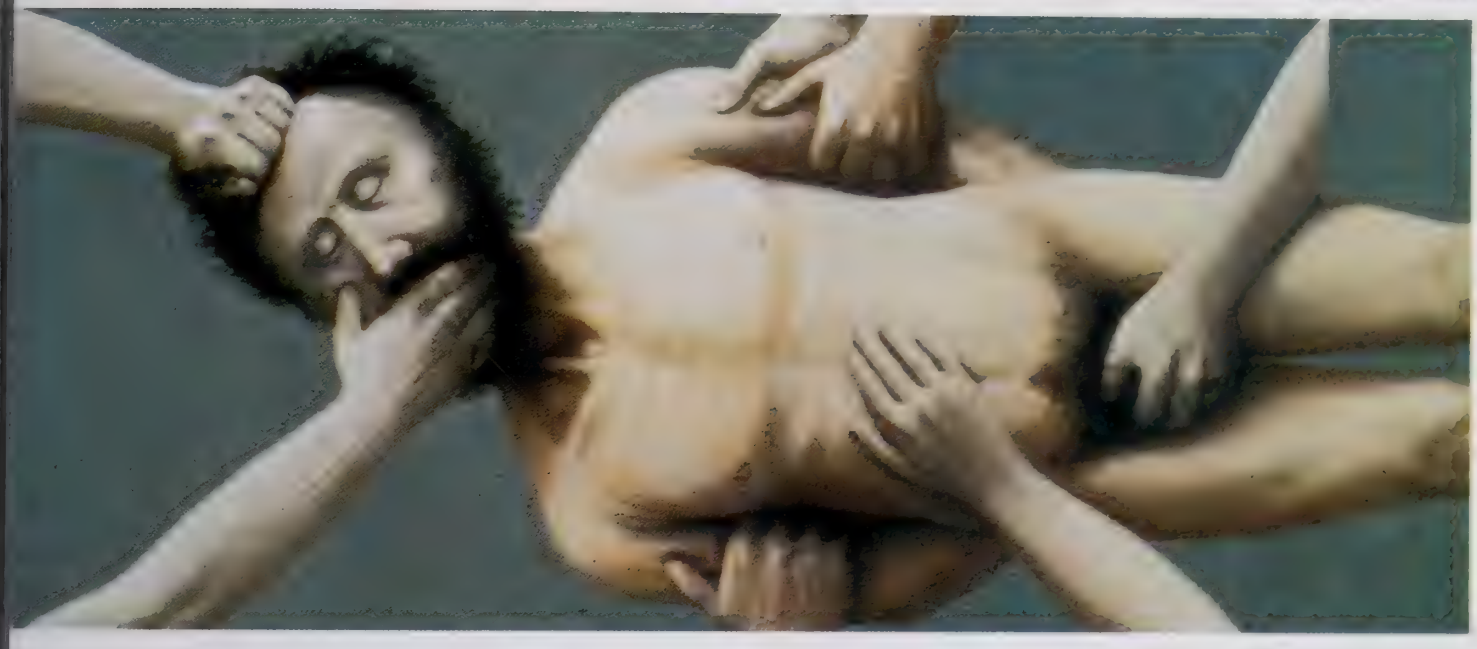
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YEARS
1850-2000

HARPER'S

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WHO NEEDS MEN?

Addressing the Prospect of a Matrilinear Millennium

A Forum with Barbara Ehrenreich and Lionel Tiger

◆

THE REANIMATORS

On the Art of Literary Graverobbing

By Jonathan Dee

RUSSIA IN THE RED

Undone by Capitalism, Moscow Drifts Toward Chaos

By Andrew Meier

MIND ON FIRE

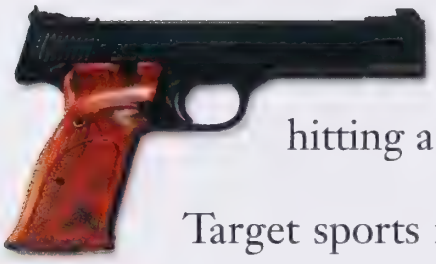
A story by Julie Hecht

Also: Christopher Hitchens, Will Self, Mark Twain

BURLINGAME
MAY 13 1999
LIBRARY

◆

Ever shoot a wad of p
Then you already un



Since the first cave man threw a stone, the challenge of hitting a target has been part of human nature.

Target sports require skill. Accuracy. Focus. And, if you've ever missed a wastebasket shot, imagine being able to consistently hit a bull's-eye 3 1/2 inches in diameter at 50 yards with a target-style handgun.

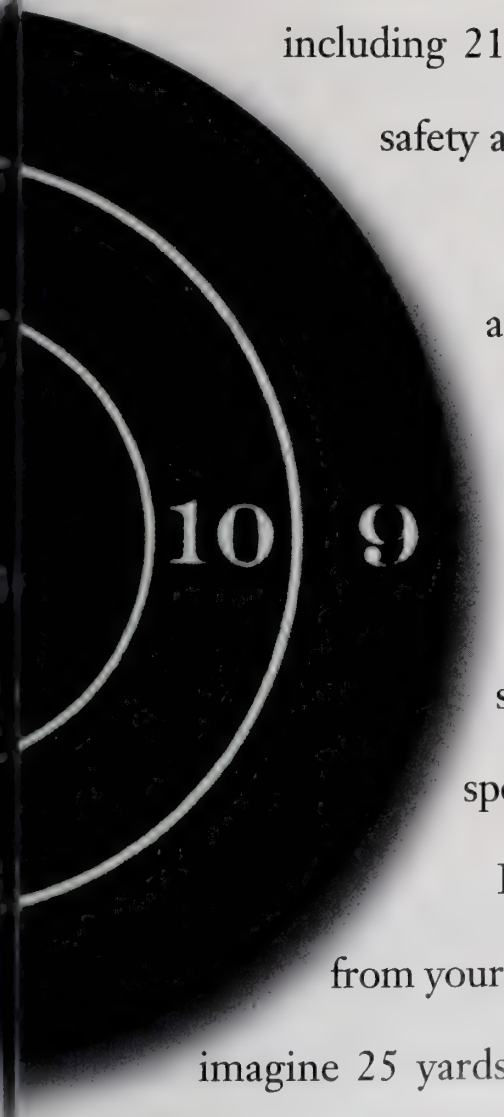


It's a sport so challenging and fascinating, it's not surprising that it's so popular. People in virtually every walk of life and age range enjoy target sports.

But what is surprising is how many people have never even considered the sport. One reason for this is that, compared to other popular sports, target sports have received so little attention.

Which means, aside from participants, few know about their diversity.

r into a wastebasket?
tand target shooting.



Target sports are highly organized, with competitions at all levels including 21 Olympic events. And that we've always made safety a leading priority.

Shooting ranges are known for their strict adherence to safety standards and rules that cover all aspects of gun handling and shooting. We understand owning a firearm is a full-time job that requires knowing how to use, handle and store firearms safely. Which is why shooting sports are among the world's safest sports.

If we have your interest by now, walk 10 feet from your wastebasket and see how good your aim is. Now imagine 25 yards. Then visit our website at www.nssf.org. Or, write to us at NSSF, 11 Mile Hill Road, Newtown, CT 06470.

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150 YEARS 1850–2000

HARPER'S MAGAZINE

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JUNE 1999

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Our featured writer this month is Mark Twain, 1835–1910.

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LETTERS

Just Sell It

Readers who responded to Jonathan Dee's essay on advertising ["But Is It Advertising?" January; Letters, April] missed his point.

When advertisers divorce words from their meaning and hijack concepts normally used to describe human behaviors or attributes in the name of selling automobiles or footwear, they trivialize language, consumerize our worldview, and cheapen important ideas. Dee is rightly concerned about the changing concept of bravery in a culture in which a sneaker is called brave.

Boris Vatel, M.D.
Medford, Mass.

I find it strange that Emily XYZ, in defending her creation of a poem for use in a Nike commercial [Letters, April], avoids the fact that she contributed something to a corporate behemoth that makes its millions exploiting labor, and instead emphasizes that she didn't earn much from the deal. Is selling one's soul a lesser moral crime when the devil gets a bargain?

Rich Mackin
Allston, Mass.

Harper's Magazine welcomes reader response. Please address all mailed correspondence to Letters Editor, or e-mail us at letters@harpers.org. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Volume precludes individual acknowledgment.

I must surely not be the only reader to note the absurdity in Andrew Jaffe's self-congratulation as an ad-industry Medici [Letters, April]. Jaffe, the director of the Clio Awards, contends that the Clio panel serves as a watchdog against mediocrity in the advertising industry, but would anyone in his or her right mind make the analogous claim that the Oscars, Emmys, or Grammys serve to elevate their respective cultural fiefdoms to ever-increasing heights of quality by "showcasing the good"? The premise is absurd prima facie. When Jaffe praises "thirty of the world's leading creative directors" who "donate a week of their time every year" to extol the cream of the industry, it begs the question: what do they do with the other fifty-one?

Emily XYZ's indignant diagnosis of "bigotry toward and contempt for those who make art" detours into outer space with her claim that the rabble think "inspiration is what happens when you put a bindhi on your forehead or listen to Celine Dion." Although potshots at such targets are alluringly easy, Emily XYZ would do well to realize that mass-marketable "inspiration" is nowhere exemplified so well as in the advertising literature of a certain athletic-shoe company.

From its "Just Do It" and "I Am Tiger Woods" campaigns to its more recent celebration of female



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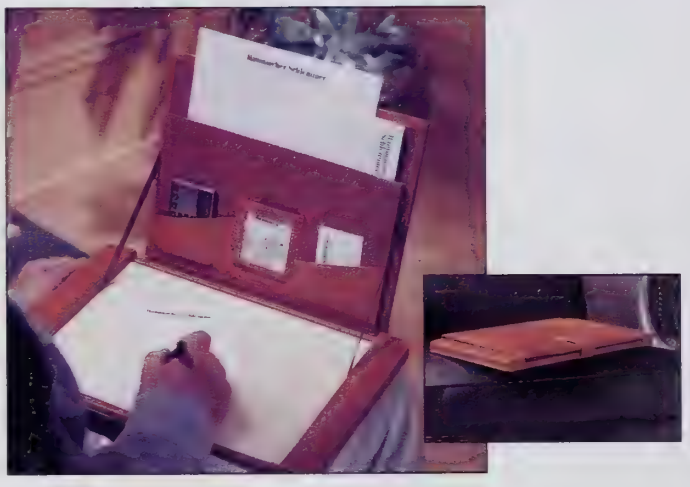


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From their catalog this month, the featured item is a leather laptop writing desk. Made by Strand of England, producer of fine leather goods since 1755, this portable desk is made of Italian leather and provides the convenience of a desktop while traveling. It is ideal for the executive or letter writer who prefers hand-written correspondence, fitting comfortably on a lap or on top of an airplane serving tray. Its cover opens to reveal blotter paper, an at-a-glance calendar with a sleeve that holds business cards, postcards, a calculator and envelopes. There are also two smaller inside sleeves Completely hand assembled, it has a "suedine" fabric back that prevents sliding. Available in tan. 15" L x 9" W x 1" H. (3 lbs.)
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athleticism, Nike would have the public believe that inspiration does in fact come in a red-and-white box. By participating in Nike's practice of boiling down to a few typecast images the millions of young women learning life lessons through athletics, XYZ is up to her ears in the same kind of nonreflexive product identification that lends credibility to the *Titanic* soundtrack as a genuine evocation of true love.

For Nike to render XYZ's poem in a fashion that expresses in any depth or complexity the idea of human striving (as was presumably her fondest intention) without first reducing the idea to a matter of discrete consumption would be unthinkable. People who sit back to reflect on such things can't be counted on to buy Air Jordans.

Michan Connor
Chicago

When I played the *Ode to Joy* from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony for my fourth-grade class, the kids broke into strains of, "Drink milk, love life, drink milk, love life," the lyrics that accompany the *Ode* on a current television ad sponsored by the Ontario Milk Marketing Board. I should not have been surprised, but I was.

Those who wrote letters defending the use of art, artists, and cultural icons in advertising appear to confuse two distinct practices. Emily XYZ and William Burroughs made a conscious decision to lend their words or their images to an ad campaign in exchange for financial reward. It becomes more problematic when the person who created the work is no longer alive to grant permission to associate it with a commercial message. Beethoven would probably have wanted my kids to drink milk. But more than this, he would have wanted them to create their own personally resonant images when they hear his music rather than be forever cursed with a preprogrammed association.

Bruce Stodart
Toronto, Ontario

irgin Territory

The March *Harper's* Index entry umber of virgins who have bought insurance policy against immacu- e conception next year: 10,113" ay be misleading. Despite the com- only held conviction that the term nmaculate conception" refers to nception without sexual inter- urse, it actually refers to the con- ption of the Virgin Mary, who ac- rding to Roman Catholic dogma s born with a soul free of original n. Those 10,113 insured virgins are vered only if they conceive a child ho is without original sin. If they ought they could collect for get- ng pregnant without the fun, they ere mistaken.

rry Engelbach
ooklyn, N.Y.

agan Puritanism

Regarding Lewis Lapham's "Ex- cism" [Notebook, March]: As a acticing Wicca, I am continually unned by the number of people ho insist on capitalizing the more mainstream religions like Christianity while assuming that Paganism is not worthy of the same respect. Paganism, along with its various subsects, is a recognized religion in this country. It also happens to be one of the oldest spiritualities practiced today.

Pagans as a rule do not concern themselves with hierarchy, titles, gender discrimination, tithing for subsistence, or political power. For these strengths alone I think we deserve at least the same level of respect accorded the other religions of the world that do endorse or tolerate such questionable spiritual activities.

And please, just as I would never presume that all priests are pedophiles, I ask that people not assume that all Pagans are Satanists. We are not. Thank you.

Laurel Haigh Gore
Seattle

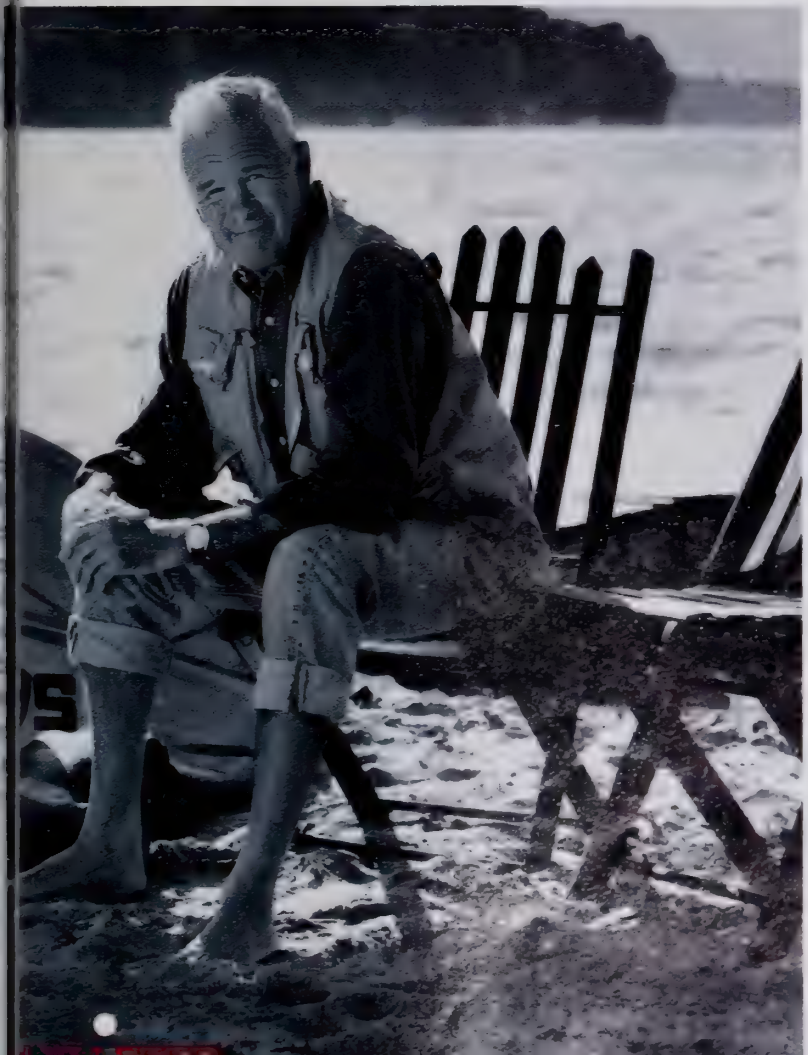
Chickened Out

In "Enter the Chicken" [March], Burkhard Bilger accurately describes the thrill of gleaming gore and cheap spectacle that infects gambling cockfighters and cockfight hangers-on. He is off the mark, however, in his comments about cannibalism and blood lust in egg-laying hens.

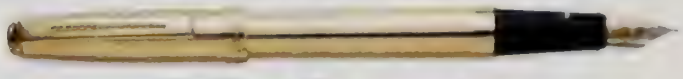
In nature, hens peck at (or into the air beside) one another, a warning similar to the harmless chest-beating of gorillas and other apes, to establish order within their flock. However, in intensive egg production, or "factory farming," the cruel method whereby all non-free-range eggs are now obtained, overcrowding doesn't allow this show of authority to be effective. Deprived of any room in which to move when threatened, some hens must bear the brunt of destructive behaviors forced upon them by more dominant birds. Blood is drawn, and death may follow from infection.

Chickens, like humans, have distinct personalities. Some fight for fun or out of aggression, but as someone who has housed and cared for a considerable number of rescued

Continued on page 94



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NOTEBOOK

In the American grain

By Lewis H. Lapham

The people who live in a Golden Age usually go around complaining how yellow everything looks.

—Randall Jarrell

Harper's Magazine this month begins its one hundred and fiftieth year of publication, and by way of celebrating the occasion between now and the sesquicentennial date of June 2000, we will add to each of the next twelve issues a voice from the magazine's past. Some are famous, others not well enough remembered, but all of them choose carefully their quarrels with Providence, and, in the midst of the changes brought to pass by the rise and fall of seven generations, their various remarks—on love, war, railroads, movie stars, lost dogs—speak to the unchanging cast of the American character and turn of mind. The first Archive piece, Mark Twain's "Diaries of Adam and Eve" (page 55), can be read as prior commentary or subsequent gloss on the conversation between Barbara Ehrenreich and Lionel Tiger (pages 33–46), who clothe the topic in modern dress. Twain composed the diaries during the years 1901–1905, and although he hadn't yet heard of children born in petri dishes, he knew that women left to their own devices (tasting forbidden apples, gossiping idly with serpents) could be relied upon not only to find their way out of Eden but also to make the men in the party believe that they had come to a far, far better place.

Over the course of the next twelve months, I don't know whether all the correlations between past and present will prove as obvious or as easy to find, but I suspect that the odds favor the enterprise. The 1,788 consecutive issues of *Harper's Magazine* tell a rambling story about a restless people fond of journeys and experiments, and their collected notes and observations bear comparison to the snapshots in a family album. The points of resemblance show up in the dispatches from Antietam and Iwo Jima, in the recurring sermons about a plutocracy too rich for its own good (a text first introduced during the heyday of the Gilded Age and revived in the 1920s and then again in the 1980s), in the reports of new machines, new means of transport and communication, new discoveries in the sciences. The inflections change and so do the conventions of the prose, but the steadiness of the voice defines, with as much precision as the phrase will bear, what is meant by the American grain—the voice of travelers in a country that is always new, optimistically exploring the landscape of their times, bearing mostly west in search of a new identity or an old hunting ground, for something seen in a play of sunlight on a canyon wall or through a drift of rain in tall trees.

We like to think that the past was slower and somehow more peaceful, that among the whole of the company of our since departed countrymen we alone confront the prospect of the ground falling away beneath our feet. If asked why we deserve so singular an honor, we mention our access to the Internet and nuclear cruise missiles, our sophisticated use of the junk bond, the dildo, and the cell phone. What other generation of Americans ever found itself beset by so many cataclysmic changes, infected by so much moral decay?

The first editors of *Harper's Magazine* looked for answers to the same questions. The year of the magazine's inauguration coincides with the midpoint of the two decades described by Charles and Mary Beard in *The Rise of American Civilization* as "the most changeful, most creative, most spirited epoch between the founding of the colonies and the end of the nineteenth century." The mercantile blueprint on which Thomas Jefferson had thought to erect the architecture of a Christian republic was being shredded by an emerging capitalist economy geared to the engine of the Industrial Revolution. The country was turning on its axis, the currents of power and trade beginning to run east and west instead of north and south. Behind the agrarian facade of an America now falsely portrayed as a tranquil wheat field or a quiet millpond, nothing was static, nothing was safe. Politicians as light-minded as our own drifted like corks on the surface of events, doing their best to pretend that nothing had changed, that Cotton was still king and slavery the will of Heaven, but everywhere in the country the inventors to whom Twain referred as "the creators of this world—after God" were busy tinkering with the roots of things, rearranging the lines of communication and the distribution of the nation's wealth. By 1859 northern manufacture provided an annual return of $1.9 billion, while southern agriculture yielded only $204 million; all that remained to

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be discussed was whether the political revolution evident in the arithmetic would find expression as a treaty of peace or an act of war.

Because the American promise reveals itself as a ceaseless making and remaking—of theorems, baseball teams, and fortunes—the society inhabits a permanent state of impermanence, all of its arrangements temporary and provisional. Any careful reading of the country's history finds every generation balanced on the edge of an abyss, which probably explains why so much of the writing published in *Harper's Magazine* over the last 150 years retains both its relevance and its force. Crisis concentrates the mind.

Our own contemporary journals of opinion imagine that they have discovered something new under the sun when they mourn the absence of a political left and deplore the supremacy of the business corporations. But here is Will Durant on the topic in June of 1927, writing an essay entitled "In Praise of Freedom":

> We have selected for our rulers gentlemen who reverently represent the established gods of industry; and we have put behind us, for the while, all thought of experiment in the relations of master and man. We have conferred a mystic popularity upon officials whose only virtue is their timidity; while our scorn of rebels and reformers is so great that we have ceased to persecute them. The capitals and governments of the world are in the hands of caution; and change comes over them only in the night, unseen.

The date of publication suggests that Durant had in mind the silence of Calvin Coolidge and the overbearing greed of J. P. Morgan & Co., but he could as easily have been talking about the Clinton Administration—the oligarchic bias of its domestic tax policies as well as its reluctance to risk home-grown casualties in the Balkans. Over the course of the next three paragraphs Durant extends his remarks with an observation pertinent not only to the contemporary euphoria in Wall Street but also to the booming of the markets in sexual liberation and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's dogged pursuit of the virtues to be found in autocracy.

> Yet, bewilderingly simultaneous with this virtuous avoidance of the new in the official world, behold in our cities such a riot of moral and literary innovation, such an exuberant rejection of ancient faith and discipline, as makes every gray head shake with sociological tremors, and every aged finger point to corrupt Imperial Rome....
>
> [T]he same riches that make us timidly conservative in politics make us bravely liberal in morals; it is as difficult to be ascetic with full pockets as it is, with full pockets, to be a revolutionist. Puritanism did not die from bichloride of *Mercury*, it was poisoned with silver and gold.
>
> Partly the situation issues from a contradiction in our hearts: it is the same soul that hungers for the license of liberty and the security of order; the same mind that hovers in its fluctuating strength and fear, between pride in its freedom and admiration for the police. There are moments when we are anarchists, and moments when we are Prussians. In America above all—in this land of the brave and this home of the free—we are a little fearful of liberty. Our forefathers were free in politics, and stoically stern in morals; they respected the Decalogue and defied the State. But we deify the State, and riddle the Decalogue; we are Epicureans in morals, but we submit to all but one of a hundred thousand laws; we are slaves in politics, and free only in our cups.

Durant was an historian, the author of an eleven-volume *Story of Civilization*, and I borrow from his essay at such long length not only because I think it as fine a summing up of the American dialectic as I've ever encountered but also to make a point about the intelligence likely to appear in the annals of *Harper's Magazine*. At fairly frequent intervals over the last twenty-odd years I've had occasion to rummage through the back issues in search of an article or short story said to possess some sort of historical importance, but I seldom find the text in question. The idleness of my curiosity saps the strength of my resolve, and I succumb to the blandishments of genius. I begin to look for Woodrow Wilson's essay on George Washington, but I come across Henry James in Paris, and instead of taking note of one American president's judgment of another, I accompany the expatriate novelist on an excursion through the south of France. I decide to find out what Walter Lippmann means by "The Peculiar Weakness of Mr. Hoover" (June 1930), but I never hear what he has to say because I stumble upon Horace Greeley, "The Plains, As I Crossed Them Ten Years Ago" (May 1869), or Leon Trotsky, "What Hitler Wants" (September 1933), or Pearl S. Buck, "America's Medieval Women" (August 1938).

The oldest of the American monthlies, *Harper's Magazine* has reached its one hundred and fiftieth year because its editors have kept current with its readers—as willing to make a new deal in a new line of country, as fond of journeys and experiments, making and remaking the magazine to meet a revised premise or a changed circumstance. The earliest issues, set before the public at a cost of $3 per annum, presented a compendium of "Scientific discovery, Mechanical inventions, the creations of Fine Art, the Orations of Statesmen." The editors borrowed heavily from European journals and reviews (most especially the ones conducted by Dickens in England, Macaulay in Scotland, and Lamartine in France) because the kingdom of American letters in the spring of 1850 scarcely could be said to exist. Hawthorne published *The Scarlet Letter* in the summer of that year, but he was near the end of his inspiration, and his audience was beginning to grow bored in church. The light also had begun to fail in the hands of the New England transcendentalists. Emerson was still giving public lectures, but not with the same vigor and not to as many rapt admirers. Poe had died in 1849; Melville had drifted into an obscurity from which even the publication of *Moby-Dick* in 1851 failed to rescue him.

The magazine acquired its reputation as an ornament of American literature during the tenure of Henry Mills Alden, who served as editor for

fty years, from 1869, in the first year f the Grant Administration, until is death in 1919, in the seventh ear of the Wilson Administration. poet descended from the Puritan entleman who arrived in Massachuetts on the *Mayflower* and attempted court Priscilla Mullins on behalf of aptain Miles Standish, Alden idn't care much for politics. He set a one of "agreeable, well-bred, intelligent, racy conversation of the higher ind," addressed to readers of increasng "wealth and importance," whom e expected to take little notice of raft, crime, sports, or "the common musements."

If by the end of the century the nagazine had become self-consciously literary, publishing the writng of Edith Wharton and Stephen rane as well as the drawings of Winslow Homer, Alden's hope of a genteel discourse" perished in the reat War of 1914–1918. His successor, Thomas Bucklin Wells, rerafted the magazine in 1925 as a ournal of ideas, deleting the illusrations and the rococo typography, ublishing the essays of Bertrand ussell, Elmer Davis, and Rebecca West, as well as the short stories of William Faulkner and Virginia Woolf. Like Alden, editor Wells asumed a conversation with readers listinguished by their urbanity and ntellect, but he also took for grantd what he once described, in an afer-dinner speech, as their "concern or the national well-being."

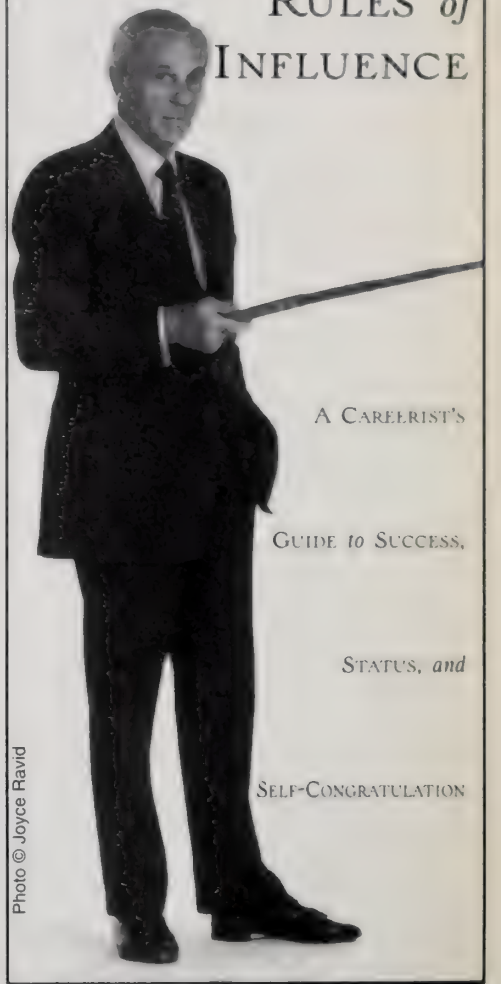
That assumption has remained urrent for the last seventy-five ears, taking different forms under a uccession of editors, among them rederick Lewis Allen, John Fischer, Willie Morris, and myself, carrying orward the American quarrels with rovidence through the Depression, he New Deal, three wars and as nany sexual revolutions, the passing of the Soviet empire, and the comng of the euro and the Internet. As he names of the authors changed—Bernard De Voto and Thornton Wilder replaced by James Baldwin and Barbara Tuchman and then by Norman Mailer, Tom Wolfe, Annie Dillard, David Foster Wallace—the magazine continued to revise both its appearance (in 1950, again in 1969 and 1984) and the nature of its literary devices. Readers whose sensibilities have been shaped by the electronic media don't take kindly to one hundered and forty-four octavo pages in double columns of eight-point type, and so the magazine now augments the longer forms of the article, the essay, and the short story with the Index, the Annotation, and the Readings.

The editorial intention, however, remains true to the "Word at the Start" that appeared on the first page of the first issue of the magazine in June 1850. Events that year seemed to be moving entirely too fast—California was becoming a state, and war was on its way to Kansas; the excited gossip in New York City had to do with the astonishments mounted by Mr. P. T. Barnum, the new summer fashions tending toward "the extreme ornamental elegance of the middle ages," and the new record for a trans-Atlantic crossing (ten days, four hours, and thirty minutes) made by the American steamer *Pacific*. The editors worried about holding the attention of people who didn't have time to read through "scores and hundreds of magazines and journals, intermingled with much that is of merely local and transient interest," and so they offered a compendium that allowed them to discuss, or at least touch upon, "all the varied movements of this most stirring and productive age."

On the assumption that no compendium is ever complete, the magazine this month presents both an Archive and a Map, at the same time restoring the once customary practice of reviewing books. Conceived as another of the magazine's regular departments, the Map will make visible some of the lines of connection between the political and economic spheres of reference; the Archive maybe will counter the popular impression that we live in a perpetual and annihilating present that severs our kinship with the past. The sense of history argues for the community of human thought, feeling, and experience that accompanies the journey of the generations—another kind of map, but one projected across the gulf of time. ■

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LEWIS LAPHAM
EDITOR OF *HARPER'S MAGAZINE*

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HARPER'S INDEX

Year in which the CIA predicted a "violent conflagration" in Yugoslavia : 1990

Year in which former Secretary of State Warren Christopher said that "Serbian influence" in Kosovo must be limited : 1993

Hours before NATO began bombing Kosovo in March that NPR aired its last e-mail from a 16-year-old Albanian girl there : 6

Chance that a Kosovar refugee crossing the Serbian border last April was a child : 1 in 2

Chance that a U.N. peacekeeper killed on the job since 1948 died as a result of combat or other hostilities : 1 in 3

Percentage change since 1991 in the number of armed pirate attacks worldwide : +122 (see page 96)

Estimated portion of the $4.8 billion that the IMF loaned Russia last July that has been lost or stolen : 1/5 (see page 67)

Number of years after the Soviet national anthem was retired that Russia's Duma voted last March to reinstate its tune : 7

Number of Kiss concerts that the band has postponed in Russia due to the country's instability and anti-American mood : 3

Ratio of attendance at Mother Teresa's last Oxford University talk to attendance at Jerry Springer's : 1:1

Number of men ticketed for indecent exposure in Opelousas, Louisiana, last year for wearing low-riding pants : 14

Amount New York's Department of Corrections spent last year on estrogen for 61 inmates who want a sex change : $9,000

Percentage change since 1991 in the number of U.S. inmates who were illegal-drug users at the time of their arrest : +68

Percentage change since then in the number of such inmates who receive treatment : –32

Chance that a legal antidepressant will alleviate severe depression : 1 in 2

Chance that a placebo will : 1 in 3

Fee charged by a Pennsylvania cyberpsychologist for online treatment of Internet addiction, per minute : $1.50

Price an Indiana historical museum charges visitors to spend 90 minutes as a runaway slave : $15

Estimated ratio of white to black runaways in the museum's re-enactments this year : 2:1

Number of months after the Civil War ended that slaves in Texas were told of their emancipation : 2

Number of years that Texas has observed a "Juneteenth" state holiday to commemorate the day its slaves were told : 19

Miles of U.S. highway that the Ku Klux Klan has applied to sponsor under state adopt-a-highway programs : 16.5

Miles that the group has been granted : 1 (see page 22)

Length, in feet, of a transparent bridge Israel is building just under the surface of the Sea of Galilee : 328

Estimated number of inches by which the bridge's footpath will be submerged so that visitors will appear to walk on water : 3

Number of spare parts that NASA retrieved from an Alabama museum last March to use on a space shuttle : 2

Estimated average number of Martian rocks that land on Earth each month : 4

Percentage change since 1990 in the number of U.S. traffic disputes in which one driver kills or injures another : +59

Average number of rural acres lost to "urban sprawl" in the United States each year since 1970 : 1,000,000

Rank of Atlanta among U.S. cities in the number of miles driven per capita : 1

Percentage of Alabamans who oppose removing the state's constitutional ban on interracial marriage : 26

Ratio of husbands who say they fell in love with their spouse at first sight to wives who say this : 2:1

Percentage of newlyweds who say they consummated their relationship on the first date : 17

Estimated maximum number of hours that a male june bug will cling to its partner after copulation : 2

Number of pups that Bob Dole's dog Leader has sired with Strom Thurmond's dog Chelsea Marie : 8

Last year in which neither a Dole nor a Bush has appeared on the Republican presidential ticket : 1972

Last date on which it was legal in Utah for 14-year-olds to marry : 5/2/99

Rank of people on their third marriage among spouses who say "I love you" most often : 1

Strokes by which O. J. Simpson reports that his golf handicap has improved since the murder of his wife : 4

Figures cited have been adjusted for inflation and are the latest available as of April 1999. Sources are listed on page 94
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READINGS

[Essay]

THE DEMOLITION OF WORLD ORDER

From "The Current Bombings: Behind the Rhetoric," an essay by Noam Chomsky in the March 27 edition of ZNet, *the Web site of* Z Magazine. *Chomsky is a professor of linguistics at MIT and the author, most recently, of* Profit Over People, *published by Seven Stories Press.*

The decision by NATO to bomb Yugoslavia followed a year-long humanitarian catastrophe overwhelmingly attributable to Yugoslav military forces. The main victims were ethnic Albanian Kosovars, some 90 percent of the population of this Yugoslav territory. The standard estimate of the human devastation was 2,000 deaths and hundreds of thousands of refugees. In such a case, what are the accepted and applicable "rules of world order"?

There is a regime of international law and international order, binding on all states, based on the U.N. Charter and subsequent resolutions as well as on World Court decisions. In brief, the threat or use of force is banned unless explicitly authorized by the Security Council after it has determined that peaceful means have failed, or in self-defense against "armed attack" (a narrow concept) until the Security Council acts.

But there is a tension, if not an outright contradiction, between the rules of world order laid down in the U.N. Charter and the rights articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (U.D.), a second pillar of the world order established under U.S. initiative after World War II. The U.N. Charter bans force that violates state sovereignty; the U.D. guarantees the rights of individuals against oppressive states. The issue of "humanitarian intervention" arises from this tension. The United States and NATO claim the right of "humanitarian intervention" in Kosovo, a stance that is generally supported by editorial opinion and news reports.

We may also bear in mind that the right of humanitarian intervention, if it exists, is premised on the "good faith" of those intervening, and that that assumption is based not on their rhetoric but on their record, in particular their record of adherence to the principles of international law. Consider, for example, Iranian offers to intervene in Bosnia to prevent massacres at a time when the West would not do so. These offers were dismissed with ridicule; if there was a reason beyond subordination to power, it was because Iranian "good faith" could not be assumed. A rational person then asks obvious questions: Is the Iranian record of intervention and terror worse than that of the United States? How should we assess our own "good faith"?

When presented with a crisis on the scale of Kosovo, outsiders have three choices: act to escalate the catastrophe, try to mitigate it, or do nothing. Washington's interventions in such

crises have tended to escalate catastrophes. Consider, for example, our actions in Colombia, where the annual level of political killing by the government and its paramilitary associates is about at the level of killing in Kosovo before the NATO bombing, and refugee flight primarily from these atrocities is well over a million. Colombia has been the leading Western Hemisphere recipient of U.S. arms and training throughout the Nineties, and that assistance is now increasing, under a drug-war pretext dismissed by almost all serious observers.

Consider Turkey, where, by conservative estimates, ethnic repression is on par with, and perhaps even worse than, that in Kosovo. Since the early Nineties, the Turkish army, relying primarily on U.S. arms, has devastated the countryside, forcing more than a million Kurds from their homes and killing probably two million. When human-rights groups exposed Turkey's use of U.S. jets to bomb villages, the Clinton Administration found ways to evade laws requiring suspension of arms deliveries, much as it was doing in Indonesia and elsewhere.

Colombia and Turkey explain their (U.S.-supported) atrocities on the grounds that they are defending their countries from the threat of terrorist guerrillas. As does Yugoslavia, where the threat of NATO military action led to a sharp escalation of atrocities by the Serbian army and paramilitaries, and to the departure of international observers, which had the same effect. NATO commanding general Wesley Clark declared it "entirely predictable" that Serbian violence would intensify after the bombs began to fall—and, of course, it did, the terror for the first time reaching the capital city of Pristina, followed by the large-scale destruction of villages and the generation of an enormous refugee flow, perhaps an effort to expel a good part of the Albanian population.

A recent study of "humanitarian intervention" by international-law scholar Sean Murphy reviews the record after the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928, which outlawed war, and then since the U.N. Charter, which strengthened and articulated the provisions of the pact. In the first phase, he writes, the most prominent examples of humanitarian intervention were Japan's attack on Manchuria, Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia, and Hitler's occupation of parts of Czechoslovakia. All were accompanied by factual justifications and highly uplifting rhetoric. Japan planned to establish an "earthly paradise" as it defended Manchurians from "Chinese bandits." Mussolini was liberating thousands of slaves as he carried forth the Western "civilizing mission." Hitler announced Germany's intention to end ethnic tensions and violence and to "safeguard the national individuality of the German and Czech peoples."

It is a useful exercise to compare those obscene justifications with those offered for humanitarian interventions in the post–U.N. Charter period. In that period, perhaps the most compelling example of intervention that mitigated atrocities was Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia in December 1978. Vietnam pleaded the right of self-defense against armed attack, one of the few post-Charter examples where this is plausible, since the Khmer Rouge regime was murdering Vietnamese in border areas. The U.S. press condemned the "Prussians" of Asia for their outrageous violation of international law. They were harshly punished for the crime of having terminated Pol Pot's slaughters, first by a (U.S.-backed) Chinese invasion, then by U.S. imposition of extremely harsh sanctions. The United States recognized the expelled Democratic Kampuchea as the official government of Cambodia, because of its "continuity" with the Pol Pot regime. None too subtly, the U.S. supported the Khmer Rouge in its continuing attacks in Cambodia. This reaction tells us quite a bit about the custom and practice that underlie the claimed legal norms of humanitarian intervention.

Despite the desperate efforts of ideologues to prove that circles are square, there is no serious doubt that the NATO bombings further undermine what remains of the fragile structure of international law. The United States made that clear in the discussions leading to the NATO decision. Apart from the United Kingdom (by now, about as much of an independent actor as Ukraine was in the pre-Gorbachev years), NATO countries were skeptical of U.S. policy, and were particularly annoyed by Secretary of State Albright's "saber-rattling." When France called for a U.N. Security Council resolution to authorize deployment of NATO peacekeepers, the State Department flatly refused, insisting "that NATO should be able to act independently of the United Nations." Unwilling to concede any authority to the U.N. Charter and international law, the United States refused to permit the word "authorize" to appear in the final NATO statement; only the word "endorse" was allowed. Similarly, the bombing of Iraq was a brazen expression of contempt for the U.N., and was so understood.

It could be argued, rather plausibly, that further demolition of the rules of world order is irrelevant. The contempt of the leading power for the framework of international law has become so extreme that there is nothing



From The Chain, *a series of photographs by Chien-Chi Chang of mentally ill patients at Longfa Tang Temple in southern Taiwan. The temple treats the 600 in its care by chaining healthier patients to less healthy ones; no medicines are used. Chang's work was on display last winter at the Alternative Museum in New York City, where he lives.*

left to discuss. A review of the internal record demonstrates that the stance traces back even to the first memoranda of the newly formed National Security Council in 1947. During the Kennedy years, the stance gained public expression. The main innovation of the Reagan–Clinton years is that defiance of international law and the U.N. Charter has become entirely open. The highest authorities have explained with brutal clarity that the World Court, the U.N., and other agencies have become irrelevant because they no longer follow U.S. orders, as they did in the early postwar years.

Under Clinton, the defiance of world order has become so brazen as to be of concern even to hawkish policy analysts. Earlier this year, Samuel Huntington warned in *Foreign Affairs* that Washington is treading a dangerous course. In the eyes of much of the world—perhaps most of the world, he suggests—the United States is "becoming the rogue superpower," considered "the single greatest external threat to their societies." Realist international relations theory, he argues, predicts that coalitions may arise to counterbalance the rogue superpower. On pragmatic grounds, then, the stance should be reconsidered. Americans who prefer a different image of their society might call for a reconsideration on different grounds.

The right of humanitarian intervention is likely to be more frequently invoked in coming years—maybe with justification, maybe not—now that Cold War pretexts have lost their efficacy. In such an era, it may be worthwhile to pay attention to the measured views of international-law specialist Louis Henkin, who writes that "violations of human rights are indeed all too common, and if it were permissible to remedy them by external use of force, there would be no law to forbid the use of force by almost any state against almost any other. Human rights, I believe, will have to be vindicated, and other injustices remedied, by other, peaceful means, not by opening the door to aggression and destroying the principal advance in international law, the outlawing of war and the prohibition of force."

[illegible] even recognized principles of international law and world order, solemn treaty obligations, decisions by the World Court, and the considered pronouncements of respected authorities do not automatically solve particular problems. Each issue has to be considered on its merits. Those who do not adopt the standards of Saddam Hussein must meet a heavy burden of proof in undertaking the use of force in violation of the principles of international order. Those who are even minimally serious must carefully assess an action's reasons and likely consequences, not rely on declarations of purity of intentions.

[Agenda]

ETHNIC CLEANSING: A FIVE-POINT PLAN

From a statement by Serbia's deputy prime minister Vojislav Seselj outlining the "goals of Serb national policy in Kosova." The statement was posted on April 1 on the Kosova Crisis Center, a Web site maintained by Albanian students and professionals in the United States "to keep the world informed with the facts from the ground about the Serb atrocities . . . as well as the oppression against everything Albanian in Kosova." Seselj's outline originally appeared in the October 14, 1995, edition of Velika Srbija, a weekly published in Belgrade by Serbia's ultra-nationalist Radical Party, of which Seselj is the head. Translated from the Serbian by Helena Cobban.

We hereby state the necessary measures for crushing the secessionist insurrection of Albanians in Kosova:

Revision of citizen rights

It is urgent that the federal parliament adopt a law to prevent Albanian immigrants from living in our state. Immigrants who are known extremists should be expelled immediately. Others should be required to possess the proper documents to avoid expulsion, the most important being the citizenship certificate, something none of them of course have. Employment should be denied to Albanians of certain categories to compel them to leave the country. Such a measure would first and foremost affect the educated portion of their population, so that the rest would not be able to organize resistance and could be easily manipulated.

Education

The curriculum in state schools should stress the elements and values of the Serb culture; the instruction language must be Serbian. Efforts should be made to further maintain and promote the current illegal parallel education of Albanians. This way, all the doors to employment and incorporation in the society will be closed. Every tactic should be used to prevent Albanian secessionists from having a job.

Revision of land ownership laws

Land that has in one way or another ended up in the hands of Albanians should be given back to its Serb owners or their successors. This could be carried out easily. In most cases, Albanians have not built new houses but only knocked down existing ones so that Serbs would have no place to go if they decided to return.

Information and propaganda

The government should broadcast special radio and TV programs in the Albanian language offering the most decadent values of the West, which are readily adopted by primitive people. The Serb enclaves would be spared primarily by the language barrier, as well as by the installation of cable television in their settlements. Albanians must be denied all kinds of social assistance, for it has facilitated their high birth rate. A crucial element of the Serb national program is for families to have a third and fourth child. Serb mothers who have four or more children should be entitled to early retirement. Large families should be granted loans for housing and private business.

Changing the ethnic structure of the population

The colonization of Kosova should be carried out quickly and conclusively. In a process that can be called "terrain configuration," highways should be constructed, up to one kilometer apart, to cleanse a wide belt through Albanian enclaves. Near such highways, the land and space must be allocated to Serb colonists, which will thin the Albanian population. These moves will create a "leopard spot" pattern of Serb enclaves that will eventually grow larger than the Albanian enclaves—a much more efficient way of conquering territories than "planting" individual Serbs in Albanian communities.

Electricity and water supplies to the Albanian enclaves should be disrupted to make their lives unbearable. If Serbs from neighboring enclaves start to patronize Albanian businesses, incidents of beatings and violence must be prompted in these areas.

Paramount attention must be paid to drug trafficking. If one Albanian is caught in such an activity, his indiscretion must be used as a pretext to stalk and punish large groups of them. Such cases would discredit important Albanian figures in the eyes of the Western world.

The issuing of papers from state authorities has to be as complicated as possible. Albanians

MOST NEWS FOLLOWERS IMAGINE GLOBAL TERRORISM TO BE AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH.



In fact, terrorist acts have declined sharply in the 1990s. But the most spectacular incidents get so much attention, and the news coverage hits so hard, that they seem more and more frequent.

Monitor readers have a clearer picture.

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BOSTON · THURSDAY

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

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HYBRID HYPE



CARLOS OSORIO/AP

MOTOR SHOW: A Chrysler Cruiser unveiled in Detroit.

Terrorism's Trend Lines

■ Friday's blasts in two African capitals show terrorists are forced to evolve in their tactics

By Scott Peterson
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

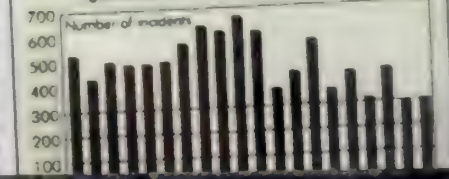
AMMAN, JORDAN – Just after the US Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, a group placed to a newspaper in Cairo to claim

packed with high explosives in the basement sheared the building in two, the message was sent around the world that a new nation was about to be born.

Menachem Begin, who masterminded the King David attack, and later prime minister of Israel, described in his book "The Revolt" the thinking behind such acts of terrorists. "There are times when everything in you cries out: your very self-respect as a human being lies in

Global Terrorism, 1978-97

Despite high-profile attacks such as last week's at US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the number of terrorist incidents around the world has not generally increased in recent years.



[Chat-room Transcript]

THE LONE STAR SERB

From the transcript of a live chat with Serbian paramilitary leader "Arkan" Raznatovic held on March 31 on the MSNBC Web site. In April, Raznatovic was indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia for war crimes committed in the Balkans between 1991 and 1995. He and his paramilitary forces, the Tigers, are also accused of war crimes and ethnic cleansing in Kosovo.

Chris__MSNBC: Joining us is Zeljko "Arkan" Raznatovic, a notorious Serb paramilitary commander and accused war criminal.

Arkan: Hi. It's good to be here. We are under the bombing umbrella, but we're alive. I'm ready to take your questions now.

Question from ATHENA: Arkan, will you truly put all your force against ground troops?

Arkan: The minute NATO comes on the ground, we'll fight for our land. A ranch in Texas is probably bigger than Yugoslavia. I am a worker on that ranch. I will defend that ranch, and you'll have a hell of a time if you attack us, that I can promise.

Question from JimP: Where have the male Kosovar refugees disappeared to?

Arkan: That's pure propaganda. In this kind of time, 1999, you're telling me we're eating up the people in Kosovo, they're disappearing?

Question from Wayne Fielder: What is the objective of your exercise in Kosovo? We are told it is practically genocide.

Arkan: We don't have anything against Albanians. We've lived together more than 50 years. It's the crazy politics of the newcomers, they want to take apart Yugoslavia and make a new state.

Question from Honorable Bureau: Why are you opposed to an independent Kosovo?

Arkan: It's not normal thinking, we're not going to give up our land. If you have a majority population of Mexicans in Texas, why don't you give Texas to Mexico? It's the same question. You would say, this guy's crazy. People from Texas will never accept that.

Question from ret305: Americans don't understand their own history, let alone Europe's. Do you believe that Americans really comprehend the significance of Kosovo to the Serbs?

Arkan: The history of America starts for me in Texas. We have to fight to defend something we believe in—the same way they fought to defend Texas and the fortress of the Alamo.

Me to stick to their tribal procedures in solving disputes they have administrative interposition. Legislation should be adopted that would force Albanians to ask for permission even to own a cow. Such regulations will persuade them to go abroad. Then they will face serious impediments at the borders when attempting to come back.

Albanian political parties should be created through specific legislation and at the same time scandals arranged to discredit them. Important political figures should be eliminated by traffic accidents and jealousy killings or by infecting them with the AIDS virus when they travel abroad. Their infection would be discovered when they cross borders, thus requiring them to be quarantined. Through adequate propaganda, such events can create the sense of an intolerable percentage of virus carriers, which could be used as an excuse to isolate large groups of Albanians and would promote a stereotype of Albanians as an infected people.

[Memoir]

THE KING AND I

From "Memories of JY1," by Laurie Margolis, in the April issue of CQ: The Radio Amateur's Journal, a magazine for ham-radio enthusiasts published in Hicksville, New York. Margolis is a journalist with the BBC; he lives in London.

When King Hussein of Jordan died in February, he was buried amidst possibly the greatest collection of world leaders ever gathered in one place: Britain's Blair with France's Chirac, President Assad of Syria and President Yeltsin of Russia, four U.S. presidents—Carter, Ford, Bush, and Clinton. All for the Hashemite King of Jordan, King Hussein Ibn Talal. All for a radio amateur, JY1.

I was nineteen years old when I first made contact with the king. A student at London University, I was living with my family in the resolutely ordinary suburb of Ilford, in Essex, east of London. Word had gone around the amateur-radio world that King Hussein of Jordan, as unlikely as it sounds, had become a radio amateur. And on March 22, 1970, while I was tuning 20 meters (around 14,000 kilohertz), higher than I normally listened, I heard his voice. There was JY1, with a huge signal, beckoning a contact.

I called him, wondering how to address him. He gave his name as "Hussein." This seemed a bit familiar, so I settled on Your Majesty—pre-



"Camilla (1)," a photograph by London artist Sarah Jones, was on display in April as part of the exhibit "Another Girl, Another Planet" at Lawrence Rubin, Greenberg Van Doren Fine Art in New York City.

ty odd on the egalitarian amateur airwaves, but I hoped it wouldn't cause offense. We had a routine contact: weather, rig, 73s. The king of Jordan—and this really took some accepting—was blasting out of the loudspeaker in my living room, telling me he was using a Drake T4/R4 and an L4B amplifier.

King Hussein's QSL address was workaday: P.O. Box 1055, Amman. I sent a card off the next day, and soon after, one of his dropped onto the doormat. It came in an embossed envelope, resplendent with the Jordanian royal crest and covered with Jordanian stamps. There was a handwritten message: "It was a pleasure to contact you, my good friend. I hope we will have a future contact soon. Kindly accept my best wishes and regards. Sincerely, Hussein I."

The summer of 1970 was an ominous time in the Middle East. Palestinian terrorists were trying to use Jordanian territory as a base from which to attack Israeli interests and the West in general. In September, the terrorists hijacked four international airliners to a remote desert airstrip in Jordan and blew up three of them in front of TV cameras. Jordan was in serious danger of being taken over by the Palestinians, and there wasn't much resistance from the rest of the Arab world. King Hussein decided to fight the PLO, to smash their strongholds in his kingdom. By mid-September, he declared martial law. The Jordanian civil war had begun.

Not surprisingly, Jordan became a media dead spot. All the newspaper datelines were Nicosia and Beirut. Virtually nothing was coming directly out of the country. There was one voice, however, emerging from the very heart of the kingdom. I heard it when I was listening across 20 meters late one night. There, to my surprise, was JY1, chatting with a WØ in Minnesota. Conditions were good, and I called. He remembered our contact six months earlier and described the desperate situation in Amman.

Although it was 1:00 A.M., I woke my mother, a BBC producer, and we rang up the *Today* program, a current affairs show on BBC Radio. Later that morning, the BBC sent around a radio links vehicle to play my tape of the contact with JY1. Then began two weeks of mayhem. It is no exaggeration to say that the world's media descended on our small house in Ilford. After

all, the only eyewitness account from Jordan was coming from its king, and it was being picked up by a young Jewish student in a London suburb on 20-meter sideband. I had several more QSOs with King Hussein over the next week, relaying various messages to his family in England and to the Jordanian Embassy. There were often several reporters listening, and the king appeared obligingly, S9 plus as usual, as a BBC TV news program did a live report from the house.

The war ended with the king victorious, though at the cost of a destroyed nation. Some weeks after Hussein and Arafat signed a peace agreement in Cairo, a package turned up from the Jordanian Embassy. Inside were two watches engraved with the royal crest, one for me and one for my father. A note from the embassy thanked us for our help and support. I've worn my watch every day since.

Later that year, the king, exhausted from the war, spent some time in a hospital in London. To our great delight, he put a beam on the roof and used his reciprocal call, G5ATM. My father and I were invited to meet him. It was just the three of us in the modest hospital room, the small figure of the king lying on the bed in his pajamas and robe. I must admit that I can't remember much of the half-hour conversation; I was astonished just to be there.

Although I never met King Hussein again, I do know that he maintained his interest in amateur radio for many years, running top-quality stations from his palaces in Amman and Aqaba, talking to friends all over the world. Truly great people touch many lives, but usually only from a distance. The difference with King Hussein was that he chatted with many of us radio amateurs in our homes, through the familiar medium of our radio stations, one on one, as equals. None of us will forget the day the king came to call.

[Concession]

THE EMPIRE'S NEW CLOTHES

From a letter sent on March 4 by Dwight H. Sullivan, a lawyer with the American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland, to Janet Owens, county executive of Anne Arundel County, Maryland.

Dear Ms. Owens,

During the previous Anne Arundel County Administration, the Invincible Empire Knights of the Ku Klux Klan applied to participate in the county's Adopt-A-Road Program. I understand that in response, the county suspended processing new applications to the program.

I have been informed by the Invincible Empire that, in order to avoid controversy, it is willing to agree to a sign that does not include the words "Ku Klux Klan." Instead, the sign could read, "The Invincible Empire Realm of Maryland." I have also been informed that the organization does not plan for its members to wear robes while engaging in trash collection.

Would you please let me know whether the Invincible Empire will be allowed to participate?

Sincerely,
Dwight H. Sullivan

[Memoranda]

BAY OF FAT-FREE PIGS

From a series of recently declassified memoranda written in 1964 to National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy by his deputy Gordon Chase. On February 28, 1964, a day after Senator Kenneth Keating (R., N.Y.) claimed that the sale of $2 million worth of lard to Cuba would have "a significant impact upon the foreign policy and international interests of the U.S.," the Commerce Department added lard to the list of items under the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba. The documents were obtained by Peter Kornbluh, who directs the Cuba Documentation Project at the National Security Archive in Washington, D.C.

February 27, 1964
Subject: U.S. Lard to Cuba via Canada

State is still digging for more information on the report of a U.S. lard shipment to Cuba via Canada. Here is what they have thus far. We have no confirmation of the deal, but we believe it is true.

Exports of non-subsidized foods and medicines to Cuba are permissible. In the past such exports have been very small. (Shipping has been a problem, and there's been no Cuban demand for such goods.)

My preliminary view is that we will have to try to live with the deal. We have always been rather proud of the fact that "we weren't trying to starve the Cuban people."

February 28, 1964
Subject: Lard to Cuba

KOHINA TURNED OUT TO BE AN EVEN MORE CELEBRATED GEISHA THAN I WAS IN MY PRIME, but I don't think she ever recognized her own beauty. She never understood why men treated her the way they did. I remember when she was an apprentice, there was a certain actor—let's call him Mr. Ikeda—who used to come to the Gion district all the time. He was quite popular among the geisha because he was rarely moody, but he never once asked for me—until, that is, I took on Kohina as my younger sister and began to train her. I could tell from the start that Kohina found him enchanting: she'd seen all his films, and she was in awe, really. Yet somehow it never occurred to her he might feel attracted to her too.

Then one evening as we arrived at the Mitsuyo Teahouse, the mistress took us aside to say that Mr. Ikeda had been sitting alone a half-hour in the little room overlooking the moss garden, turning down all her offers of company, just waiting for us and no one else. We slid the door open a crack to peek in, and there he sat, drawing lines in the beaded moisture on an unopened bottle of Absolut Vodka. Beside it on the table stood two untouched glasses. "Only two glasses," I said to Kohina. "He's waiting for you, not both of us."

She was wearing a cinnamon-colored kimono with a design of autumn grasses, and she looked magnificent, but I could see she had no confidence in herself. I'm not sure what she would have done if I hadn't stepped aside and slid the door open so she had no choice but to go in. She gave me such a look! Nervous and excited all at once. The flush in her skin reminded me how she'd appeared that afternoon when she'd stepped from the bath into the chilly air, still steaming.



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The latest information is that no American lard is involved.

There is a Cuban trade mission in Canada that has contacted several Canadian companies with American names. However, our present information is that these companies are probably controlled by Canadians. The Cubans have indicated that they are interested in buying lard, and the Canadian companies have indicated that they are interested in selling.

February 28, 1964
Subject: Lard to Cuba

Attached is Commerce's press announcement for your clearance; Commerce wants to make the announcement rather urgently to head off a possible lard deal.

FDR Jr. [the undersecretary of commerce] wants to red-flag the U.S. subsidiary problem. At present, U.S. subsidiaries abroad are not subject to our licensing controls. Therefore, American subsidiaries in Canada could ship Canadian lard to Cuba.

February 29, 1964
Subject: Uses of Lard

USDA's Jim Hartman made the following points about the uses of lard:

Lard is used almost exclusively for food—either directly as a cooking fat or blended with other ingredients to make margarine. It can also be added to livestock feed.

Lard can be used to manufacture soap and steric and oleic acids, and turkey red oil (these are industrial acids that are definitely not strategic). In practice, however, lard is generally not used for these purposes. Both inedible tallow and tall oil, which are substitutable for lard, are plentiful and cheap. Mr. Hartman knows of no other uses for lard.

Cuba can be expected to use 100 percent of any lard it gets for edible purposes.

Mr. Hartman added that it would probably not be credible to take the line that we have decided to stop shipments of lard because it is not solely a food.

[Solicitation]

A LITERARY FUND-RAISER

From a letter sent in March by Representative Barney Frank (D., Mass.) to campaign contributors.

Dear ____:

I do not share the view that the appropriate response to the failed right-wing effort to drive Bill Clinton out of office is a nonpartisan healing-fest. But because it would be imprudent to incur the wrath of the Washington pundits by ignoring completely their call for immediate reconciliation, I am prepared to make a gesture toward those whom I spent most of the last six months debating. Accordingly, this fund-raising letter flatters the House impeachment managers by partially imitating their rhetorical style.

Their anti-Clinton arguments leaned heavily on literary quotations, which are, of course, often a convenient substitute for logic. Since after nearly twenty years of begging I am out of new ways to frame a logical argument for you to send me money, I find myself as much in need of a substitute for reason as the Republicans. And since the fact that you are receiving this means that you have previously donated to my campaign, one particular quotation is especially appropriate:

"Please, sir, I want some more."*

Barney

*I apologize for addressing this to the considerable number of my contributors who are not "sirs." In the book, Oliver Twist was addressing an individual who happened to be a man, and I have simply adopted a figure of speech in borrowing this comment for use as a generalized request to thousands. My dim recollection from high school days is that there is a name for the figure of speech that allows a single comment to stand in a broader context, but I am uncertain as to what it is. I know it is not onomatopoeia, and it may or may not be synecdoche.

[Word Problems]

HOW MANY LICKS IN A TOOTSIE POP?

From word problems in Mathematics: Applications and Connections, *a middle-school textbook published this year by Glencoe/McGraw-Hill. According to Jack Witmer, president of educational publishing at McGraw-Hill, use of "real-world examples is effective in engaging students' interest and in enhancing the learning process." McGraw-Hill has no financial interest in the products mentioned in the book.*

The best-selling packaged cookie in the world is the Oreo cookie. The diameter of an Oreo



Player *and* Rebel, *from* Metal Men, *a series of paintings of heavy-metal musicians in the style of Renaissance masters by New York City artist Amy Hill. The series was on display last winter at the Clementine Gallery in New York City.*

cookie is 1.75 inches. Express the diameter of an Oreo cookie as a fraction.

Celina and Marcus went to Burger King for lunch. Celina ordered a Whopper with cheese, one order of onion rings, and water. There are 19 grams of fat in one order of onion rings. There are 65 grams of fat in the entire meal. Let g represent the number of grams of fat in a Whopper with cheese. Write an equation to find how many grams of fat are in a Whopper with cheese.

Have you ever heard of the game UNO Hearts? UNO Hearts is a card game created by Mattel that is similar to UNO. Twenty-four out of the 108 cards are purple. Compare these two numbers by using a ratio.

LeAnn Rimes's *blue* compact disc has 11 tracks. If the entire CD takes 34.8 minutes to play, what is the average time for each track to the nearest hundredth of a minute?

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, created in 1937, was Walt Disney's first full-length film. Its running time is 84 minutes. Over the years, other all-time classics were made, including *Cinderella* (76 minutes), *Bambi* (69 minutes), and *The Lion King* (88 minutes). For each movie, write a fraction that compares the running time to the number of minutes in an hour.

Have you ever watched the Showcase Showdown on *The Price Is Right*? The contestants spin a wheel that is separated into equal sections marked 5¢, 10¢, 15¢ . . . $1. Each contestant gets 2 spins. The contestant closest to $1 without going over wins a spot in the Showcase. What is the theoretical probability that the wheel will land on $1 the first time a contestant spins it?

Kellogg's introduced Cocoa Frosted Flakes in 1997. The package is a rectangular prism 12 inches high, 8 inches wide, and 3 inches deep. How many square inches did the label designer have to cover on the package?

According to the results of a test conducted by *Zillions* magazine, 12 out of 17 kids prefer the Sony PlayStation to Sega Saturn. Suppose there are 3,400 kids in your community. Predict how many will prefer the PlayStation.

[Consideration]

THE CHAGRIN OF THE NEAR MISS

From "Near Misses," by William Ian Miller, in the Winter issue of the Michigan Quarterly Review. *Miller is a professor of law at the University of Michigan and the author, most recently, of* The Anatomy of Disgust. *His essay "Giving the Gift of Humiliation" appeared in the February 1994 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

There is a mystery of the near miss, and it is malign, even cruel. The near miss brings with it a sense of having been teased and toyed with by an inscrutable power: tantalized, set up, conned, messed with. Mere misses, on the other hand, might, like near misses, be occasions for regret, disappointment, and frustration, but mere misses don't make us feel singled out as playthings of malevolent gods. We usually are willing to blame ourselves for the miss by a mile; but it is fate itself or the heavens that we curse for the near miss.

There are some near misses that are part of the cost of playing the game at a high level, where to be in the position to miss nearly is to be worthy of the attention of the gods and the esteem of one's peers and worshipers. Michael Jordan does rim out last-minute shots; Clint Eastwood can make movies that don't quite succeed when he ventures outside the revenge genre in which he never misses. And these people are trusted to try the next time, and they trust themselves to try again, for we and they guess, quite rightly, that they are favored by the gods, but even the gods and the incredible talents of those they favor are bound by rules of statistical probability, those blasted contingencies that will distribute even their attempts in some array of hits, near misses, and misses.

With these types, though, we must contrast those whom we do blame for their near misses, whom we feel we have a right to expect either to vacate the field or to acquire the necessary competence so that their near misses are indeed excusable rather than sources of annoyance and embarrassment for everyone else and what should be sources of humiliation for them if they were more clued in. Consider that it is not always better to miss by a little than to miss by a mile. What if you are in William Tell's position? Moreover, missing by a mile allows for the excuse that you just weren't playing seriously or even trying, that you were not engaging your honor at all. Such big misses can be understood to be a kind of mockery of the contest, a contempt for it, a refusal to lower oneself even to play the game. The near miss, however, makes a claim to competence and shows that one cares to win or to make good within the relevant frame. Once you are understood to be a player in the game, always to come up short discharging those tasks assigned to you suggests that you perhaps shouldn't have been playing in the first place.

Bearing some relation to the near miss is the nice try. "Nice try" is what we say to encourage, to keep up the spirits of those trying to acquire reasonable competence in a task they are learning or relearning. But the try still has to measure up to some kind of good-faith standard, and even more than good faith is required. There has to be some evidence of an actual skill that is in fact emerging if saying "nice try" is to avoid becoming brutally sarcastic. You cannot just say "nice try" to any nice try, unless you are one of those souls who believes that people's psyches are so fragile that no matter how inept they are that fact is never to be hinted at.

In a more rational order only a very small set of near misses qualifies as true nice tries. These are those grand efforts that come up just short. The shot rimming out at the buzzer doesn't qualify because the mechanics of taking a basketball shot are not that demanding, but the team coming back from a twenty-point deficit to tie the game with seconds remaining before losing at the buzzer *would* qualify. Such an effort is a nice try and a near miss. But the "nice try" has pretty much been claimed by the world of ridicule and sarcasm. Only parents and physical therapists are more likely to say "nice try" encouragingly than disparagingly; and even then it is hard not to have a tone of exasperation after the second or third "nice try" doesn't yield some genuine improvement in performance. So the nice try comes to signify those misses that miss by a mile but are not so far off that the incompetent bumbler can claim that he wasn't even trying in the first place, that he should, in other words, not be held to account at all. The "nice try" of hostile intent denies to its target any way out. He is simply an inept fool.

What unites the chagrin of the near miss and the mortification of the nice try? The near miss raises the question of what-if: there could have been other outcomes and other paths if only . . . But this question is not just experienced as an abstract exercise in the idea of paths not taken; it is felt and felt with a powerful amalgam of emotions we have come to understand as the sense of "what-if-ness" itself. Miserable as that sense can be at times, it still suggests that we matter, even if only as the object of the gods' laughter. And what of the nice try? It works to provide the contrasting term,

the ironical negation. Its mode is coddlingly sentimental, denying tragedy, horror, commitment, and suspense—denying, that is, most of the possibility of a good story. Its style is the therapeutic in the self-help mold. It's about I'm OK and you're OK, with OK meaning that we passed judgment in a world that makes no demands to be anything but what we already are; that is, a world in which what-if is not a possible question. No wonder we use "nice try" to express contempt.

[Book Review]

A TRANSLATOR'S PATRIOT GAME

From a review by Justo Navarro of the Spanish-language version of Op-Center: Balance of Power, *a novel by Tom Clancy and Steve Pieczenik that was published in Spain this year. The review appeared in the February 27 issue of* Babelia, *the literary supplement of the Spanish daily* El Pais. *Translated from the Spanish by Marko Miletich.*

Anyone who has read *Op-Center: Equilibrio de Poder* and believes it to be a translation of *Op-Center: Balance of Power* is mistaken. The Spanish editors tell us that they have respected the plot and only corrected Clancy's unbelievable exaggerations and errors. But in my opinion *Equilibrio de Poder* and *Balance of Power* are two different novels.

Let's start at the beginning. The story takes place in Spain. An insurgent general sets out to conquer the nation, and the Op-Center, an American armed force, arrives on the scene to ensure world order. In *Balance of Power*'s first few pages, agents Martha McKall and Aideen Marley face sexual predators. They know that if they call the police, the officers will simply join in the harassment. This is one of the factual errors that the translation "remedies." In *Equilibrio de Poder*, the Americans suffer only the slight inconvenience of flirtatious remarks and throughout the book encounter "purified" Spanish police.

Why are McKall and Marley in Spain? In *Equilibrio de Poder*, they're addressing tensions between farmers and the central government. This is not what Clancy wrote. He tells us that there is a struggle between the poor Andalusians and the rich and influential Castilians. The country may find its domestic order disrupted, notes the translation. *Balance of Power*'s intelligence chief is more specific: the worst war in a thousand years is about to break out.

The conflict imagined by Clancy is an ethnic, bloody, contagious war in NATO's south flank. A Catalonian shipbuilder believes that the Catalonian people should govern Spain. To obtain power, he choreographs a national economic catastrophe, takes advantage of the warring Basques, and attacks well-known members of ethnic groups. How does the government prevent the Spanish press from reporting on this? By bribing the journalists, Clancy tells us. In the translation, the journalists are silent because their government appeals to their patriotism.

The bad guys in the translation are a man named Puig (in the original his name is Ramírez) and his Mafiosi friends. Clancy, however, does not deal with mere megalomaniac fantasies: In his book, the Catalonians want to crush the other ethnic groups in Spain. (The *Balance of Power* war puppets ask the Catalonians if they're willing to consider "genocide"; the translation substitutes "armed conflict.") Clancy's Catalonians hate the black Africans, an animosity that goes back to the times of the wars against the Moors. So they murder agent McKall, the daughter of a soul singer and hero in the struggle for civil rights.

The Castilians of *Balance of Power* then see an opportunity to show the world that Catalo-

[Editor's Note]

STET

From a correction in the Autumn 1998 issue of Free Lunch, *a journal of poetry edited by Ron Offen. Robert Lowell, who twice won the Pulitzer Prize for his collections of verse, died in 1977. Offen lives in Laguna Niguel, California.*

It is my sad duty to report that a poem in our special section of prisoner poetry in the last issue was for the most part a plagiary. The poem, "Within," purportedly by prisoner Robert Brooks, was actually a close reworking of a section of "My Last Afternoon with Uncle Devereux Winslow," by Robert Lowell, from his book *Life Studies*.

To add insult to injury, I asked the plagiarist for revisions of Lowell's lines on two separate occasions.

My apologies go out to Lowell's publishers.

nia does not respect life. The Castilians consider themselves pure-blooded Spaniards and dream of returning Spain to its true people after a thousand years of oppression from Madrid. At least, that's what Clancy says. The translation, however, narrates the adventures of a small group of Hispanophiles obsessed with the unity of the country, under the command of the crazed and lonely General Amadori. Amadori, in the original, is a Castilian supported by many politicians, businesspeople, and military men. The translated Amadori is a lunatic who has contacts with the European far-right wing and who lives with his soldiers in an abandoned nineteenth-century mansion.

For Clancy's Spanish editors, a bestseller clearly does not deserve the same consideration as a serious literary work, in which words are obviously arranged in a particular way for a reason: to say what the author means. The editors adapted the original so that nothing will shock Spanish readers or contradict their view of reality. They have utterly distorted Tom Clancy's novel.

[Essay]

THE BIG DOME

From an essay by Will Self, in the Spring issue of Granta, *a special issue on London. Self is the author, most recently, of* Tough, Tough Toys for Tough, Tough Boys, *a collection of stories.*

When you grow up in a great city (and by great I mean a city that is not readily geographically encompassed, even by an adult with mature visio-spatial abilities), your sense of it is at first straightforwardly crazy—like a film with appalling continuity. "Daddy," asks my eight-year-old as we drive past Clissold Park, "is that Battersea Park?" Poor dog, nodding his way into comprehension, as the jump-cut scenes of the city are projected at him through the windshield.

Then comes the integration, the coalescence of the 200 billion neurons that will make up the city-brain. The faux villages of London—the tiny zones around friends' houses or known haunts—spread over a gray waste of overpopulation, strung out along ribbon developments of short-term memory. And then, in adult life, there is the long, long shading in of the rest, the even adumbration that constitutes regular experience.

Even ten years ago, and certainly fifteen, I could patrol central London and still avoid my past self when I saw him coming in the opposite direction. I could take alternative routes to avoid the districts of failed love affairs, I knew short cuts that would circumvent the neighborhood of an abandoned friendship, I had only to swerve to miss the precincts of a snubbing acquaintance. But now the city is filled in with narratives. There is no road I haven't fought on, no cul-de-sac I haven't ended it all in, no alley I haven't done it down. To traverse central London today, even in a car, is to run over a hundred memoirs.

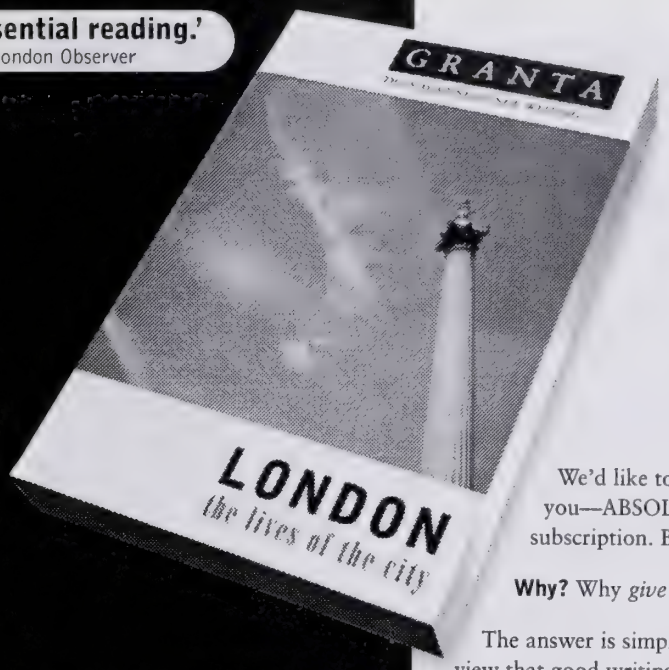
I think all of us Londoners are like the young schizophrenic man who knocked on the door of my Shepherd's Bush house on a dull winter evening in 1989: "Could you lend me £13.27," he said, his voice jagged with the fateful snicker-snack of psychosis, "and drive me to Leytonstone?"

"All right," I replied, keen as ever to experience a random act of senseless generosity. As we were scooting under the Euston Road underpass, and his delusional babble was mounting in volume and intensity, I decided that I'd better check out his destination. I pulled over. "Show me," I said to him, opening the A–Z road map to the relevant page, "exactly where it is you want to go in Leytonstone." He looked at me warily. "Come on, man," he said, "you know as well as I do that the A–Z is a plan of a city—it hasn't been built yet."

The A–Z, the coloring book of London. Some of us live in this plan more than we do in the physical reality of London. Some of us even live more in the diagram of the tube than we do in the physical reality of London. After all, the tube imparts a sense of the city that is not unlike a child's unintegrated vision: you disappear down a hole in the Mile End Road and then pop out of another one in Chalk Farm. Some people's whole lives must be like that, with no coherent sense of the city's geography; they must find it impossible to circumvent old lovers, defunct friendships.

I've been orienting myself for a lifetime, but it wasn't until the mid-Eighties that all of my disordered ideas and impressions and imaginings of London came together. I was standing in Hill Street, Mayfair, on a warm, early summer morning when I realized that I had never been to the mouth of the river that ran through the city of my birth. You couldn't have had more solid confirmation of the fact that London's geography remained, for me, exclusively emotional. What would you think of a peasant who had farmed all his life on the banks of a river if he told you he had never been to where that river meets the sea, some thirty miles away? You'd think he was a very ignorant, very insular, very landlocked peasant. There are millions of peasants like that in

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London; in imagining themselves to be at the very navel of the world, Londoners have forgotten the rest of their anatomy.

I got in the car and drove east. It turned out that the Isle of Grain, the southernmost extremity of the Thames, was the provider of a parallax, a point of reference that allowed me to sense the city and its peculiar cosmology. Once you've spotted one parallax, you begin to apprehend more and more. Central London may seem curiously flat, but if you drive up the Bayswater Road, you'll be able to realize the overall shape of the city moving beneath you. I've now taken so many bearings that I am paralyzed, lost in a tangled undergrowth of points of view. It took several more years and several more acts of geographic foolhardiness before I could acknowledge the full extent of my own sense of confinement.

This sense of confinement was enhanced by the fact that I was commuting at the time from Shepherd's Bush in the west to Southwark in the southeast. It was my first—and last—proper office job. It came with a company car, a Ford Sierra so new that there was wrapping paper on the accelerator and the interior smelled the way I remember new bicycle brakes smelling when I was a child. The temporal margins within which I had to operate were astonishingly narrow: five minutes too late leaving in the morning could mean another twenty on the journey, pinned like some automotive butterfly on the card of the Westway flyover. When there were tube strikes—and there were a lot then—the journey could last three hours.

I was overwhelmed by the totality of the traffic in the city, and of its complete interconnection. I began to imagine it might be possible to analyze it on a purely physical level, and from this to derive a complete knowledge of traffic flows throughout an entire built-up area. It would be like having an awesomely powered Trafficator computer, but in your head.

I started work on a story that expressed this idea of a metaphoric meta-jam. Soon I was getting up at six-thirty in the morning and rushing through London by car to sit down and write about it. I began to work on other stories in parallel—and I began to see their ontogeny, and to see that they were all about London. By this I don't mean simply that they were all set in London. I mean that the city was the main—and possibly the only—protagonist.

Although it seemed as if the city had sucked me in, it was a consummation I had no will to resist. For to avoid the massive and destructive sense of inertia that I felt whenever I wrote fiction, I had to write about something I knew very well. I was forced on my subject, and it was forced on me. We were locked up together, tapping the monotonous, plastic piano.

Now that I was a writer, I thought I needn't actually live in the place. It might be nice to live in the country, to write about London from a position of rural reclusion, or even to not write about London at all. What a fool.

The country was crowded, noisy, and polluted. My infant son's asthma got worse. At night the sky was bruised with the massive explosion of halogen, forty miles away to the south. In the day, I fancied I could hear the distant rumble of the Great Wen's traffic, mocking my bucolic idyll. I began writing a novel, most of which was set in a London that was a bewildering place containing many different levels of reality: my protagonist could turn the corner of St. James's and find himself mysteriously in the Aldwych. The city, once again, had usurped the tale, stolen the narrative.

My marriage broke up. I moved to the far north of Scotland, then to Suffolk. It was a tired, eroded landscape that I walked ceaselessly, attempting to map it, but my subject matter, when I did manage to write at all, was exile. My protagonists were all writers who had left the city. I reached a point where my life and my writing life horribly intersected. I started to know people in the locale, there were invitations to gatherings of stultifying chitchat. After four years, it was over in two days. A van was hired, a house was rented. I went home.

Initially, I found myself to be pleasingly disoriented, occasionally even lost. My internal A–Z had faded with desuetude. But soon it was back, and worse than ever. The city was punishing me for my defection. Before I left, my fictionalized London might have been banjaxed and strange, but it exhibited no more anachronism than the real thing. Now this altered sinisterly. I began to perceive the city as not simply filled with my own lifelines and story lines but choked with those of everyone else as well. I began to write stories set in a London where the opium den that Dorian Gray frequented in Limehouse was still mysteriously open, despite being shadowed by the Legoland of Canary Wharf Tower.

This was a more claustrophobic city than the one that had preceded it. It swarmed with humankind: humans running, humans walking, humans scratching, belching, farting, like a pack of apes. I decided to write a novel set in a London entirely populated by chimpanzees. My protagonist found the city to be about two-thirds to scale with the London he knew. That,



Walking Down Broadway III, *a painting by London artist Bill Jacklin. His work was on display in April at the Marlborough Gallery in New York City.*

and the way in which the chimps would ceaselessly and publicly copulate, served to make him feel overpoweringly claustrophobic.

I remarried and we bought this house in Vauxhall, closer to the city center than I've ever lived before. My claustrophobia was now so complete that in some strange way it wasn't really claustrophobia any longer but more a case of my own partaking of too many London tryptamines: a bit of a bad trip. In the past I would welcome that sensation, familiar to all city dwellers, of suddenly noticing a building that I'd never paid any attention to before, even though it had been in my purview many thousands of times. Now I'm afflicted by a more ominous but related sensation, which involves suddenly noticing a new building and not being able to remember what it's replaced. This is unpleasant. This is like conceptualist burglars breaking into your house during the night and millimetrically realigning all the furniture. There's only one way to arrest this entropy of the city—keep writing about it.

I've learned to accept London as my muse. Initially, there I was, sitting on the tube, when she came in: filthy, raddled, smelly, old, and drunk. Like everyone else, I wanted to get up and move to the next carriage, especially when she elected to sit down right next to me. But now we're inseparable, going round and round the Circle Line, arm in arm, perhaps for eternity.

When I was a child my unhappily married parents would drive us, almost every weekend, to Brighton, where we would stay with my grandparents. My parents would argue all the way there and all the way back; the trip was synonymous with misery for me. In time I came to associate any leaving of London with this wrenching sadness. I began to conceive of the city itself as a kind of loving parent, vast but womb-like and surmounted by an overarching dome. By accepting the city as a source of fictional inspiration, I've made this dome a reality—for me. My only wish now is that everyone else should experience the same peculiar sense of interiority, of being in London, that I have. They should have made the Millennium Dome far, far bigger. I could have told them what to put in it. ■



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WHO NEEDS MEN?

Addressing the prospect of a matrilinear millennium

Women now make up 56 percent of students in America's colleges and universities and, by the year 2007, having achieved parity or majority in such traditionally "male" fields as business and biology, will earn 200,000 more bachelor's degrees annually than will men. What does such a disparity portend, given that there are already six women in the workplace for every seven men and that the percentage of women who never marry or have a child has risen steadily for a generation? Has a fundamental shift between men and women occurred in industrial society? What narrative accounts for Iceland's astonishing out-of-wedlock birthrate of 65 percent, the dramatic rise in the average age of Taiwanese brides, and the 23 percent functional-illiteracy rate among England's young men? Could it be that males are in decline?

Knowing that such an idea will be greeted with skepticism, *Harper's Magazine* invited two practiced observers of the human condition—a man and a woman—to open the debate.

The following discussion was held over lunch at the Savoy restaurant in Manhattan.

COLIN HARRISON
is the deputy editor of Harper's Magazine. *He served as moderator.*

BARBARA EHRENREICH
is a political essayist, columnist, and social critic, as well as a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine. *She is the author or co-author of twelve books, including* The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment, *and, most recently,* Blood Rites: Origins and History of the Passions of War. *Her last article for* Harper's *was "Nickel-and-Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America," which appeared in the January issue.*

LIONEL TIGER
is the Charles Darwin professor of anthropology at Rutgers University, was for twelve years research director of the Harry F. Guggenheim Foundation, and serves as a consultant to various governmental and private organizations. Among his books are Men in Groups, *which introduced the term "male bonding" into the cultural vocabulary;* The Imperial Animal *(with Robin Fox);* Optimism: The Biology of Hope; The Pursuit of Pleasure; *and* The Decline of Males, *published in May.*

THE INSULT OF MASCULINITY

COLIN HARRISON: Lionel, you're worried about men, that they are under pressure—societally, occupationally, sexually—even as women are enjoying a long overdue ascension. Men are now a minority of college students, hold fewer and fewer jobs in relation to women, and are not present in the daily lives of one quarter of American children. What's happening?

LIONEL TIGER: Since the 1960s I've listened to the whole discussion of sex and gender, and have retained a somewhat stubborn sense that there's a lot going on that is not at the level of politics, or even at the level of consciousness. I think the fulcrum of the subject is the birth control pill. We have made a major shift in our reproductive relationships, causing some rather glaring phenomena, such as the rise in single motherhood and the emergence of legal and illegal abortion in communities that hitherto had been very resistant to it. The shift is being misdiagnosed, on the one hand, by politicians who yammer on about family values as a way to recapture a family structure no longer available to many people; and, on the other hand, by academics and theorists who want to amend the interpersonal relations between males and females. What has changed are our underlying biological patterns. Just as Marx describes the problems of our century at its beginning, I think that Darwin may describe many of the problems at its end. And these are gay rights, single motherhood, abortion—all things that essentially come out of the biology of *Homo sapiens*.

BARBARA EHRENREICH: We have many millennia to cover here, and I take issue with you even on our starting point in this discussion. As for the role of the pill in creating a crisis in the relation between the two sexes, I find that very unconvincing for the reason that there's always been fairly safe and effective contraception before the pill—for example, the diaphragm.

TIGER: And the condom.

EHRENREICH: Right, but going back to traditional societies, you also find contraception. A human male has never known for sure whether he's planting a seed in fertile ground, so to speak.

TIGER: But the pill is categorically different, I think, because it has allowed for a measure of privacy. Only the woman knows whether she's using it or not. Which, historically, is new.

EHRENREICH: Well, she also knows whether she stuffed a pessary made out of grass and mud into her vagina.

TIGER: Which the man might be able to detect, as she would a condom. My point is that the introduction of the pill a generation ago yielded two counterintuitive results—more single mothers and more abortions. Paternity uncertainty has had a far more volatile impact than anyone would have predicted.

EHRENREICH: But you cannot establish that the increase in single motherhood has anything to do with pill usage. In fact—

TIGER: Except in time.

EHRENREICH: I know, but just because something happens at the same time—well, there's a fancy Latin phrase for that kind of logical error. But in fact one of the groups in our society that has consistently rejected the pill as a form of birth control is poor, inner-city women, who have a lot of suspicion about the pill. And, remember, the pill that was initially released was very high in estrogen, with lots of side effects and hazards. I was one of the women who took it in the mid-Sixties, and I got off it when strange things began to happen.

So it produced, perhaps, a generation of women who had high expectations about contraception and control over their own bodies, but were really let down. And it's not until about the last ten years that there's been a low-estrogen pill with fewer side effects. So that's another problem with your assertion. But there are lots of *other* reasons why men have walked away from the family that have nothing to do with knowing whether their children are biologically theirs or not. By the way, one more little biological point is concealed ovulation—an odd thing about humans. Human males never know whether they're impregnating a fertile woman. God knows why we have this. A little feminist touch from the Goddess, I guess. Anyway, I find the connection between the pill and these social changes unconvincing.



LUIGI PELLITTERI

TIGER: What would be convincing?

EHRENREICH: I would agree that there has been an exodus of men from the family. The single-mother family is much more common. I'd give three reasons. One is that men *wanted* to leave. Men had been coerced into the male breadwinner role, in which they had to agree to support a non-working woman and her children forever. As I argued in *The Hearts of Men*, there was a revolt against that beginning in the Fifties. A lot of men looked around and said, "Why are we supporting these parasites, these women who don't earn their keep?" A second cause is that some of the ideological props pushing men into that role—such as the whole quasi-Freudian psychology, in which real manhood was defined as holding a job, being married, and supporting your wife—were beginning to crumble in the Fifties and Sixties. The human-potential movement came along and said: Life is not just a matter of fitting into a sex role; it's an open-ended trajectory, a path that could go here or there. You don't have to fit the one model. That had a big impact, certainly on middle-class men and women. And then, third, the thing undercutting the older male role in the family is the decline of male wages. Working men are not in a position to support a family anymore.

TIGER: We agree on the third point. But on the issue of the therapeutic model, you have to add the entire feminist movement, which dynamically energized women to believe that being in the traditional role was a sign of emotional or psychological poverty, and that they should move out into the labor force. This movement led to a series of profound tensions, which I see at the university all the time, in which the whole essence of what used to be defined as normal maleness is now seen as a risible kind of fatuous and reactionary behavior. One example is what happens to boys in school. Being males, they like to make large-muscle movements, and then they're told by their teachers that they've got attention deficit disorder and they're given Ritalin and tranquilized, and they drop out of school. What happens to those boys? There's a community out there punishing them. We have a social system, based on sentimental psycho-prejudice, in which the norm is the female norm and what boys do is seen as socially disruptive. Another example is the notion that a man should take care of a spouse and children. I have boys in my classes who are stunned into silence when the discussion turns to what happens after they graduate. They don't dare talk, because they're going to get leapt on by the women of the class, who'll say, "What do you mean you want to take care of a wife and child?" The women are personally insulted.

EHRENREICH: I've had the opposite experience with college audiences. I'd say, "How many women here would like to just stay home and raise children?" And you'd get a few hands. They'd be a little embarrassed, but they'd put their hands up. Then you'd ask, "How many men here are prepared to devote their lives to supporting these women who are not going to work?" No hands.

TIGER: Of course. In the old days there used to be some rather severe forms of control over this, one of which we used to call God, and if you got married in the Church, then that was the end of it. If you were a Catholic you could not possibly divorce. It just couldn't happen. And up until

Sculpture by Harris Diamant, from the [illegible]

the Fifties or Sixties getting a divorce, even in the secular sense, was quite difficult. Once you got married you understood that it was for keeps. It was a real contract. And what subsequently happened, because of this psycho-therapeutic sauce that you could apply as a kind of a flavoring, is that people began to see their lives not as forms of commitment to obligation but as forms of commitment to self-expression. That's a real change, historically. Now men no longer see themselves as having a set of commitments that they have to fulfill. Many of them are insufficiently imaginative or confident about the alternative to know quite what to do.

EHRENREICH: I'm not talking about marriage, I'm talking about the idea that within marriage a man has to be the sole breadwinner. I'm saying *men* rejected that. It has nothing to do with whether they want to get married or not. They often *want* to get married. But if you ask them what kind of woman they want to get married to, they say one who can pull her own weight.

TIGER: This has now gotten to a surrealistic level; young men won't marry very talented young women who are on a law-partner track or making lots of money on Wall Street, because they think the moment they marry them, they'll quit working. The men don't want to have to support an organism costing $150,000 a year.

EHRENREICH: That only confirms my point.

TIGER: But they view it as a question of equity, you see. The notion of equity between a man, a wife, and their children has changed, so that a man no longer feels that it's enough to bring home his paycheck, except in the working-class communities, where if he can do that it's pretty good, because jobs are hard to get. Those men really do want to supply goods and services to their families and try their very damn best to do so. But there's been a recalibration in the national sphere, publicly and emotionally and conceptually, away from male responsibility, due in part to the whole force of the feminist movement, which has been phenomenally powerful.

EHRENREICH: Let's get to feminism. Please don't generalize from academic women about American feminism. That's unfair. If you speak for grass-roots, mainstream feminism in this country, the position has not been that we want to destroy the family. It's been that we think the family is so important that men ought to get involved in it. That's been the stance. That you guys can get used to the idea of changing a diaper without issuing a press release every time you do it. The message is that what we're doing at home is important. And you men damn well better do some of it, too.

TIGER: I agree with you that it's hard to characterize feminism, because it doesn't exist as a unitary thing. But if you ask women in the public, not Gloria Steinem or any of the whole array of professional feminists, whether they think of themselves as feminists, they say no, because they feel that it's anti-family, it's anti-female. There's a strong undercurrent of resentment to this notion that the only sensible female role is one in which she is self-supportive.

EHRENREICH: But that hasn't been the feminist point of view. The feminist point of view has been that we have to respect that traditional role. Hence the feminist campaign to improve social security for homemakers, for example. This is why some of us fought our losing battle to keep welfare, because raising children is work. There's an old feminist slogan that says there are no non-working mothers. But right now, being a full-time mother is only an option for women married to wealthy men.

TIGER: Let's consider the Jesus and Mary story in the Bible. I think it's a metaphor for welfare. Joseph was not the father, had no personal responsibility for that child. The community has to take care of the mother and child. In the old days, when it was legally required that you take care of your child or children if you were married, there was no option, no necessary community to step in to help out when the mother didn't know who the father was—before DNA testing, which is going to change all this; before you could make any kind of assertion about who a child's father was, the church and the state conspired and said to the guy, I'm very sorry, this is your job, you must do this. Now, many men didn't do it, but many, many did. One of the greatest transfer payments of all time must have been in the 140 or 150 years of the Industrial Revolution, when every steelworker in Cleveland, Kiel, and Sheffield would take his sixty or seventy dollars and bring it home to his wife. Since nobody had bank accounts, she'd give him three or four dollars for whatever he might want to do with it, and she handled the rest. That went on throughout the industrial world for a long time. That was seen as both morally appropriate and essential. Somewhere we lost that belief.

EHRENREICH: That was not always a very voluntary transfer payment. My own grandmother had to go to the shift boss at the mines and complain that my grandfather was not bringing home his paycheck. He was drinking it away. I always felt ambivalent about that story, going to the boss to complain about your husband. But it was a struggle to get that paycheck past the bars of Butte, Montana. I am saying this to undercut any notion that men have some genetically inherited program that says they are not whole men unless they can bring home money to a wife. It was a struggle to get men to be responsible to their families.

TIGER: Your point drives to the basic point I'm making, which is that as a society we're moving to a biologically fail-safe mechanism, which is to look at the mother-child relationship as the core of the community. And once again the male is scuf-

fling around the outside trying to figure out what the hell to do. That's what we see in some communities, especially certain minority communities. The species has always faced the question of what to do with the young males. That problem still remains. We're moving to a new kind of matrilineality that is happening very quickly. Increases in the number of single mothers have been astonishing over the past thirty years. Margaret Mead said years ago that fatherhood is a social invention, and there you and I agree. We've lost, however, the notion that we should even maintain the fiction that it's desirable. In fact, there are lots of people trying to undermine it, so you have fatuities such as Gloria Steinem's "a woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle"—a kind of tonal rendition of this entire story. The result has been an unprecedented speed of change in the heartland of human life, which is male-female relationships and the raising of children. I don't think one can avoid the responsibility to look at all possible explanations.

EHRENREICH: You keep picking on Gloria Steinem.

TIGER: Because she's a suitably sentimental figure here, and obviously quite prominent—

EHRENREICH: She didn't make up that slogan. And I don't see what's so threatening about that slogan anyway.

TIGER: Imagine if she said that about blacks.

EHRENREICH: What would be the problem? All it means is that you don't have to land a man to be a full human being as a woman. Don't be threatened by it.

TIGER: I'm not. I am trying to ask why all this started to happen so remarkably rapidly, and what effect it has on people. We need to find the best possible explanation. I happen to think that if we're talking about a biological category, gender or sex, biology isn't a bad tool to use.

EHRENREICH: Sex is a biological category, gender isn't. You should have picked up that from the feminist academics.

TIGER: But gender/sex is in fact a boring dichotomy, because we all know what we're talking about. I think that sex is real; gender is fashioned, *fashionable*. I don't much care about gender; I do care about sex. Let's restrict our discussion to that, because at least it's clearer than talking about gender.

EHRENREICH: When you talk about whether men wanted to be breadwinners, you're talking about gender, and then you're trying to trace this all down to what seems to me a rather adventitious matter, the introduction of the birth control pill. This is just really hard to follow.

TIGER: It may be hard to follow, but it may not therefore be incorrect. When I said that time was the factor, all I said was that whereas there's no causal relationship that you can identify, there is a temporal relationship in which you introduce a technology here and you get a series of events there, which are plausibly related. Plausibly. And all I'm trying to do is sketch—

EHRENREICH: *Male* scientists came up with the pill. And I'll tell you something else men introduced: *Playboy* magazine, which initially was an ideological, polemical journal that rallied men to dump their wives or not get married in the first place. I think that I could make an argument every bit as convincing that *Playboy* was much more important than the birth control pill in saying to men, You don't have to be the breadwinner for a family the size of which you don't even control.

DE-GENDERED MAN?

HARRISON: Lionel, you mentioned that your male college students seem quite confused about what is expected of them. Is it that they don't want to fulfill traditional expectations or that they feel that they *can't* fulfill those expectations? In other words, does the idea of supporting a family terrify them?

TIGER: Young people are absolutely terrified about their futures. They're very, very concerned about earning a living. They're very aware of the profound competition in the job market, that companies are not keeping people forever. Personal economic stability is the first order of business. And now women are the majority in the universities, so the men are competing not only with one another, which they've always had to do, but now with women, and women generally do better.

EHRENREICH: So you cite that as another example of male decline, what we could call the feminizing of the university?

TIGER: I wouldn't use that word, "feminizing."

EHRENREICH: One of the reasons why fewer men are going to college may be because they suspect that they can make a living just as well without a college education; in other words, they still have such an advantage over women in the non-professional workforce that they don't require an education. I would explore that possibility before advertising the point that the relative decline of men in the student body represents male decline. It may represent male *advantage*.

TIGER: I can't treat that idea seriously, because, for example, we know from the black community that women go into the university far more than men. And it's not because black men are getting jobs as orthodontists; it's because they're not getting any jobs at all. They're not going into any higher education because they just feel doomed. So yours is a capricious analysis. Furthermore, let's assume that men are now staying out of the university and earning fortunes doing I don't know

what, but let's assume that they are. When push comes to shove, ten years from now, it's the women who are going to get the good jobs because they've got the credentials. Those are the emergent outlines of our community. When I talk about the decline of males, I'm merely trying to point out something that's quite astonishing; if any of us had been told thirty years ago that men would now be the minority at universities and that universities would now be having affirmative action for *men*, we'd have been shocked. Even fifteen years ago, we wouldn't have believed it. Events have happened so rapidly that we've lost an analytical lever to try to understand them. That's all I'm trying to say. Paternity certainty is not the only thing that's involved. Nonetheless, in most cases, most men still do what they are supposed to do about their children, and they work their asses off for them. Some of them leave, as you yourself characterize, but it's now much more permissible to leave, not, please, just because of *Playboy* but because of some sense of equity; the idea that I do not have to provide money to another organism. Marriage is no longer a sacred ritual, legislated and denoted by God, but yet another contract. The rise of the prenuptial contract is merely a leading indicator of the prenuptial agreements emotionally, which are that we go into this relationship until severe irritation do us part.



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EHRENREICH: You are romanticizing marriage in the past. Marriage, if anything, has become much more about romantic love than it was in past centuries, when it was a contract between two families, an economic relationship. You'll concede that—

TIGER: I don't want to concede that point. What I want to concede is that marriage has always been seen as a difficult phenomenon involving male and female sexuality that was likely to yield children. Therefore it required a composed preparation called the wedding, in which you bring the two families together, in some cultures actually exchanging money through the wedding feast and the wedding gifts. I agree totally that it has never been a romantic matter. The more romantic it's become, the less it's had to do with kinship and the more it's had to do with psychology.

EHRENREICH: I want to get at another level here. I want to explore your feelings about these things. You say the "decline" of males—there's a sad tone to that. I would feel sad, as a mother of a son, if males suddenly started "declining" in some serious way. Do you feel loss and regret and nostalgia? Why call it a decline? Why not say, Let's go boldly forth in this more egalitarian and somewhat de-gendered world?

TIGER: A more attractive picture to be sure, but not, however, I think, quite as accurate a rendition of the emotional consequences of what's happening. I'm not interested in characterizing my own personal psyche in this matter, solely because I think it's of zero interest to anyone. What is of interest is the fact that, as you suggested, young men and women are very concerned about these matters, one reason being that they no longer have a set of rules that they think are emotionally and morally worthwhile. Now, why should people have rules? If you study anthropology, you realize that human beings generally try to have rules, notions of how to behave. What we saw in the Clinton-Lewinsky business was some astonishing confusion between personal and public life.

EHRENREICH: You certainly got away from the issue of how *you* feel about it. See, *I'm* willing to say how I feel.

TIGER: I'm wholly uninterested in your feelings.

EHRENREICH: But I think it lends energy to what I say here, because I *do* feel strongly about this. A good deal of my adult life has been given to the struggle for gender equity. I don't want males to decline, I want females to rise up. I think you have some powerful nostalgia here, perhaps not only for patriarchy but for more hierarchical and feudalistic ways of life in general.

TIGER: I could not object more strongly to your characterization of me as moving toward patriarchy and—what was the other calumny? Feudalism?

EHRENREICH: That's left open unless you—

Sculpture by Harris Diamant, from the series *James Heads*. Courtesy Ricco/Maresca Gallery, New York

TIGER: You don't leave it open. I don't think the intellectual is the personal. I think the personal is the personal and the intellectual is the intellectual. We shouldn't confuse psychodrama with analysis. And I happen to think, as a matter of formal principle, that one's personal position is not necessarily connected to one's intellectual position.

EHRENREICH: You come to this discussion of men and women, and you have no particular stake in the kind of world we're heading toward?

TIGER: I have a stake in getting the argument right. I have a stake in trying to ensure that when people live their lives they do so with a measure of information that is as uncorrupted as possible by sentiment, cant, and ideology. I have a personal stake that is anti-ideological, I will concede that. Ideology is a form of brain damage, and too much of the world makes easy judgments based on ideology rather than the harder work of going through each case on its merits. So to that extent, yes, I do have a personal position, but it's a functional position, not, I have to assure you, out of some nostalgia for the Montreal of the 1940s in which I grew up working in my father's economic colossus, Martin's Herring Store. This was presumably where I learned the elegant privilege of patriarchy. You must be joking. Be a little kinder to the messenger.

EHRENREICH: But there's a nostalgia to the phrase "the decline of males." I'm willing to be generous on this point and take you as just a neutral, non-ideological, disembodied presence commenting on things very distant from you. But these things are not distant from me, or from a lot of people trying to figure out their lives. When is the decline of males going to get to the point when, say, the Senate is mostly women?

TIGER: Oh, I don't think it's going to, because women understand perfectly well that the best thing to do is to vote for the appropriate senators. Which is what they've figured out now to do in the last two elections, and they've done all through Europe too.

EHRENREICH: If men are declining so fast, why aren't there more women in the Senate?

TIGER: They should be if they want. I don't think it's necessarily a sign of progress to be in the Senate, given most of the people there.

EHRENREICH: How about CEOs? Women have made very little progress at the top of the corporate hierarchy.

TIGER: Again, that's a complicated question about who wants those jobs.

EHRENREICH: A lot of women do.

TIGER: Then they should try to get them. They're going to have as much trouble getting them as men do. Most men, virtually *all* men, don't get those jobs. Yes, there's a disproportionate number of men who have those jobs, because a disproportionate number of men have been in the system over the years. It will change. But not totally. A lot of women will simply not be prepared to do what men are prepared to do, which is essentially to deny themselves any inner private life in order to achieve this status.

EHRENREICH: Wait, wait. I hope you're not saying that the reason women aren't in those positions of power is that they just haven't tried. You're going to have trouble convincing a lot of women that men are on the decline when we haven't seen much of a change in the positions of power in the world. And so I would say, yeah, they may be declining, but not fast enough.

TIGER: Regarding the dramatic spots, the CEO positions, I agree. I don't think that's going to change very quickly. That will depend on people being willing to be unmarried, on women being unmarried.

EHRENREICH: Wait, why doesn't it depend on men being willing to be unmarried? We don't have celibate male CEOs.

TIGER: No, because they have wives.

EHRENREICH: So it would seem to me that men are still holding their own pretty well, that there's still quite a bit of advantage in being a man.

TIGER: I never said there was a disadvantage.

EHRENREICH: Well, I'm just pointing out that the decline hasn't been very dramatic.

TIGER: It hasn't been yet. But when I use the general term "males," I'm not so interested in the elite CEOs. I'm much more interested in the broad mass of the population and how people in general are living, much more interested in the one third of babies born to single mothers who, I think, get a raw deal at the outset—because there's no father. And that fact seems to me to be vital in any effort to look at the future.

HARRISON: Barbara, you mentioned your son. How do you think these changes affect him?

EHRENREICH: He's twenty-six and in a long-term relationship. He's not married. And the deal between him and his girlfriend is that when she's making more money she supports the two of them and when he's making more he supports the two of them. There doesn't seem to be any fuss about it. I think it'll be the same way if they have children, that they'll divide the child raising that way. I don't think he's unique to his generation in being pretty laid-back about the traditional male sex role. He's just not interested.

TIGER: I was once asked by a major magazine principally devoted to women to do a story about women married to men whom the women felt were not working hard enough. One man had gone off to Seattle to express himself, and another had decided to take up bookbinding. The men were doing just what they felt like doing. The women were *deeply* irritated. And I think one consequence of this kind of quest for non-traditional male identity is that a lot of women will say,

I'm not going to even bother getting married.

HARRISON: But Lionel, how could women possibly complain about men simply expressing themselves, when, in fact, that freedom is what women have worked for so hard for thirty years?

TIGER: I remember that one woman came to our place for dinner—and she's got a very important job—and the first thing she said was, "I can't work this hard anymore." Now, she had a job of such envious status that most people would be thrilled with it. What she was saying was that she wanted her spouse to actually do more than what he was doing. And he was doing the best he could. But that was her response. When you look at what's going on in Japan, in Germany, in France, in England, at the marriage patterns, you see real changes. In Japan, for example, the women have decided they simply cannot bear these men who go off to work and come back drunk at night and expect them to have dinner ready and all of that. The women are simply not getting married. And if they are getting married they're not having any children, so the Japanese government has been trying to stimulate the birth rate, and in Singapore they actually pay people with high IQs to have babies. It's a kind of high comedy. But the women are realizing that they have to be able to do it themselves. So one reason that there are more women in college than men is that they're working for two, because they're going to have to support children.

HARRISON: Barbara, if your son has a child with this woman, in or out of wedlock, do you expect that he'll support that child?

EHRENREICH: Well, he'll do his best, yes.

HARRISON: Do you *expect* him to support that child?

EHRENREICH: Well, with his girlfriend, yes. I would expect them both to support that child. Who else? You want me to do it?

HARRISON: What if he didn't?

EHRENREICH: And he just goofed off? Well, I guess I'd have to take that baby in.

TIGER: You know what? You're now part of the emerging kinship system.

EHRENREICH: I'm part of a family. It's a family responsibility.

TIGER: That's right, which is what marriage always has been. Kinship responsibility.

EHRENREICH: Why, what are you getting at? Are you saying my son is a no-good, a deadbeat?

HARRISON: I am trying to find the point of conflict. Earlier you referred to men being freed from their roles. If your son decided to move to Seattle and put earrings in his ears and do something crazy—

EHRENREICH: He already has earrings.

HARRISON: Okay, what I mean is, what if he did not want to support the child? At what point do you say, Your freedom ends—

EHRENREICH: Of course I believe in responsibility to children when they come along, but I was trying to talk very sympathetically toward men who reject this kind of role. I'm not, however, sympathetic to deadbeat dads. Kids are an absolute, lifelong responsibility. Spouses, girlfriends come and go. A kid, that's who the contract should be with. And I would say all this to my son if he were to be so rotten. But he's actually one of the most responsible people on earth.

TIGER: Obviously he's had a decent mother in this matter, but the fact is, for a lot of young men, their mothers don't know what to tell them.

EHRENREICH: What about the women, though? Women have spent far more of their time raising children, having children, and if any sex has been radically displaced from its traditional work, it's women. My great-grandmothers had four, five, six pregnancies. A tremendous investment of a woman's life. *This* is what has changed. Now, in my generation, it might be two or three pregnancies. In my daughter's, it'll be one or two. So if any sex has been quickly tossed out of what apparently was its prehistorically ordained job, it's females. So please don't now toss us out of the colleges and better jobs.

TIGER: You obviously are not getting the tone of the argument, because women can still do what they've always done.

EHRENREICH: Which is?

TIGER: Which is if they want, they can have a child or two. They're not exempt from or kept out of the reproductive system, and that's what's happening with a third of the babies in the industrial world.

EHRENREICH: Men aren't either. I'm saying both sexes have been pushed out of older roles.

TIGER: Oh, no question about it.

EHRENREICH: Women certainly more so, and all the more radically so without welfare. Now you can't even say, Oh, I think I'm going to have a baby and let the government support it.

TIGER: But women still have the opportunity to experience a good part of the life cycle. I see the life cycle as something you really want to protect, in that you want to give every organism the opportunity to do as full a range of its endowed genetic capabilities as possible. In this sense I have a zookeeper's mentality. You want to create a societal zoo in which the conditions are as close to the evolutionary nature of the animals' conditions as you possibly can. Therefore I think that forcing people not to have children is wrong. I think it's morally wrong. It's biologically wrong also. And we evaluate zoos by how well the animals reproduce in them.

EHRENREICH: But there's no need for us to keep reproducing at a rapid clip. From the vantage point of economic elites, there's even a surplus of humans on earth.

TIGER: No, there's not a surplus.

EHRENREICH: But the population is high. You can't

so easily convince the elite in some particular country that their businesses will come to a halt if they don't campaign to provide charity for starving babies. We have a trend away from social welfare, toward dismantling it, because there's no reason on the part of the elite to keep those little children alive. This is what's new, I would say, about the human situation. We have overfilled the earth, or at least filled it up pretty well. And some of the visions of family that you have, which I sense that you are nostalgic for, belong to a more sparsely populated earth, and are implicitly pro-natalist.

TIGER: The earth that we're talking about, the industrial earth, is becoming, in fact, more and more sparsely populated. The birth rates all through Europe and Russia are declining, and Italy will have about half its population in sixty years if the current birth rate stays as it is.

EHRENREICH: But the overall global population is expected to go up for several more decades.

TIGER: That's a conjectural issue, because then the basic political question becomes immigration.

EHRENREICH: Huh? My point is that biologically this is a new situation. Maybe there was a time when women had to stay at home or at the hearth, and produce baby after baby, and just fill up the earth. God said, Go forth and multiply, and we took that commandment very seriously, this species. That's been done. You could still argue against feminists in the nineteenth century and say, Well, if you want to have these jobs and do this and that, what's going to happen to the species? Now we can say, as women, Wait a minute, we did our work, we overstocked the earth with human beings. We can take a rest now. We can be gay if we want. We can be asexual. The change may be terrifying in some ways, but it's also wonderful.

TIGER: As I mentioned, in many of the European countries and eventually in the United States, absent Hispanic immigration, populations will begin to decline. It doesn't feel as if it ever will, but there is a declining birth rate in many of the European countries, and it's serious enough for governments to pay attention.

EHRENREICH: My point is that for the first time on earth, that's something to applaud.

TIGER: Yes, except that in terms of the life cycles of the men and women involved, it is a form of sentimentally enforced infertility. Look at fertility clinics now, which are among the most prosperous part of the medical industry because people have delayed having children. A community enjoys itself better if it engages in reproduction, simply because reproduction is so rich, such an important part of life.

EHRENREICH: Right, but it's no longer a necessity.

TIGER: I never said it was.

EHRENREICH: I know. I'm making a huge, sweeping biological point.

TIGER: I wouldn't dream of doing that.

EHRENREICH: (Laughing) Come on. I feel comfortable making huge sweeping biological points with you because you have done so much of it in your life—and very intriguingly. But the fact is that now women can live different ways. That is the biological turning point. The burden is not on every woman to keep her womb stuffed with the next baby.

TIGER: Then the question remains—and you're rephrasing the question that's implicit in our discussion—what the hell do the males do?

LEVITTOWN IN THE PALEOLITHIC ERA

EHRENREICH: You know, Lionel, it's funny to me that you haven't mentioned the crisis for males that took place about 12,000 years ago—just on the eve of the transition to agriculture, as hunting was ceasing to be a viable way of life, and largely, I would conjecture, because of depleted game stocks in the world. What men did at that point was pretty scary. They invented war. They found something for themselves to do. It was glorious, it flattered their egos, those of them that lived through it. Then there were those poor guys who had to make the much less glamorous adaptation to pushing a plow, to agriculture. I'm just saying you haven't mentioned the first big decline of males 12,000 years ago.

TIGER: It was a decline, but it involved a change. That crisis of movement from hunting and gathering to agriculture and pastoralism generated all our moral systems. The Lord is my Shepherd, the Buddhist ethic—all these are the ethics of small farmers and shepherds, part of an effort to deal with precisely the problem of what the hell do we do with the males. So we make up a religion, we tell them that they're going to have to do this on pain of hell. And if they happen to get involved sexually with someone and a baby is born, then they're married de facto, full stop, end of story. All the organized religions come out of that crisis of transition. Warfare, yes. Warfare happened, however, before, and it happens in the chimps.

EHRENREICH: The first evidence of war, as opposed to individual homicides, is from around 12,000 years ago, which is long after our evolutionary divergence from chimps.

TIGER: That's when the population started to get large enough.

EHRENREICH: Maybe. But I want to take this opportunity to take issue with the whole view of gender and evolution you have been associated with for decades: the "man the hunter" theory, in which the males are the hunters and the females just wait around for them to bring the meat home. I think my real anger at you, Lionel, is that—I

have to say it—is that by creating this mythical view of our past—and I don't think you did it all that convincingly—you made it impossible for anybody to talk interestingly about prehistory for a long, long time.

TIGER: I did this?

EHRENREICH: Yep. I'm blaming you and a few other sociobiologists who said, here's how it was millions and hundreds of thousands and tens of thousands of years ago, this is what it was like in the gender sense, here is what the two sexes did. It turned a lot of women off from looking back at our evolutionary history. And it's not well founded, not at all. That whole "man the hunter" idea is a strange vision of human evolution. For one thing, it would make us the only predatory species in which only one sex hunted. Very odd.

TIGER: What about the chimps?

EHRENREICH: Female chimps hunt, too.

TIGER: But hardly at all. Occasionally and opportunistically, but they don't go out and—

EHRENREICH: But the male chimps don't either. They are not exactly a predatory species.

TIGER: But they do conduct warfare.

EHRENREICH: Not anywhere near as intelligently—or as often—as ants do. My point is that we are beginning to understand that hunting, until about 15,000 years ago, was probably a communal activity. It was not done by small bands of guys going off and leaving the gals back at the campsite. It was done by a whole community driving herd animals over a cliff, into a cul-de-sac, into a net (a net often made by women, we assume, but we don't really know). So, you, Lionel, gave us a very funny picture. You gave us a picture of evolution in which only one sex was really being acted on by natural selection, and that was the male sex. Because males were hunting, the male sex was naturally selected for intelligence, for the ability to cooperate with others, for everything.

TIGER: My central argument in *Men in Groups* was that hunting was cooperative among humans, who do cooperate to acquire food, unlike the other primates, who do not. In *Imperial Animal*, Fox and I asserted that it was biologically better to give than to receive. But the hunters were and largely are male. It was women who were selecting the hunters. That's how prestige in sexual selection goes. You're accusing me of having made an argument based on a relatively small database, which I concede, but I wasn't there, and neither were you; you don't know who was making nets, you don't know who was killing the animals. The genetic evidence we have shows that this hunting business went on for nearly the entire history of our species. At the time of Christ half the people were still hunting and gathering. Was there a difference between men and women and their hunting patterns? If a bunch of guys are going out hunting and you, the woman, are carrying a bowling ball in the hot tropical sun, namely a baby, are you going to go with them? No.

EHRENREICH: You're not following my distinction between the communal strategy of hunting and the stalking strategy of hunting. This is important, because the stalking of individual animals probably becomes more important only as the supply of animals begins to shrink—more recently than 15,000, 12,000 years ago—on the verge of the Neolithic revolution. All I'm saying is that "man the hunter" is basically an exciting macho fantasy of human evolution.

TIGER: It's a macho fantasy to hunt a pig? Those are your words.

EHRENREICH: Yeah, they're my words! Because *your* words really shut off any useful discussion of gender and human evolution. Because I share your respect for biology. I *do* believe there is a human nature. I do believe there are some things about us that we share that come from that long prehistory. I further believe that some of them are ill-served by, or contradicted by, the arrangements in which we now live. Not just men or women—I'm talking about all humans. For example, I think we're a sociable species. Sociality is central to us. You created the term "male bonding." You threw us way off the track with that. It's not male bonding that's at issue, it's human sociality. It's a desire to bond with other people in generous, exciting, adventurous, convivial ways. We may not be set up to live in a socially isolated capitalist society. It would be important to talk about that. I personally resent the fact that I can't even open up the subject of human evolution with my feminist friends without wasting half an hour refuting you.

TIGER: Look, I'm either flattered or deeply depressed by the power I retroactively had in these matters. It comes as a great surprise to me. But let's assume that you're correct and that I had this negative impact, along with a few other chums. I'm certainly not alone in this malefaction. We were dealing with the comparative primate data such as they were, which show remarkable sex differences. When we do a genotype of humans and chimps, we're just like them, except for possibly as few as fifty genes—fifty genes out of a hundred thousand. So you cannot then tell me that this Paleolithic history is in the realm of nostalgia alone.

EHRENREICH: Of course, I'm not. I'm agreeing with you on that.

TIGER: Maybe some of us were a little intrepid in trying to specify these ideas rather early on, but then what was the alternative? To go on yammering about sex roles and gender and all of these contemporary sorts of things?

EHRENREICH: But you essentially made up a story. And what made it so suspect, even to those of us who didn't have a grip on the data, is that the picture you created of prehistory looks so much like

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Levittown in 1957. The guys went out in the morning and worked, the women stayed at home with the babies. That made it suspect to some of us right from the start.

TIGER: You may have been unduly constrained by Levittown, because if you also look at the hill towns of Italy 3,000 or 5,000 or 7,000 years ago, you'd find that the men would go out into the fields and the women would remain at the hearth.

EHRENREICH: What made it suspect is that it looked all too much like you were finding Paleolithic justifications for the hierarchy that existed in 1957.

TIGER: I'm sorry, Barbara, I don't think that's a strong argument. I can appreciate—

EHRENREICH: No, it's not a strong argument. It's just a reason for suspicion. I'm saying it would have been odd if people 25,000 years ago had sex role relationships very much like people in Levittown in 1957.



LUIGI PELLETTIERI

HARRISON: If that's true, Barbara, how would you redescribe 25,000 years ago? What were the differences between men and women then?

EHRENREICH: Well, we don't know how much difference there was. You'd have to be pretty foolish to extrapolate back to 25,000 years ago.

TIGER: Why?

EHRENREICH: Or you could be Lionel and do it. But I would not. I would say that there's reason to believe, as I already said, that the economy was based on communal hunting, which requires everybody in the group. You need the pack.

TIGER: Barbara, that's not what happens with contemporary hunter-gatherers.

EHRENREICH: Of course not. Contemporary hunter-gatherers live in a world that's been depleted of game. Today, you have to stalk individual animals.

TIGER: I understand—

EHRENREICH: It's my turn to explain all of prehistory, Lionel, you've *had* your turn. I'll give you a guess, a speculation. That era of communal hunting comes to an end when the game supply is diminishing globally—for whatever reasons, perhaps because of human hunting. Then humans change sometime, much closer to now than 25,000 years ago, maybe 15,000 years ago, 12,000 years ago, to the other hunting strategy, which is hunting by stalking. That requires quiet, and, no, you can't be carrying a baby. That's when hunting gets more specialized, with bands of men. That and the Neolithic revolution really transform the relationship between the sexes. For one thing, pro-natalism enters in with the Neolithic. You need those babies to be field hands. So I would say the downfall for both sexes may have come with that transition. We got locked into a mode of production that only became worse and more constraining with industrialization.

TIGER: Again, none of us was there. I'm not so displeased as you appear to be with retrodiction; that is, by looking at what happens now and describing what might have happened in the past. Or looking at a contemporary chimp and asking, What is the chimp likely to have been 50,000 years ago? I think there's some genuine continuity between those two figures—chimp then, chimp now. I think the same is true with humans. And if one looks at what men now do recreationally, they hunt and fish. Generally women do not. Some women do, but the overwhelming numbers of hunters and fisherpeople are men. They do sports. They pay attention to sports. They do the proto-aggression sort of thing that one would expect a captive chimp to do.

EHRENREICH: But whenever women have gotten a chance to hunt and fish, and when those things have been appealing, socially prestigious things to do, they have done it. And women are hunting and participating in sports more and more now. You're neglecting the increasing participation of women not only in sports but as sports fans. The number of women who watch the NFL is amazing. As restrictions have been lifted off women, we become boxers, we become—

HARRISON: Let me interrupt you right there. Boxing seems to be a useful compression of everything

Self Portrait by Harris Diamant. Courtesy Ricco/Maresca Gallery, New York

we're talking about, since it's combat. A woman friend recently said to me, "Women are boxers now. We should pay attention to this." And my response was that when the first woman kills another woman boxing, then I'll believe that women are boxers. Perhaps that is a prototypically male point of view.

EHRENREICH: Perhaps, but Lionel just said we can extrapolate back from what people do as hobbies to what they did in the Paleolithic. I'm saying that once you give women a chance, they do some amazing things. I would not have predicted, twenty years ago, that women would be so eager to get into combat in the military. Another little touchy subject we—

TIGER: They're still not, as a matter of fact, if you ask the ones who are actually in the military. It's fine if you ask all the theorists.

EHRENREICH: But women have been beating on the door, they want the military promotions.

TIGER: Who? Who? Who? Who? Who?

EHRENREICH: Female officers, for example. And remember that women are already allowed in combat in two branches of the service—the Navy and the Air Force. Anyway, my point is that as barriers have been removed from women's lives, things happen that even I, as a very feminist, liberated woman, would not have imagined. So if you're going to say, Well, in 1973 men liked sports and women liked needlepoint, and we can extrapolate back to 25,000 years ago from that, I'd say, no, no way.

TIGER: I'm not suggesting that these differences are so absolute you will never find a man doing anything a woman does and vice versa. That's simply not an acceptable argument. But just because you will find some women playing sports is not then necessarily to say that all of those differences that may have existed in the past are therefore theoretical.

EHRENREICH: Well, I'm just questioning your little methodology of going back from what people like to do now to what they were doing 25,000 years ago.

TIGER: What you call my "little methodology" has to do with an effort to understand the nature of the species from what it actually chooses to do. It seems to me that there is a kind of listening that one does, as you did in your report on working in restaurants ["Nickel-and-Dimed," January], that you can do only if you're not making judgments. What I'm talking about here is a species-wide ethnography based on a commitment to the notion that human beings are more or less all the same, that there are some differences between men and women that tend to recur. You will get a lot of women at bullfights, but you will get more men interested in *being* bullfighters. So to try to invalidate a broad argument about the nature of a reproductive species and its sex roles on the basis of who goes to NFL games doesn't seem to be an appropriate position.

EHRENREICH: Right, but to make any arguments on the basis of what people have been doing, according to their sex, for the last twenty, thirty, forty years, is also ridiculous. A woman couldn't *be* a woman bullfighter in 1940. In many parts of the country a woman couldn't walk down the street smoking a cigarette. Women have been so constrained in so many societies, and still are in many societies, that I would not want to extrapolate from their behavior in these sexist societies to whatever might be "natural" to us.

THE MATRILINEAR MILLENNIUM?

HARRISON: Given that things are changing, are we now arriving, Barbara, at some more natural state of opportunity for women to be who they happen to be? And if so, what is that? Are they really almost the same as men, except for a few different sex-organ doohickeys?

EHRENREICH: I'm arguing that the big biological change at the moment is that we have populated the earth, we have done our job on that. As women, we can say that each of us individually does not have to bear children. That opens up all kinds of freedoms.

HARRISON: So if your son says to you, "My girlfriend is just like me. We're the same, except for the doohickeys," then you would agree.

EHRENREICH: Sure.

TIGER: If he comes to you and says, "Mom, she wants to have a child and I don't," is that fine?

EHRENREICH: Sure.

TIGER: Or if he says, "Look, I would really love to have a child and she doesn't want to have one. Shall we split?"

EHRENREICH: I don't really see the relevance of the question.

TIGER: I'm interested in how your theory pertains to your interest in life.

EHRENREICH: You mean, as a potential grandma?

TIGER: Yes.

EHRENREICH: Oh, as a potential grandma. I see, I've got to get my genes reproduced?

TIGER: No, no.

EHRENREICH: Tell him to go out and find another vessel, huh?

TIGER: Well, you're putting it in a rather unkindly manner. You might actually enjoy babies.

EHRENREICH: Oh, I love babies. With all that genetic programming, practically anybody who drools attracts me.

TIGER: Okay, so now we're not talking about the selfish intrusion of the Barbara Ehrenreich gene in to the third millennium but rather just your own enjoyment of life as a member of the species. You'd obviously tell me you'd like to have a grand-

child just because it's entertaining. Again, forgive me for personalizing it. But you did start it. If the barrier in your son's choice was this particular female, you might have a special attitude toward her, only because she was interfering with what you saw as a natural grace point of your life cycle, which is to have a grandchild.

EHRENREICH: What a wicked, evil mother-in-law I would be! What an awful woman! "Dump that bitch because she's not producing my grandchildren"? No, I couldn't possibly say that. It's none of my business. Obviously. Plus, the bright side of our biological time is that there are plenty of other sources of satisfaction to me in my life, and I will not be a lonely old lady if I don't have grandchildren. Now, it would be a wonderful thing to have grandchildren, but I also have an awful lot to do, and I won't be able to baby-sit them everyday, those grandchildren. That's what I'm saying: the gene pool's been stocked, well stocked. The terrifying thing is the lack of a collective social commitment to the children who already exist on this earth.

HARRISON: I want to ask each of you to offer your picture of the future. Where are we going?

TIGER: We'll see great attention paid to boys' academic success and career opportunities, because it's quite clear that in many labor forces the females are superior.

More and more children will be born out of wedlock, as currently exists in the black community, and more and more women in the rest of society won't assume that they're going to marry. They will just assume that they will live their lives themselves, or with their children or with other women or alone. The question still remains, What about the males? And here, I think, we will continue to see what we're currently seeing, which is a decline in male contribution to the labor force; that is, the number of hours men are working keeps going down, and they retire earlier and earlier. Men will occupy their time with sports and pornography. Society will be very different when many people grow up without fathers around. The conviviality of kinship is likely to be much less salient in people's lives, and they will continue to have to create vigorous, vivid emotional experiences out of public experiences such as television and movies and the Internet. Celebrities then become the surrogate family members. People will live more of their emotional lives in symbolic terms. And as for private sexuality, one gets the impression that young people realize that sexuality is very, very demanding and can lead to a whole series of commitments that people are not ready to accept or understand very well. They find it difficult to contemplate a whole lifetime of doing something like raising children. So we may find, in that sense, a decline in long-term intimacy. Maybe we'll see an increase in virtuoso intimacy for short periods of time, but not that kind of long-term commitment. In this sense, I guess, as a citizen, I have a real question about what happens in such communities with few children. We end up a very wealthy society with a lot of people spending a lot of money flying to Key West.

EHRENREICH: Someone—Karl Marx?—once said that the possibilities for the future are always socialism and barbarism. There's a nightmare future and there's a better possibility, but the nightmare future is that the poor children of single mothers don't get cared for. They become like the street children in Rio de Janeiro whom cops shoot for sport. They become throw-away children, there's no collective public commitment to them from fathers or governments, and the whole situation gets uglier and uglier. Who knows? Maybe they'll be raised to provide organs for transplant to people in the Northern Hemisphere. And then, as for your young men, they can be soaked up by paramilitary groups, or, in the more industrialized places, they can become soccer hooligans. So that would be the nightmare world: nobody taking responsibility, and militarism as our major collective endeavor. Not only for men, I should say, because I think one very dramatic change that I would emphasize in recent years is that the woman warrior has appeared on the scene. Women arm themselves. Women are action heroes in films. They too may have a militaristic response to a crumbling world, a world without the old economic or biological certainties.

But then, of course, we have the option of a better world, and my hope would be that we do develop a collective responsibility to those people who are on the earth now. In my utopia I would expect that marriage would change a lot. Couples would make a contract, not with each other, because I think these relationships don't last forever, but make a contract to be co-parents forever. I think we might formalize that and maybe make some beautiful ceremonies around the co-parenting contract. I would also want to see people get less of their need for sociality derived just through kin and the immediate family, which reflects the sad fact that we often have no other form of community in our lives. In general, I would like to see us getting much more satisfaction from other people in all kinds of ways—forms of conviviality that are not really permitted, or not available to us in this very fragmented, highly competitive culture we live in. And it would be great for women too. We can have babies or not, we can climb mountains, we can snuggle by the fireplace. Do all those things. And men can climb the mountains with us, and snuggle with us too. ■

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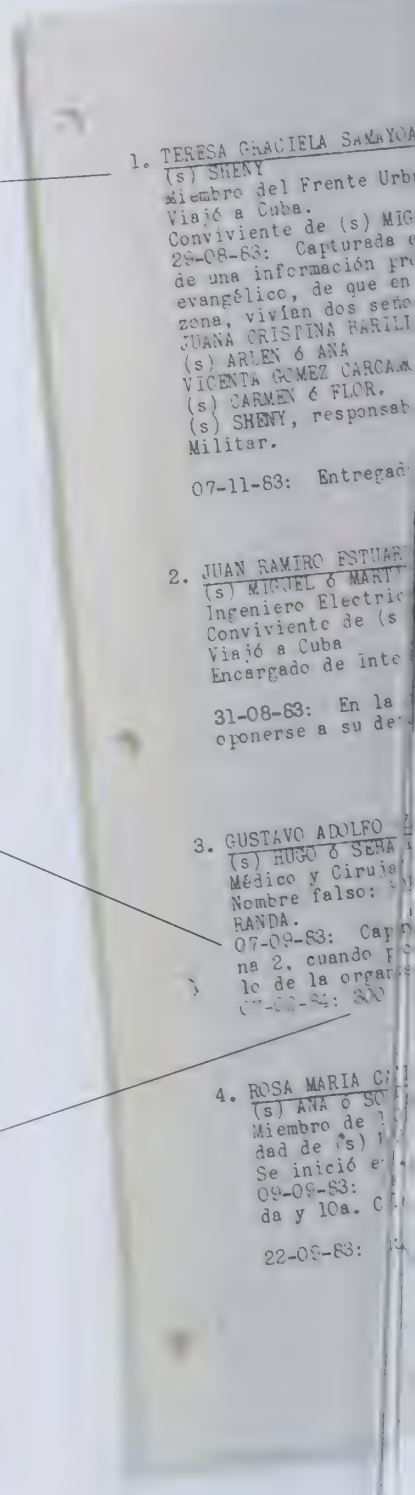
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KNELSON

DEATH S

Looking into the secret archives of Gu

During Guatemala's 35-year civil war, which ended in 1996, the term "to disappear" had a special significance: it meant abduction, torture, and execution at the hands of the Guatemalan security forces. By the time a peace accord was signed, over 150,000 people were dead, and some 40,000 Guatemalan citizens had vanished, leaving family and friends to grieve without even a corpse to bury. The Guatemalan government has consistently denied knowledge of its victims' fates; it can do so no longer. This document, smuggled out of the military's own archives in February just two days before a Guatemalan "truth commission" published its findings, lists 183 names (of which Teresa Graciela Samayoa Morales's is the first), each carefully catalogued in what amounts to a daily log of death squad activities. This list is the only known record of its kind, an accounting from inside the secret files of Guatemala's killing machine.



The death list begins in 1983, three weeks after General Oscar Mejía Víctores seized power in the midst of the army's genocidal massacres of rural Mayan villagers in the early 1980s. While the slaughter continued in the countryside, Mejía Víctores ushered in a new era of selective violence aimed at urban guerrillas. Military and police surveillance targeted suspected subversives in Guatemala City, and the number of those abducted by *desconocidos* ("unknown men," a code word used by the press to avoid directly accusing the government) soared. A secret 1986 U.S. State Department report noted that in September 1983, Mejía Víctores's first full month in power, 183 kidnappings were reported, "the fourth highest monthly figure in our study." Gustavo Adolfo Meza Soberanis, a 26-year-old surgeon, was one of them, abducted on September 7, 1983.

According to this code, which appears throughout the document, Meza Soberanis was executed on February 7, 1984, five months after his abduction. The document lists 100 other executions and contains many such codes, which were used by the military to maintain a veneer of deniability in case their records ever came to light. Meza Soberanis's body was never found, and human rights reports still list him among the disappeared. His 23-year-old sister, Mayra, a psychology student at the University of San Carlos, was abducted on September 8. The few who escaped, such as Alvaro Sosa Ramos (no. 87 on the list), are consistent in their descriptions of the ordeal. Victims were taken to interrogation centers on military bases, in police stations, or safehouses and tortured. Sosa Ramos described his experience to human rights advocates in Canada, who reported that he was "brutally beaten, whipped, deprived of water, tortured with electric shocks, and hung by his feet for long periods of time. He could hear the screams of others being tortured nearby."

D DIARY

ɔureaucracy of murder, *by Kate Doyle*



The photographs next to each name were torn from passports, driver's licenses, or official identification cards and glued onto the page. Most are black-and-white, a few are in color, and many have a fragment of an official stamp still visible in one corner. Some victims, like Samayoa Morales, have more than one photograph next to their names, older faces pasted over younger, possibly indicating that pictures previously stolen were used to identify targets before they were captured. The text contains information of interest to the government: alleged membership in rebel groups, pseudonyms, links to other suspected subversives, details about the victim's abduction, and her fate. For most of the relatives of these 183 women and men, this log will be the first confirmation that Guatemalan security forces abducted and murdered their family members.



Juan Ramiro Estuardo Orozco López, an electrical engineer who lived with Samayoa Morales (alias Sheny), was killed two days after her disappearance while resisting his own abduction. His connection to another victim is not unusual; the list contains lovers and spouses, mothers and daughters, sisters, brothers, fellow students, and colleagues. There are 24 women and 159 men, ranging in age from 81 to 12. Ten victims were professors or students at the University of San Carlos, a frequent target of death squad activity. Nine were labor activists. Others were doctors, lawyers, merchants, a carpenter, a housewife. According to the document, every one of them belonged to a guerrilla faction; the military assumed that anyone who worked for social change or who was active in leftist politics was a subversive.



This victim, Rosa María Castillo Samayoa, was seized off a street on September 9, 1984. Thirteen days later, she was turned over to another unit, the "D.I." (Dirección de Inteligencia), the Guatemalan army's notorious intelligence section. Although it is unclear which branch of the Guatemalan army carried out the crimes documented here (the typewritten sheets bear no letterhead or signatures), the central role of Guatemalan military intelligence in urban "counter-terror" operations is well known and well documented. The log was probably generated by the Archivos, a clandestine intelligence unit controlled by the president that operated in Guatemala City against suspected subversives and frequently coordinated the actions of other military and police intelligence units. Declassified U.S. documents from the time repeatedly point to the role of the Archivos in political violence, and its involvement in kidnapping, torture, and assassination was so blatant that Mejía Víctores moved to shut it down in 1985, though the unit survived and went on to torture and kill well into the 1990s.

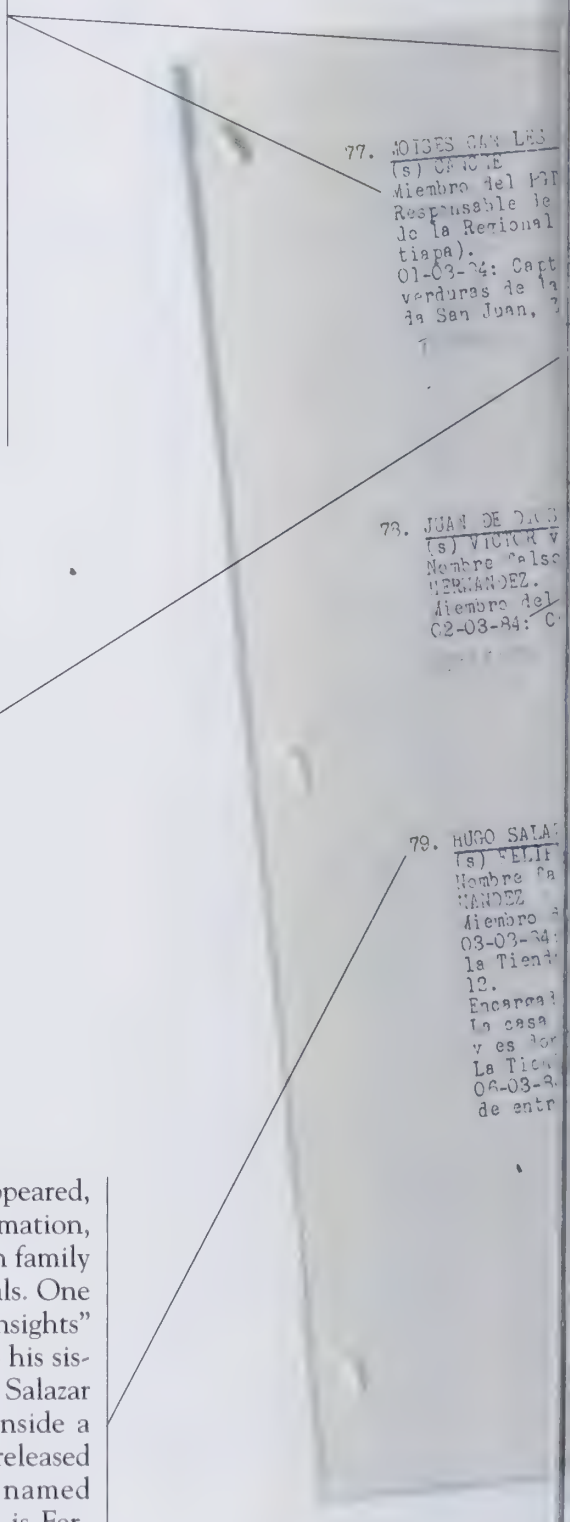


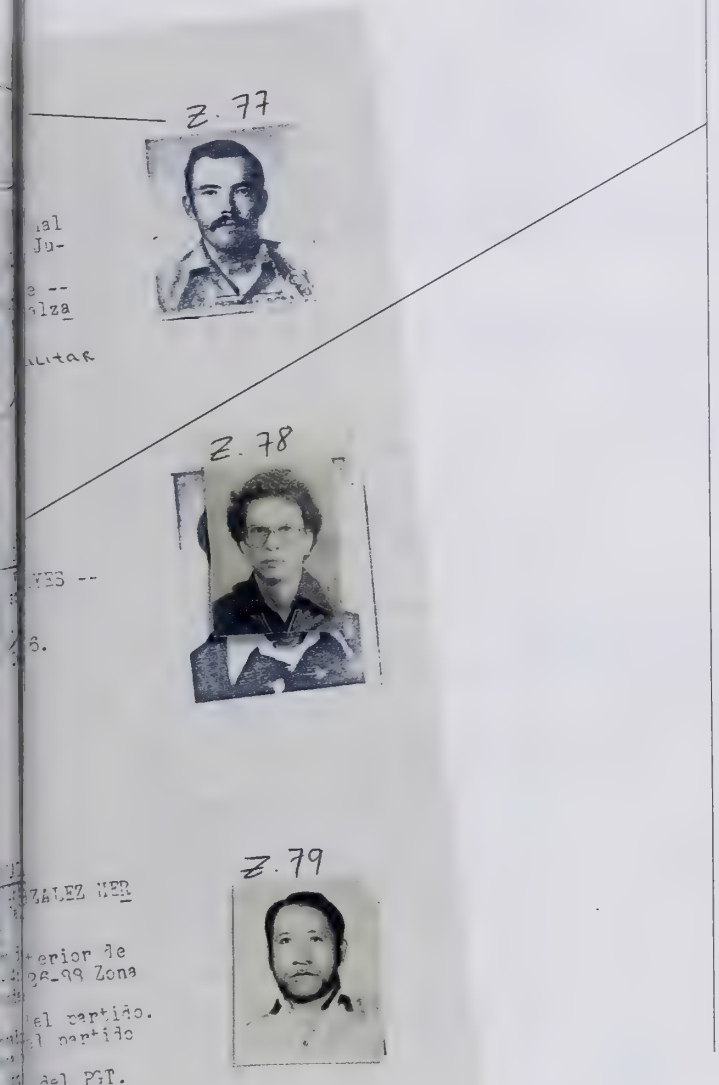
ute Doyle is an analyst of U.S. policy in Latin [illegible] and director of The Guatemala oject for the National Security Archive, an [illegible] research institute in Washington D.C.

One of the clearest indications that this death list is the product of an intelligence unit is the classification of victims according to their alleged guerrilla links. Moisés Canales Godoy is coded "Z," for Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo (PGT). Members of the PGT, Guatemala's Communist Party, had long been a target of the death squads and were the first known victims of a mass disappearance in Latin America. In March 1966, some 33 PGT leaders and their associates were kidnapped, tortured, and killed. The Guatemalan government denied involvement, but, in fact, CIA and U.S. police advisers helped create and train the joint military and police "task force" that carried out the murders. The Clinton Administration recently declassified a detailed set of notes given to the CIA by the Guatemalan military that were taken during the torture sessions of four of the victims. This case initiated the use of clandestine abduction as an integral part of Guatemala's counterinsurgency, a practice soon adopted by other countries fighting the "enemy within"—El Salvador, Honduras, Argentina, and Chile, among others.

"Working in the Jutiapa military zone." Although most of the disappeared listed here died within weeks of their capture, their bodies probably dumped in secret grave sites in or near the capital, nineteen were moved to other military bases around the country for further interrogation. In rare instances, a prisoner deemed particularly valuable was sent to a base and kept there indefinitely, often in an area where he had previously lived, with the expectation that he would provide information about local insurgent networks. According to a secret cable written by a U.S. defense attaché in 1994, "This technique has been used by the Guatemalan army since the beginning of this conflict and continues to be used today." In exchange for working with the army against his old guerrilla unit, a prisoner such as Canales Godoy would be permitted to enlist in the army and receive a salary; later he might be assigned odd jobs around the base.

Given the brutality of the torture applied to the disappeared, it is not surprising that many of them provided information, both real and fabricated, about colleagues, friends, even family members. Indeed, the document is replete with betrayals. One man is murdered after having been "placed in the gunsights" (*puesto al tiro*) by another; a brother leads the killers to his sister; a son to his father. Number 79 in the file, Hugo Salazar Aspiac—alias *El Sapo* ("the Toad")—was captured inside a shop in Guatemala's Zone 12 on March 3, 1984, and released three days later after having informed on a man named "Quique." Quique also appears in the document. He is Fernando Gálvez Martínez (no. 82), captured on March 5 inside a Pollo Campero, a popular fast-food restaurant. A handwritten notation at the bottom of his entry indicates that he was killed nine months later.



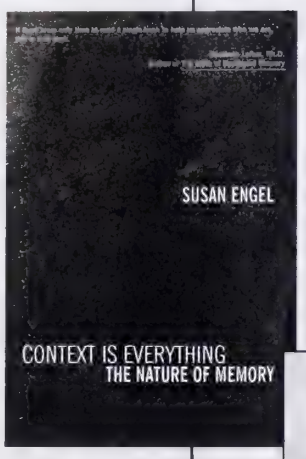


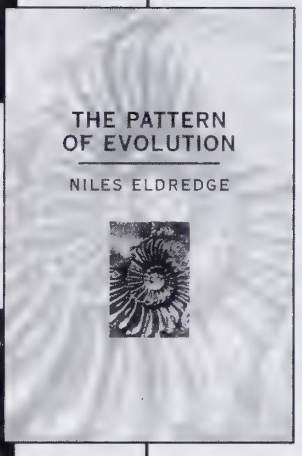
In February, when Guatemala's Historical Clarification Commission released its report on the conflict, it emphasized the role of the United States in backing the security forces and their "criminal counterinsurgency." U.S. involvement began in 1954, thirty years before these abductions, when fear about Communist influence on the democratically elected government of President Jacobo Arbenz prompted a CIA-engineered coup. In 1977, reports of atrocities convinced the Carter Administration to suspend military aid, but Ronald Reagan's commitment to "roll back" Communism in Central America led to its resumption. In a secret State Department report submitted to Congress in February 1984, exactly one month before the capture of Juan de Diós Samayoa Velásquez, the administration argued that Guatemala's human rights situation had improved, and that renewed security assistance "could act as a catalyst for further improvements." The death list tells a different story: in January 1984 alone, 25 of those listed here were kidnapped, 13 killed, and 7 passed on to other units for further interrogation. Even Reagan's conservative ambassador to Guatemala took notice. Two days before the State Department report was issued, Ambassador Frederic Chapin sent a cable to Washington decrying the "horrible human rights realities in Guatemala." Chapin wrote that "we must come to some resolution in policy terms. Either we can overlook the record and emphasize the strategic concept or we can pursue a higher moral path. We simply cannot flip flop back and forth between the two possible positions." In 1990, George Bush again cut military aid after a U.S. citizen was murdered by Guatemalan soldiers, though covert aid by the CIA continued. Only after the war ended did the United States acknowledge the damage it had done. In March, President Clinton surprised his hosts and the audience at Guatemala's National Palace of Culture by publicly expressing regret for four decades of U.S. support for "military forces or intelligence units which engaged in violent and widespread repression."

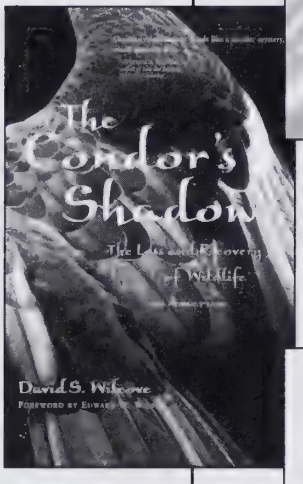
This is page 22 of one 53-page document; thousands more presumably lie buried in the army's secret archives. Mass murderers, from the Nazis and the Khmer Rouge to the Guatemalan military, seem to require careful recordkeeping as a way to dehumanize their victims, transforming them into instruments of a greater ideological project. And so they fashion a bureaucracy of death; they catalogue the abducted, inventory the atrocities, and issue productivity reports. In Guatemala, the exhumation of the truth has been an exercise in injustice: human rights groups have filed reports, survivors have testified, independent forensics experts have unearthed mass graves, yet not a single military officer has been prosecuted. On the subject of its criminal past, the Guatemalan military remains mute, assured of its impunity. Now, in this document—a terrifying record of abduction and murder—the victims of Guatemala's death squads bear silent witness to the truth.

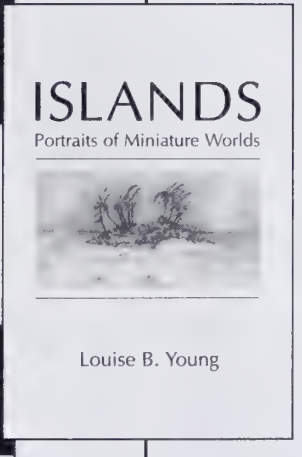
Just think.

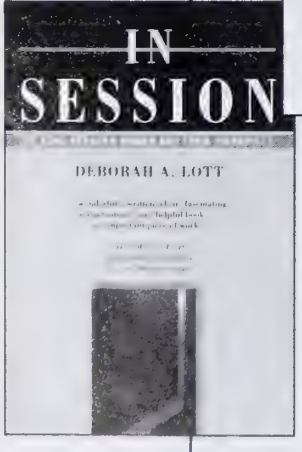
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The Diaries of Adam and Eve

(TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL MSS.)

By Mark Twain

(Line breaks indicate omitted material)

MONDAY.—This new creature with the long hair is a good deal in the way. It is always hanging around and following me about. I don't like this; I am not used to company. I wish it would stay with the other animals. . . . Cloudy today, wind in the east; think we shall have rain. . . . *We?* Where did I get that word? . . . I remember now,—the new creature uses it.



TUESDAY.—Been examining the great waterfall. It is the finest thing on the estate, I think. The new creature calls it Niagara Falls—why, I am sure I do not know. Says it *looks* like Niagara Falls. That is not a reason; it is mere waywardness and imbecility. I get no chance to name anything myself. The new creature names everything that comes along, before I can get in a protest. And always that same pretext is offered—it *looks* like the thing. There is the dodo, for instance. Says the moment one looks at it one sees at a glance that it "looks like a dodo." It will have to keep that name, no doubt. It wearies me to fret about it, and it does no good, anyway. Dodo! It looks no more like a dodo than I do.

WEDNESDAY.—Built me a shelter against the rain, but could not have it to myself in peace. The new creature intruded. When I tried to put it out it shed water out of the holes it looks with, and wiped it away with the back of its paws, and made a noise such as some of the other animals make when they are in distress. I wish it would not talk; it is always talking. That sounds like a cheap fling at the poor creature, a slur; but I do not mean it so. I have never heard the human voice before, and any new and strange sound intruding itself here upon the solemn hush of these dreaming solitudes offends my ear and seems a false note. And this new sound is so close to me; it is right at my shoulder, right at my ear, first on one side and then on the other, and I am used only to sounds that are more or less distant from me.

FRIDAY.—The naming goes recklessly on, in spite of anything I can do. I had a very good name for the estate, and it was musical and pretty—GARDEN-OF-EDEN. Privately, I continue to call it that, but not any longer publicly. The new creature says it is all woods and rocks and scenery, and therefore has no resemblance to a garden. Says it *looks* like a park, and does not look like anything *but* a park. Consequently, without consulting me, it has been new-named—NIAGARA FALLS PARK. This is sufficiently high-handed, it seems to me. And already there is a sign up:

KEEP OFF THE GRASS

My life is not as happy as it was.

SATURDAY.—The new creature eats too much fruit. We are going to run short, most likely. "We" again—that is *its* word; mine too, now, from hearing it so much. Good deal of fog this morning. I do not go out in the fog myself. The new creature does. It goes out in all weathers,

Illustrations by Jack Molloy

and stomps right in with its muddy feet. And talks. It used to be so pleasant and quiet here.

SUNDAY.—Pulled through. This day is getting to be more and more trying. It was selected and set apart last November as a day of rest. I already had six of them per week, before. This morning I found the new creature trying to shod apples out of that forbidden tree.

MONDAY.—The new creature says its name is Eve. That is all right, I have no objections. Says it is to call it by when I want it to come. I said it was superfluous, then. The word evidently raised me in its respect; and indeed it is a large, good word, and will bear repetition. It says it is not an It, it is a She. This is probably doubtful; yet it is all one to me: what she is were nothing to me if she would but go by herself and not talk.

SATURDAY.—I escaped last Tuesday night, and travelled two days, and built me another shelter, in a secluded place, and obliterated my tracks as well as I could, but she hunted me out by means of a beast which she has tamed and calls a wolf, and came making that pitiful noise again, and shedding that water out of the places she looks with. I was obliged to return with her, but will presently emigrate again, when occasion offers. She engages herself in many foolish things: among others, trying to study out why the animals called lions and tigers live on grass and flowers, when, as she says, the sort of teeth they wear would indicate that they were intended to eat each other. This is foolish, because to do that would be to kill each other, and that would introduce what, as I understand it, is called "death"; and death, as I have been told, has not yet entered the Park. Which is a pity, on some accounts.

SUNDAY.—Pulled through.

THURSDAY.—She told me she was made out of a rib taken from my body. This is at least doubtful, if not more than that. I have not missed any rib. . . . She is in much trouble about the buzzard: says grass does not agree with it; is afraid she can't raise it; thinks it was intended to live on decayed flesh. The buzzard must get along the best it can with what is provided. We cannot overturn the whole scheme to accommodate the buzzard.

TUESDAY.—She has taken up with a snake now. The other animals are glad, for she was always experimenting with them and bothering them, and I am glad, because the snake talks, and this enables me to get a rest.

FRIDAY.—She says the snake advises her to try the fruit of that tree, and says the result will be a great and fine and noble education. I told her there would be another result, sure—it would introduce death into the world. That was a mistake—it had been better to keep the remark to myself; it only gave her an idea—she could save the sick buzzard, and furnish fresh meat to the despondent lions and tigers. I advised her to keep away from the tree. She said she wouldn't. I foresee trouble. Will emigrate.

WEDNESDAY.—I have had a variegated time. I escaped that night, and rode a horse all night as fast as he could go, hoping to get clear out of the Park and hide in some other country before the trouble should begin; but it was not to be. About an hour after sunup, as I was riding through a flowery plain where thousands of animals were grazing, slumbering, or playing with each other, according to their wont, all of a sudden they broke into a tempest of frightful noises, and in one moment the plain was in a frantic commotion and every beast was destroying its neighbor. I knew what it meant—Eve had eaten that fruit, and death was come into the world. . . . The tigers ate my horse, paying no attention when I ordered them to desist, and they would even have eaten me if I had stood—which I didn't, but went away in much haste. . . . I found this place, outside the Park, and was fairly comfortable for a few days, but she has found me out. Found me out, and has named the place Tonawanda—says it *looks* like that. In fact I was not sorry she came, for there are but meagre pickings here, and she brought some of those apples. I was obliged to eat them, I was so hungry. It was against my principles, but I find that principles have no real force except when one is well fed. . . . She came curtained in boughs and bunches of leaves, and when I asked her what she meant by such nonsense, and snatched them away and threw them down, she tittered and blushed. I had never seen a person titter and blush before, and to me it seemed unbecoming and idiotic. She said I would soon know how it was myself. This was correct. Hungry as I was, I laid down the apple half eaten—certainly the best one I ever saw, considering the lateness of the season—and arrayed myself in the discarded boughs and branches, and then spoke to her with some severity and ordered her to go and get some more and not make such a spectacle of herself. She did it, and after this we crept down to where the wild-beast battle had been, and collected some skins, and I made her patch together a couple of suits proper for public occasions. They are uncomfortable, it is true, but stylish, and that is the main point about clothes. . . . I find she is a good deal of a companion. I see I should be lonesome and depressed without her, now that I have lost my property. Another thing, she says it is ordered that we work for our living hereafter. She will be useful. I will superintend.

TEN DAYS LATER.—She accuses *me* of being the cause of our disaster! She says, with apparent sincerity and truth, that the Serpent assured her that the forbidden fruit was not apples, it was chestnuts. I said I was innocent, then, for I had not eaten any chestnuts. She said the Serpent informed her that "chestnut" was a figurative term meaning an aged and mouldy joke. I turned pale at that, for I have made many jokes to pass the weary time, and some of them could have been of that sort, though I had honestly supposed that they were new when I made them. She asked me if I had made one just at the time of the catastrophe. I was obliged to admit that I had made one to myself, though not aloud. It was this. I was thinking about the Falls, and I said to myself, "How wonderful it is to see that vast body of water tumble down there!" Then in an instant a bright thought flashed into my head, and I let it fly, saying, "It would be a deal more wonderful to see it tumble *up* there!"—and I was just about to kill myself with laughing at it when all nature broke loose in war and death, and I had to flee for my life. "There," she said, with triumph, "that is just it; the Serpent mentioned that very jest, and called it the First Chestnut, and said it was coeval with the creation." Alas, I am indeed to blame. Would that I were not witty; oh, would that I had never had that radiant thought!

NEXT YEAR.—We have named it Cain. She caught it while I was up country trapping on the North Shore of the Erie; caught it in the timber a couple of miles from our dug-out—or it might have been four, she isn't certain which. It resembles us in some ways, and may be a relation. That is what she thinks, but this is an error, in my judgment. The difference in size warrants the conclusion that it is a different and new kind of animal—a fish, perhaps, though when I put it in the water to see, it sank, and she plunged in and snatched it out before there was opportunity for the experiment to determine the matter. I still think it is a fish, but she is indifferent about what it is, and will not let me have it to try. I do not understand this. The coming of the creature seems to have changed her whole nature and made her unreasonable about experiments. She thinks more of it than she does of any of the other animals, but is not able to explain why. Her mind is disordered—everything shows it. Sometimes she carries the fish in her arms half the night when it complains and wants to get to the water. At such times the water comes out of the places in her face that she looks out of, and she pats the fish on the back and makes soft sounds with her mouth to soothe it, and betrays anxiety and solicitude in a hundred ways. I have never seen her do like this with any other fish, and it troubles me greatly. She used to carry the young tigers around so, and play with them, before we lost our property; but it was only play; she never took on about them like this when their dinner disagreed with them.

SUNDAY.—She doesn't work, Sundays, but lies around all tired out, and likes to have the fish wallow over her; and she makes fool noises to amuse it, and pretends to chew its paws, and that makes it laugh. I have not seen a fish before that could laugh.

WEDNESDAY.—It isn't a fish. I cannot quite make out what it is. It makes curious devilish noises when not satisfied, and says "goo-goo"



when it is. It is not one of us, for it doesn't walk; it is not a bird, for it doesn't fly; it is not a frog, for it doesn't hop; it is not a snake, for it doesn't crawl; I feel sure it is not a fish, though I cannot get a chance to find out whether it can swim or not. It merely lies around, and mostly on its back, with its feet up. I have not seen any other animal do that before. I said I believed it was an enigma, but she only admired the word without understanding it. In my judgment it is either an enigma or some kind of bug. If it dies, I will take it apart and see what its arrangements are. I never had a thing perplex me so.

THREE MONTHS LATER.—The perplexity augments instead of diminishing. I sleep but little. It has ceased from lying around, and goes about on its four legs, now. Yet it differs from the other four-legged animals in that its front legs are unusually short, consequently this causes the main part of its person to stick up uncomfortably high in the air, and this is not attractive. It is built much as we are, but its method of travelling shows that it is not of our breed. The short front legs and long hind ones indicate that it is of the kangaroo family, but it is a marked variation of the species, since the true kangaroo hops, whereas this one never does. Still it is a curious and interesting variety, and has not been catalogued before. As I discovered it, I have felt justified in securing the credit of the discovery by attaching my name to it, and hence have called it *Kangaroorum Adamiensis*. . . . It must have been a young one when it came, for it has grown exceedingly since. It must be five times as big, now, as it was then, and when discontented is able to make from twenty-two to thirty-eight times the noise it made at first. Coercion does not modify this, but has the contrary effect. For this reason I discontinued the system. She reconciles it by persuasion, and by giving it things which she had previously told it she wouldn't give it.

FIVE MONTHS LATER.—It is not a kangaroo. No, for it supports itself by holding to her finger, and thus goes a few steps on its hind legs, and then falls down. It is probably some kind of a bear; and yet it has no tail—as yet—and no fur, except on its head. It still keeps on growing—that is a curious circumstance, for bears get their growth earlier than this. Bears are dangerous—since our catastrophe—and I shall not be satisfied to have this one prowling about the place much longer without a muzzle on. I have offered to get her a kangaroo if she would let this one go, but it did no good—she is determined to run us into all sorts of foolish risks, I think. She was not like this before she lost her mind.

A FORTNIGHT LATER.—I examined its mouth. There is no danger yet; it has only one tooth. It has no tail yet. It makes more noise now than it ever did before—and mainly at night. I have moved out. But I shall go over, mornings, to breakfast, and to see if it has more teeth. If it gets a mouthful of teeth it will be time for it to go, tail or no tail, for a bear does not need a tail in order to be dangerous.

FOUR MONTHS LATER.—I have been off hunting and fishing a month, up in the region that she calls Buffalo; I don't know why, unless it is because there are not any buffaloes there. Meantime the bear has learned to paddle around all by itself on its hind legs, and says "poppa" and "momma." It is certainly a new species. This resemblance to words may be purely accidental, of course, and may have no purpose or meaning; but even in that case it is still extraordinary, and is a thing which no other bear can do. This imitation of speech, taken together with general absence of fur and entire absence of tail, sufficiently indicates that this is a new kind of bear. The further study of it will be exceedingly interesting. Meantime I will go off on a far expedition among the forests of the North and make an exhaustive search. There must certainly be another one somewhere, and this one will be less dangerous when it has company of its own species. I will go straightway; but I will muzzle this one first.

THREE MONTHS LATER.—It has been a weary, weary hunt, yet I have had no success. In the mean time, without stirring from the home estate, she has caught another one! I never saw such luck. I might have hunted these woods a hundred years, I never should have run across that thing.

NEXT DAY.—I have been comparing the new one with the old one, and it is perfectly plain that they are the same breed. I was going to stuff one of them for my collection, but she is prejudiced against it for some reason or other; so I have relinquished the idea, though I think it is a mistake. It would be an irreparable loss to science if they should get away. The old one is tamer than it was, and can laugh and talk like the parrot, having learned this, no doubt, from being with the parrot so much, and having the imitative faculty in a highly developed degree. I shall be astonished if it turns out to be a new kind of parrot; and yet I ought not to be astonished, for it has already been everything else it could think of, since those first days when it was a fish. The new one is as ugly now as the old one was at first; has the same sulphur-and-raw-meat complexion and the same singular head without any fur on it. She calls it Abel.

TEN YEARS LATER.—They are boys; we found it out long ago. It was their coming in that small, immature shape that puzzled us; we were not used to it. There are some girls now. Abel is a good boy, but if Cain had staid a bear it would have improved him. After all these years, I see that I was mistaken about Eve in the beginning; it is better to live outside the Garden with her than inside it without her. At first I thought she talked too much; but now I should be sorry to have that voice fall silent and pass out of my life. Blessed be the chestnut that brought us near together and taught me to know the goodness of her heart and the sweetness of her spirit!

Eve's Diary

SATURDAY.—I am almost a whole day old, now. I arrived yesterday. That is as it seems to me. And it must be so, for if there was a day-before-yesterday I was not there when it happened, or I should remember it. It could be, of course, that it did happen, and that I was not noticing. Very well; I will be very watchful, now, and if any day-before-yesterdays happen I will make a note of it. It will be best to start right and not let the record get confused, for some instinct tells me that these details are going to be important to the historian some day. For I feel like an experiment, I feel exactly like an experiment, it would be impossible for a person to feel more like an experiment than I do, and so I am coming to feel convinced that that is what I *am*—an experiment; just an experiment, and nothing more.

Then if I am an experiment, am I the whole of it? No, I think not; I think the rest of it is part of it. I am the main part of it, but I think the rest of it has its share in the matter. Is my position assured, or do I have to watch it and take care of it? The latter, perhaps. Some instinct tells me that eternal vigilance is the price of supremacy. (That is a good phrase, I think, for one so young.)

Everything looks better to-day than it did yesterday. In the rush of finishing up yesterday, the mountains were left in a ragged condition, and some of the plains were so cluttered with rubbish and remnants that the aspects were quite distressing. Noble and beautiful works of art should not be subjected to haste; and this majestic new world is indeed a most noble and beautiful work. And certainly marvellously near to being perfect, notwithstanding the shortness of the time. There are too many stars in some places and not enough in others, but that can be remedied presently, no doubt. The moon got loose last night, and slid down and fell out of the scheme—a very great loss; it breaks my heart to think of it. There isn't another thing among the ornaments and decorations that is comparable to it for beauty and finish. It should have been fastened better. If we can only get it back again—

But of course there is no telling where it went to. And besides, whoever gets it will hide it; I know it because I would do it myself. I believe I can be honest in all other matters, but I already begin to realize that the core and centre of my nature is love of the beautiful, a passion for the beautiful, and that it would not be safe to trust me with a moon that belonged to another person and that person didn't know I had it. I could give up a moon that I found in the daytime, because I should be afraid some one was looking; but if I found it in the dark, I am sure I should find some kind of an excuse for not saying anything about it. For I do love moons, they are so pretty and so romantic. I wish we had five or six; I would never go to bed; I should never get tired lying on the moss-bank and looking up at them.

To-day I am getting better ideas about distances. I was so eager to get hold of every pretty thing that I giddily grabbed for it, sometimes when it was too far off, and sometimes when it was but six inches away but seemed a foot—alas, with thorns between! I learned a lesson; also I made an axiom, all out of my own head—my very first one: *The scratched Experiment shuns the thorn*. I think it is a very good one for one so young.

I followed the other Experiment around, yesterday afternoon, at a distance, to see what it might be for, if I could. But I was not able to make out. I think it is a man. I had never seen a man, but it looked like one, and I feel sure that that is what it is. I realize that I feel more curiosity about it than about any of the other reptiles. If it is a reptile, and I suppose it is; for it has frowsy hair and blue eyes, and looks like a reptile. It has no hips; it tapers like a carrot; when it stands, it spreads itself apart like a derrick; so I think it is a reptile, though it may be architecture.

I was afraid of it at first, and started to run every time it turned around, for I thought it was going to chase me; but by and by I found it was only trying to get away, so after that I was not timid any more, but tracked it along, several hours, about twenty yards behind, which made it nervous and unhappy. At last it was a good deal worried, and climbed a tree. I waited a good while, then gave up and went home.

To-day the same thing over. I've got it up the tree again.

SUNDAY.—It is up there yet. Resting, apparently. But that is a subterfuge: Sunday isn't the day of rest; Saturday is appointed for that. It looks to me like a creature that is more interested in resting than in anything else. It would tire me to rest so much. It tires me just to sit around and watch the tree. I do wonder what it is for; I never see it do anything.

They returned the moon last night, and I was so happy! I think it is very honest of them. It slid down and fell off again, but I was not distressed; there is no need to worry when one has that kind of neighbors; they will fetch it back. I wish I could do something to show my appreciation. I would like to send them some stars, for we have more than we can use. I mean I, not we, for I can see that the reptile cares nothing for such things.

It has low tastes, and is not kind. When I went there yesterday evening at the gloaming it had crept down and was trying to catch the little

speckled fishes that play in the pool, and I had to clod it to make it go up the tree again and let them alone. I wonder if that is what it is for? Hasn't it any heart? Hasn't it any compassion for those little creatures? Can it be that it was designed and manufactured for such ungentle work? It has the look of it. One of the clods took it back of the ear, and it used language. It gave me a thrill, for it was the first time I had ever heard speech, except my own. I did not understand the words, but they seemed expressive.



When I found it could talk I felt a new interest in it, for I love to talk; I talk all day, and in my sleep, too, and I am very interesting, but if I had another to talk to I could be twice as interesting, and would never stop, if desired.

NEXT WEEK SUNDAY.—All the week I tagged around after him and tried to get acquainted. I had to do the talking, because he was shy, but I didn't mind it. He seemed pleased to have me around, and I used the sociable "we" a good deal, because it seemed to flatter him to be included.

WEDNESDAY.—We are getting along very well indeed, now, and getting better and better acquainted. He does not try to avoid me any more, which is a good sign, and shows that he likes to have me with him. That pleases me, and I study to be useful to him in every way I can, so as to increase his regard. During the last day or two I have taken all the work of naming things off his hands, and this has been a great relief to him, for he has no gift in that line, and is evidently very grateful. He can't think of a rational name to save him, but I do not let him see that I am aware of his defect. Whenever a new creature comes along I name it before he has time to expose himself by an awkward silence. In this way I have saved him many embarrassments. I have no defect like his. The minute I set eyes on an animal I know what it is. I don't have to reflect a moment; the right name comes out instantly, just as if it were an inspiration, as no doubt it is, for I am sure it wasn't in me half a minute before. I seem to know just by the shape of the creature and the way it acts what animal it is.

When the dodo came along he thought it was a wildcat—I saw it in his eye. But I saved him. And I was careful not to do it in a way that could hurt his pride. I just spoke up in a quite natural way of pleased surprise, and not as if I was dreaming of conveying information, and said, "Well, I do declare if there isn't the dodo!" I explained—without seeming to be explaining—how I knew it for a dodo, and although I thought maybe he was a little piqued that I knew the creature when he didn't, it was quite evident that he admired me. That was very agreeable, and I thought of it more than once with gratification before I slept. How little a thing can make us happy when we feel that we have earned it.

THURSDAY.—My first sorrow. Yesterday he avoided me and seemed to wish I would not talk to him. I could not believe it, and thought there was some mistake, for I loved to be with him, and loved to hear him talk, and so how could it be that he could feel unkind toward me when I had not done anything? But at last it seemed true, so I went away and sat lonely in the place where I first saw him the morning that we were made and I did not know what he was and was indifferent about him; but now it was a mournful place, and every little thing spoke of him, and my heart was very sore. I did not know why very clearly, for it was a new feeling; I had not experienced it before, and it was all a mystery, and I could not make it out.

But when night came I could not bear the lonesomeness, and went to the new shelter which he has built, to ask him what I had done that was wrong and how I could mend it and get back his kindness again; but he put me out in the rain, and it was my first sorrow.

SUNDAY.—It is pleasant again, now, and I am happy; but those were heavy days; I do not think of them when I can help it.

I tried to get him some of those apples, but I cannot learn to throw straight. I failed, but I think the good intention pleased him. They are forbidden, and he says I shall come to harm; but

so I come to harm through pleasing him why shall I care for that harm?

MONDAY.—This morning I told him my name, hoping it would interest him. But he did not care for it. It is strange. If he should tell me his name, I would care. I think it would be pleasanter in my ears than any other sound.

He talks very little. Perhaps it is because he is not bright, and is sensitive about it and wishes to conceal it. It is such a pity that he should feel so, for brightness is nothing; it is in the heart that the values lie. I wish I could make him understand that a loving good heart is riches, and riches enough, and that without it intellect is poverty.

Although he talks so little he has quite a considerable vocabulary. This morning he used a surprisingly good word. He evidently recognized, himself, that it was a good one, for he worked it in twice afterward, casually. It was not good casual art, still it showed that he possesses a certain quality of perception. Without a doubt that seed can be made to grow, if cultivated.

Where did he get that word? I do not think I have ever used it.

TUESDAY.—All the morning I was at work improving the estate; and I purposely kept away from him in the hope that he would get lonely and come. But he did not.

At noon I stopped for the day and took my recreation by flitting all about with the bees and the butterflies and revelling in the flowers, those beautiful creatures that catch the smile of God out of the sky and preserve it! I gathered them, and made them into wreaths and garlands and clothed myself in them whilst I ate my luncheon—apples, of course; then I sat in the shade and wished and waited. But he did not come.

But no matter. Nothing would have come of it, for he does not care for flowers. He calls them rubbish, and cannot tell one from another, and thinks it is superior to feel like that. He does not care for me, he does not care for flowers, he does not care for the painted sky at eventide—is there anything he does care for, except building shacks to coop himself up in from the good clean rain, and thumping the melons, and sampling the grapes, and fingering the fruit on the trees, to see how those properties are coming along?

TUESDAY—WEDNESDAY—THURSDAY—and today: all without seeing him. It is a long time to be alone; still, it is better to be alone than unwelcome.

I *had* to have company—I was made for it, I think,—so I made friends with the animals. They are just charming, and they have the kindest disposition and the politest ways; they never look sour, they never let you feel that you are intruding, they smile at you and wag their tail, if they've got one, and they are always ready for a romp or an excursion or anything you want to propose. I think they are perfect gentlemen. All these days we have had such good times, and it hasn't been lonesome for me, ever. Lonesome! No, I should say not.

We have made long excursions, and I have seen a great deal of the world; almost all of it, I think; and so I am the first traveller, and the only one. When we are on the march, it is an imposing sight—there's nothing like it anywhere. For comfort I ride a tiger or a leopard, because it is soft and has a round back that fits me, and because they are such pretty animals; but for long distance or for scenery I ride the elephant. He hoists me up with his trunk, but I can get off myself; when we are ready to camp, he sits and I slide down the back way.

The birds and animals are all friendly to each other, and there are no disputes about anything. They all talk, and they all talk to me, but it must be a foreign language, for I cannot make out a word they say; yet they often understand me when I talk back, particularly the dog and the elephant. It makes me ashamed. It shows that they are brighter than I am, and are therefore my superiors. It annoys me, for I want to be the principal Experiment myself—and I intend to be, too.

I have learned a number of things, and am educated, now, but I wasn't at first. I was ignorant at first. At first it used to vex me because, with all my watching, I was never smart enough to be around when the water was running up-hill; but now I do not mind it. I have experimented and experimented until now I know it never does run up-hill, except in the dark. I know it does in the dark, because the pool never goes dry; which it would, of course, if the water didn't come back in the night. It is best to prove things by actual experiment; then you *know*; whereas if you depend on guessing and supposing and conjecturing, you will never get educated.

At first I couldn't make out what I was made for, but now I think it was to search out the secrets of this wonderful world and be happy and thank the Giver of it all for devising it. I think there are many things to learn yet—I hope so; and by economizing and not hurrying too fast I think they will last weeks and weeks. I hope so. When you cast up a feather it sails away on the air and goes out of sight; then you throw up a clod and it doesn't. It comes down, every time. I have tried it and tried it, and it is always so. I wonder why it is? Of course it *doesn't* come down, but why should it *seem* to? I suppose it is an optical illu-

sion. I mean, one of them is. I don't know which one. It may be the feather, it may be the clod; I can't prove which it is, I can only demonstrate that one or the other is a fake, and let a person take his choice.

By watching, I know that the stars are not going to last. I have seen some of the best ones melt and run down the sky. Since one can melt, they can all melt; since they can all melt, they can all melt the same night. That sorrow will come—I know it. I mean to sit up every night and look at them as long as I can keep awake; and I will impress those sparkling fields on my memory, so that by and by when they are taken away I can by my fancy restore those lovely myriads to the black sky and make them sparkle again, and double them by the blur of my tears.

After the Fall

When I look back, the Garden is a dream to me. It was beautiful, surpassingly beautiful, enchantingly beautiful; and now it is lost, and I shall not see it any more.

The Garden is lost, but I have found *him*, and am content. He loves me as well as he can; I love him with all the strength of my passionate nature, and this, I think, is proper to my youth and sex. If I ask myself why I love him, I find I do not know, and do not really much care to know; so I suppose that this kind of love is not a product of reasoning and statistics, like one's love for other reptiles and animals. I think that this must be so. I love certain birds because of their song; but I do not love Adam on account of his singing—no, it is not that; the more he sings the more I do not get reconciled to it. Yet I ask him to sing, because I wish to learn to like everything he is interested in. I am sure I can learn, because at first I could not stand it, but now I can. It sours the milk, but it doesn't matter; I can get used to that kind of milk.

It is not on account of his brightness that I love him—no, it is not that. He is not to blame for his brightness, such as it is, for he did not make it himself; he is as God made him, and that is sufficient. There was a wise purpose in it, *that* I know. In time it will develop, though I think it will not be sudden; and besides, there is no hurry; he is well enough just as he is.

It is not on account of his gracious and considerate ways and his delicacy that I love him. No, he has lacks in these regards, but he is well enough just so, and is improving.

It is not on account of his industry that I love him—no, it is not that. I think he has it in him, and I do not know why he conceals it from me. It is my only pain. Otherwise he is frank and open with me, now. I am sure he keeps nothing from me but this. It grieves me that he should have a secret from me, and sometimes it spoils my sleep, thinking of it, but I will put it out of my mind; it shall not trouble my happiness, which is otherwise full to overflowing.

It is not on account of his education that I love him—no, it is not that. He is self-educated, and does really know a multitude of things, but they are not so.

It is not on account of his chivalry that I love him—no, it is not that. He told on me, but I do not blame him; it is a peculiarity of sex, I think, and he did not make his sex. Of course I would not have told on him, I would have perished first; but that is a peculiarity of sex, too, and I do not take credit for it, for I did not make my sex.

Then why is it that I love him? *Merely because he is masculine*, I think.

At bottom he is good, and I love him for that, but I could love him without it. If he should beat me and abuse me, I should go on loving him. I know it. It is a matter of sex, I think.

He is strong and handsome, and I love him for that, and I admire him and am proud of him, but I could love him without those qualities. If he were plain, I should love him; if he were a wreck, I should love him; and I would work for him, and slave over him, and pray for him, and watch by his bedside until I died.

Yes, I think I love him merely because he is *mine*, and is *masculine*. There is no other reason, I suppose. And so I think it is as I first said: that this kind of love is not a product of reasonings and statistics. It just *comes*—none knows whence—and cannot explain itself. And doesn't need to.

It is what I think. But I am only a girl, and the first that has examined this matter, and it may turn out that in my ignorance and inexperience I have not got it right.

Forty Years Later

It is my prayer, it is my longing, that we may pass from this life together—a longing which shall never perish from the earth, but shall have place in the heart of every wife that loves, until the end of time; and it shall be called by my name.

But if one of us must go first, it is my prayer that it shall be I; for he is strong, I am weak, I am not so necessary to him as he is to me—life without him would not be life; how could I endure it? This prayer is also immortal, and will not cease from being offered up while my race continues. I am the first wife; and in the last wife I shall be repeated.

At Eve's Grave

ADAM: Wheresoever she was, *there* was Eden.■

RUSSIA IN THE RED

Undone by capitalism, Moscow drifts toward chaos

By Andrew Meier

I. LUZHKOV'S DREAM

It is well past midnight in Moscow, on a Sunday in midwinter, but from an ice-glazed balcony of the Weinerhof restaurant I'm looking down on welding brigades clamoring away, their torches giving flickering form to a massive hole surrounded by a forest of iron girders. The $12 billion construction site—the largest in Russia—stands on the naked northern bank of the Moskva, in the bend where the river slowly churns westward out of the city, and the view is both desolate and absurd. Or so I think as I stand alone on the balcony, arms folded tightly to summon warmth and thought. Behind me in the bar (a cozy Austrian affair where demure waitresses weave between the tables with trays of drafts) a cackling trio of Argentine businessmen splash through the dregs of their expense accounts. Their female escorts, comely young locals who know little Spanish but can identify the remaining players in Russia's disastrous experiment with the free market, check their watches. Looking back down, I can make out a convoy of Kamaz trucks careening across the crater, bringing gifts of brick, metal, and mud.



In post-Soviet Moscow, construction sites pass for tourist attractions, complete with viewing platforms from which the citizenry can behold the rising of a brave new world. Lenin might have promised a Bright Future, but Yuri Luzhkov, mayor of Moscow and soi-disant successor to Boris Yeltsin, persists in the attempt to build it. In Luzhkov's Moscow, the appreciation of masonry work is something of a civic duty.

The collapse of the Russian economy [illegible] nobody from that duty, and [illegible] next day, I cross the river to admire the [illegible] of the enormous office building named "The Reformer," and also the enclosed "pedestrian shopping bridge" at the base of the building with a mechanized walkway that allows Russians to glide along the glass corridor, past glitzy shops offering Venetian vases, Finnish cell phones, and Milanese dresses for preteens. On Luzhkov's bridge to the twenty-first century, the mayor imagines, German bankers, Japanese brokers, and South African traders will one day float effortlessly from The Reformer across the river to Russia's Wall Street, which he has christened (after the City, London's financial district) the "Moskva Siti."

Only the bridge, however, exists. The Siti does not. Despite the odd flurry of activity the night before, the Siti for the moment consists of little more than rusting steel beams and cable that litter the north bank of the Moskva. The pedestrian shopping bridge lacks both pedestrians and shops; most of the storefronts have been vacated or were never occupied. Still, Luzhkov hasn't given up hope. On the northern end of the bridge (centered beneath a stained glass rotunda and encased in a dome twelve feet wide) Luzhkov has thoughtfully provided a rotating architectural model of Moscow in which the city's

Andrew Meier is a Moscow correspondent for Time *magazine.*

Striking engine factory workers in tent city, Oc[illegible]

endless rows of grimy Stalinist facades appear freshly scrubbed and tidily divided by pruned evergreens. Factories are stripped of their belching smokestacks. Swept clean and paved smooth, the city's streets are sprinkled with a few handsome trucks and new automobiles. The river, recently diagnosed a cholera incubator, is a sparkling aquamarine. Upon it floats a barge and what appears to be a cruise ship. The model omits the presence of people; instead, spotlights fix on the would-be Siti, a group of gleaming translucent skyscrapers, among them one far taller than the others—part Empire State, part TransAmerica, but quintessentially Luzhkovian—that dwarf, both as concrete and metaphor, the towers of the Kremlin.

Although he's constructing a monument to capitalism, Luzhkov is a symbolic builder in the Soviet tradition, the lineage of his grand blueprint derived from Stalin's Dvorets Sovetov, the Palace of Soviets. Stalin's aim was simple: he wanted the world's biggest building. To make way (and to make a point), in 1931 Stalin blew up the world's largest Russian Orthodox church, the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, but he never got around to building the Dvorets Sovetov. A bog formed in the blast crater until Khrushchev turned it into a giant outdoor swimming pool for the proletariat. By 1993, the country's symbolic needs had changed, and Luzhkov (despite being a one-time atheist) began resurrecting the cathedral with $350 million from a legion of ignoble contributors. A few years ago, with God well housed, the mayor turned to building a home for the free market.

A young couple, noses pressed to the glass, stand transfixed by the cardboard city. Like so many who come here, they are trying to locate their apartment, but the city spins too fast. They spend another moment, then move on. "Think it'll ever be built?" the elfin girl asks her companion. "No," he replies. "Of course not."

II. THE FALL

Last fall, before a clutch of Muscovites at the unveiling of a statue of Anton Chekhov, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn recounted Chekhov's story "The Reed Pipe," in which an old man foresees the world's end. "This prophetic tale was written one hundred and ten years before our present troubles," Solzhenitsyn shrilled in his famously high-pitched voice. "But it is the truth. And we are helpless before its terrible might."

Long predicted in whispered conversations at dacha gatherings, the Russian economic collapse (a.k.a. the Deval) arrived last August 17—two days shy of the anniversary of the coup that toppled Gorbachev in 1991. Russia let the ruble fall, defaulted on $40 billion in domestic bonds, and severed itself from the world's capital markets. By October 2, the main stock index settled at a near rock-bottom 37. One year earlier, when Russia briefly enjoyed the status of the world's hottest emerging market, it had been 571.

Capital, bankers like to say, is "the oxygen of the market." Only its absence is felt. In quick succession, Yeltsin fired his prime minister, the cabinet, and Central Bank officers. Banks locked their doors, imports disappeared, and visa lines at Western embassies grew long. The billboards that crowded Moscow's avenues, once proof of the capitalist miracle, began to go white. Soon they were painted over with the sayings of Euripides and Thatcher, Camus and Martin Luther King. A cell-phone company whose slogan had been "Bee Line—Be Happy" added "Don't Worry." By December, a real estate firm simply wished everyone, in English, "GOOD LUCK."

In retrospect, the bubble seems obvious. Even at its peak, the value of the stock market was only $127 billion, a mere four times the stock value of Amazon.com (as of this writing). Almost all Russia's blue chips were in oil and gas, making the market extremely vulnerable to falling crude prices. The combination of Soviet and Western economies, which the boys at Salomon Brothers and the Harvard Business School touted as an apparatus both glorious and benign, turned out to be more of a Frankenstein. Tsarist Russia had issued bonds and even nurtured a small stock market, but the arrival of the global market after seven Soviet decades meant that Russians had to learn a new financial grammar. Tellingly, there is a linguistic distinction between a share and a stock. A stock is called an *aktsiya*, a foreign word that has an abstract ring. ("Securities" translates into Russian as "valuable papers.") But a share is a *dolya*, a native Russian word that also means a piece of the action, an allotment, one's due. Yegor Gaidar, the porcine former prime minister who presided over the birth and death of the Russian stock market, once explained the difference to me. "You can sell a Russian shares in a factory and he'll still want to see his dolya—the part of it he owns," he said. "It's not that Russians don't understand stocks and private property. It's that they want ownership and control over what they own." The Russian market was not ruled by tidy business plans drawn up in oak-paneled boardrooms; it was driven by the populace's hunger for a share of the spoils.

True, a corps of U.S. consultants tried to import law and order by building a Securities and Exchange Commission—a glistening tower staffed with besuited young Russians and Burson-Marsteller subcontractors on USAID stints. But "the rules of the game"—no matter how often invoked at Kremlin briefings and shareholder conclaves—never caught on. Gorbachev spoke of "the transitional period," but Russia more nearly resembled a transitional neighborhood, a good value for those with wealth willing to take the risk but bad news for the people deported under the economic laws of gentrification. In the early 1990s, thanks to a privatization scheme paid for in large measure by U.S. taxpayers, 145 million Russians received vouchers for shares in 15,000 state enterprises. But beginning in 1995, in one of history's greatest heists, these engines of Soviet industry—its oil fields and metal mines, factories and mills—were snapped up by a handful of men of mysterious means who became known as "the oligarchs." Entrusted to them, Russia's resources and hard currency flowed freely across its porous borders at the rate of $15–20 billion a year.[1] In 1996 the oligarchs bankrolled Yeltsin's re-election, and the Russian media began to call this new elite the *semibankir*

[1] *For example, Estonia has become a world leader in nonferrous metal exports, even though the tiny Baltic nation produces no metals itself.*

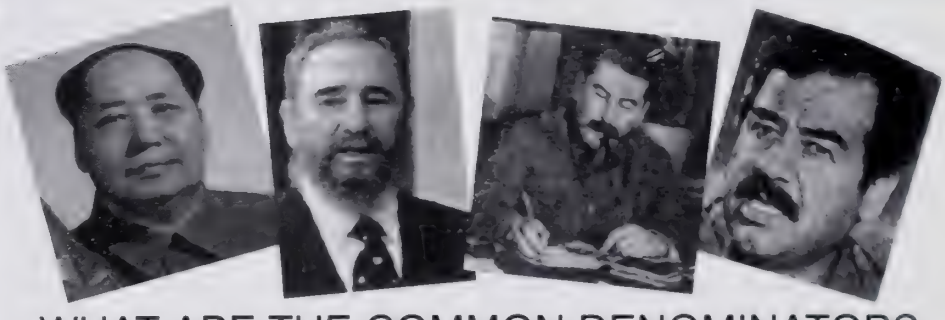
china—the rule of the seven bankers, h echo of the *semiboyarshchina*, a sev-nteenth-century reign of seven Tsarist oblemen. The most prominent of the ligarchs, Boris Berezovsky, soon con-olled the Security Council, guaran-eeing that he and his cronies could under at will.

As the oligarchs grew fat, the state ifted into bankruptcy, and teachers, r-traffic controllers, railroad workers, nd miners went on strike, demand-g months of back pay. Some nuclear hysicists committed suicide. To cov-its bills, Russia followed the advice f IMF and Harvard economists and eated a cash flow by selling short-rm, ruble-denominated treasury bills nown as GKOs. Investors should have een wary when GKO yields soared nto triple digits, but Russia, so the arkets believed, was too big to sink.

But sink it did, and the remnants of apitalist romanticism went down with . Having long hoped for democracy nd free trade, Russians were so un-one by the chaos and graft engen-ered by those freedoms that they not nly gave up on the idea of a "New ussia" but began to sullenly doubt the xistence of such a thing as a nation-ate. Russia now verges on splinter-ng into municipal and regional fief-oms—some with nuclear arms, all acking a functioning economy—quabbling over the post-Soviet waste-nd. Yeltsin seems unable to grasp the ravity of the unfolding catastrophe, nd rumors of his ill health have tak-n on an iconic quality. In the streets, eople whisper that he is really dead; hat the man who showed up to work nly a few days in the first quarter of 999 is a body double. The metaphors each beyond Russia's borders. One vening a friend tells me that at a Helsinki convention of cardiologists, he cocktail chatter was that Yeltsin's 996 quintuple bypass had in fact been heart transplant, one that, like Rus-a's disastrous attempt to graft capi-alism to socialism, had failed. "They aid Boris is showing all the telltale ymptoms of rejection."

The Deval was coupled with the oorest grain harvest in nearly half a entury, and the specter of famine and nrest instilled in the foreign press orps the hope of important headlines. Over drinks one night, an American





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TV grandmother gleefully announced that [illegible] people are eating animal feed. The London *Sunday Times* soon upped the ante, announcing: "Russian Villagers Eat Dogs." Some 38 percent of Russians live below the poverty line—a paltry 493 rubles ($20) a month. Outside Moscow's marbled emporia and casinos, where the crash's survivors shopped and gambled through the winter, 557 people died from exposure. In Red Square the distraught immolate themselves. Scrawny soldiers cadge cigarettes on the sidewalks, hunt for mushrooms in the woods, and scavenge for cabbages in the fields. More and more give up and go AWOL. But that term means little when the army has abandoned the boys of the 101st, the last brigade pulled from Chechnya, to fend for themselves in a tent city outside Stavropol and the unclaimed corpses of some 300 soldiers lie rotting in a Rostov-on-Don morgue.

Still, soldiers, who can beg, are better off than Russia's one million prisoners, who must survive on sixty-seven kopecks (three cents) worth of food a day. In an eighteenth-century dungeon in Vladimir, where crime bosses live in cells once occupied by Soviet dissidents, the warden put the problem succinctly: "Every Westerner who comes here lectures us about human rights, but I'm fighting for money. My guards haven't been paid for six months." Russia has a third of the world's natural gas and oil reserves, but residents of the Pacific peninsula of Chukotka went without heating fuel for weeks this winter, warming their apartments with *burzhuikas*, iron stoves fed logs, furniture, and books.

Once a point of Soviet pride, the social safety net is all but gone. More and more youth are homeless; in the city of Novokuznetsk they live in the relative warmth of the sewers. Drug abuse and suicide are pandemic. A block from Lubyanka, the old KGB headquarters in Moscow, babushki hawk their arthritis prescriptions to adolescent dopers who, in a clever bit of street alchemy, brew the medicine into amphetamine cocktails. HIV blooms in the cities, while tuberculosis, the plague of Dickens and Dostoevsky, rises everywhere unchecked. One afternoon, at the opening of a photo exhibit of prisoners with TB—Russia boasts some 100,000—I met the doctor in charge of dispensing the $12.5 million dedicated by George Soros to their treatment. A Russian émigré in town for a few days, he assured me that "the worst is yet to come." He talked of 30,000 cases of "multi-drug-resistant TB," a strain bred in the penal colonies that ignores the best of medicines.

Nuclear disaster zones are scattered across the Russian landscape. In a few places, among them the city of Murmansk, local governments have erected isotope meters that broadcast the radiation levels. The national government shows no such openness. In 1996, Alexander Nikitin, a shy naval inspector, warned the world that the ninety nuclear subs in Russia's Northern Fleet were a "slow-motion Chernobyl." The government charged him with treason; today, he is under house arrest, still awaiting trial.

Two months before the Deval, Solzhenitsyn himself published a book. Entitled *Russia in the Abyss*, it was a fierce indictment of Yeltsin's Russia—the "cult of profit and prostitution," the venal oligarchs, corrupt bureaucrats, and sclerotic president—a "union of selfish people who are eternally indifferent to the fate of those they govern, even to the extent of whether they live or die." Solzhenitsyn also predicted the crash: "So that the 21st Century does not become the last for the Russians," he wrote, "we must find within ourselves the strength and the skill to resist the collapse."

Russia in the Abyss sold fewer than 30,000 copies.

III. THE HUNT

Now there is little left in Russia to divide but blame.

"They were convinced they were building something, something with cash, something that would last—not Lenin's Bright Future, but Caaapitaaalism." Venyamin Sergeyevich Sokolov, Russia's chief auditor, spits out the vowels like bitter seeds. "The oligarchs imagined themselves rulers of a new order. They believed they had it all—a banking system, a strong ruble, new international trade. But it all went wrong. And the castles they built? Their empires? They've come crashing down with everything else. They may have hidden their riches in Cyprus, the Riviera, the Bahamas, God knows where . . . but they can't hide themselves. We will find them. The guilty will settle their debts with society."

A scientist and former university rector, Sokolov is an unlikely Columbo. But he is, as he puts it, "leading the hunt" to find the $4.8 billion the IMF gave Russia's Central Bank to save the ruble last July, much of which was "diverted, misused, or simply stolen." Within weeks of the Deval, Sokolov was instructed to audit the Central Bank, and by now he has dozens of binders stuffed with evidence of theft and fraud. We sit in his elegant office on the top floor of a gleaming palazzo; the plush interior, post-Soviet baroque, drips with the gilt of Moscow's five-star hotels. It strikes me as odd that the man charged with rooting out graft in one of the world's most corrupt states should be headquartered in so lavish an office. "It's over the top," he concedes, nearly blushing. "I still slide on the marble floors. We'll probably be audited in the end. But," he notes wryly, "it was paid for by the Kremlin."

Sokolov has an air of willful purpose that is somehow reassuring, like the smell of rubbing alcohol in a doctor's office. His suit is plain, East German or Soviet. His hair is cropped, though a tuft of gray hangs over his pronounced widow's peak. His profile and manner is that of a fastidious hawk. At sixty-four, Sokolov has lived seven years longer than the average Russian male and remains unashamed of his Communist roots, especially now that the country's GDP has been cut in half since 1991. "We are facing a Great Depression, but, alas, we have no Roosevelt," he says. "We are worse off than the Germans after the war, but we have no Marshall Plan."

Although he was appointed by the Federation Council, the upper, and more moderate, house of Russia's parliament (as opposed to the Duma, which is controlled by rabid anti-Yeltsin hard-line Communists[2]), because Sokolov has a long Communist résumé, his crusade was initially dismissed as a Ken Starr–style witch-hunt designed to embarrass Yeltsin. But a

[2] *In March the Duma overwhelmingly voted to replace the national anthem with the old melody of the Soviet Union anthem.*

e enormity of Russia's corruption came evident, and Yeltsin and the igarchs lost absolute power, various vernmental bodies (all with their vn political agendas and loyalties) on unleashed scores of other auditors. en the prosecutor general, Yuri Skutov—a one-time Yeltsin ally known r making apocryphal (if true) pronouncements such as, 50 percent of commercial banks and 40 percent state-owned enterprises are controlled by the Mafia, and then doing thing about them—got into the act. "There's never been an audit of the entral Bank," beams Sokolov, "let one one in which we have the legal ght to obtain every piece of paper rtaining to every transaction and hen so much money is at stake. We e progressing through the pile. And hat we've found already . . . smells."

He proffers his preliminary audit, amped TOP SECRET, explaining that it ould be a crime for me to publish the port but that I certainly can read it in s presence. As I flip through it, I pause the section headed CONCLUSIONS: Nearly 68 percent of the total sum of e IMF credits were spent on the curnt needs of the Federal Budget, approximately 10 percent went to the yment of the foreign debt, the reaining 22 percent, which should have one to the [financial rescue plan], went purposes having no clear relation to ese activities." In other words, 22 ercent of the $4.8 billion IMF loan—$1.06 billion—vanished.

IV. THE CHORUS

Just off Moscow's Garden Ring Road, two blocks west of the Institute of Biological Structures at handles the annual repair work Lenin's corpse, is Club T, possibly e finest restaurant in Russia. It should e. It was designed as a private reserve r the new plutocracy—their very own Club. Guests are vetted via videophone. Silk drapes keep the outside utside. Gold seraphims dance on the alls, their pudgy arms hoisting aloft litle gilded candles. Large mirrors help he discreet diner make out the famous ce hidden across the room.

One evening in November, I host a inner at Club T for four Americans ho had come to Russia in the first ush days of free-market enthusiasm, af-

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ter Gorbachev departed and the Soviet Union dissolved, in the good old days when Moscow and St. Petersburg grew lousy with entrepreneurs babbling about building business centers, importing Arkansas hot dogs, exporting vodka and furs. In 1990, *Pravda* announced the arrival of one, Paul Tatum, with creamy praise: "Paul Tatum has a dream, an American dream. . . . He dreams of the day when a tiny American oasis will grow in the center of the Soviet capital." Tatum's "oasis" took the form of a hotel. In 1996, a hitman gunned down the erstwhile Republican fund-raiser one block from his dream hotel.

By now, many foreign frontiersmen have fled for home or gone on to the next gold rush, but Bill Browder, Peter Derby, Boris Jordan, and Charlie Ryan remain—four Americans who, when their portfolios were at their fattest, controlled several billion dollars worth of investments in Russia. Derby, a New Yorker of Russian descent, arrived in 1989 to open one of Russia's first foreign-owned commercial banks. Jordan, another prodigal son of Long Island's Russian diaspora, appeared in 1992 to help run Credit Suisse First Boston's Moscow outpost and then founded Russia's first investment bank, Renaissance Capital. In 1997, Jordan, oligarch Vladimir Potanin, and George Soros formed an offshore consortium that paid $1.9 billion for a 25 percent share in Svyazinvest, Russia's telecom monopoly.[3] Browder, the soft-spoken grandson of the American Communist leader Earl Browder, arrived in Russia in 1992, having run funds for Robert Maxwell and Salomon Brothers. In April 1996, he formed the Hermitage Fund, a high-end hedge fund that at its peak claimed $1.2 billion in assets and provided Browder with a 910 percent return on his initial capital. Ryan came to Russia with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Together with one of Russia's leading reformers, former finance minister Boris Fyodorov, Ryan founded the United Financial Group, which, by early 1998, managed more than a billion dollars in assets. "Of course the money brings us here," Ryan told me back then. "But it's much more than that. We're building something entirely new. Okay, you can get stability and good returns in the U.S. But can you get the buzz?"

Over snails and caviar, king prawns and medallions of New Zealand lamb, the evening's theme, at my request, is "What went wrong?" The four have entangled financial dealings with one another, and the conversation doesn't begin well. "You'll have a lot more time for golf these days, I'd imagine," Jordan says to Derby. Derby looks at me as if to say "I don't need this shit." Although all of my guests face irate clients, Derby, the table's sole commercial banker, faces several thousand more.

For the next three hours, the foursome point fingers at the IMF, former prime minister Sergei Kiriyenko, the corruption bred in Russian bones, falling commodity prices, the global recession, prudish U.S. investors, prudent Asian investors, again the IMF. Jordan drops the name of every player in Russia, from Kiriyenko to Soros, and declares early on: "This'll help them" ("this" being the crash, "them" being the Russians). Derby speaks in breathless arias on the chronology of the fall. Ryan waxes philosophical, and Browder concludes, "Sadly, this is a crash with too many morals." Sadly too, the meal, by far the most expensive I've ever eaten, gets lost in the burlesque of charge and countercharge.

"The basic problem is you can't control a company in this country," states Jordan.

"You *can* have controlling stakes," says Browder.

"And get ripped off on every level," replies Jordan.

Derby announces that his number two, "a great Russian guy," will go to jail in days, but adds, "We will stay and try to be honest and fulfill our responsibilities."

"This country's so corrupt they fucked themselves," says Browder.

"Bill, you obviously don't believe that," says Jordan, "or else you didn't do your fiduciary duty for your clients, investing a billion in the place."

At this moment, the joust between Browder and Jordan is interrupted by the governor of St. Petersburg, Vladimir Yakovlev, a blithe opportunist who stops by for a round of handshakes. (A few weeks later, the governor will com under attack for skipping the funeral o his vocal opponent, Duma deputy Gal na Starovoitova, who was gunned dow by contract killers in the stairwell out side her apartment.) When the gover nor floats away, Derby picks the con versation right back up. "The wors thing about it was there was no reaso to default," he says. "Absolutely none There wasn't that much debt comin due, like $12 billion over the six week And it was ruble-denominated. Ther were reasons to take action, but not t default on the domestic debt."

"Any country will default if the can't roll over their debt," says Brow der. "If the U.S. couldn't sell T-bills fo a month straight, they'd have a b fucking problem. But the thing that most damaging is the collapse of th banking system . . ."

"This place never had a bankin system," scoffs Derby.

"It had a system where you mad payments," Browder retorts. "You can make payments now."

"The banking sector did not tak savings, invest it, and get growt through investment," says Derby.

"There was no multiplier effect Ryan sums up.

"And the reason you don't hav people breaking the windows here because they didn't deposit their mo ey in the banks," says Jordan.

"This is one the great mysteries Russia," Ryan says. "No one's had job in a lot of towns for years. But o ownership in those same towns h gone up by 200 percent. Consum durables are way up. And at the sam time no one's rioting. That's a cle sign that no one's being very hon about their real net worth, or abo their real sources of income."

"Let's say you've got 25 percent your money in the bank and 75 perce in your mattress," says Browder. "Eve tually your mattress money is going disappear."

Tuxedoed waiters unveil course ter course with flair, raising broad sil lids from big silver plates, mak sweeping bows in sync. As the even winds down, Browder, more puck than the rest, says, "There used to Third World countries. Then they came Developing Countries. Then I

[3] *Soros calls the Svyazinvest investment "the worst" of his career, indeed, that 25 percent stake is worth only $500,000 today.*

Developed Countries. Then the Wall came down and we got Emerging Markets. Well folks, now they're gone, too."

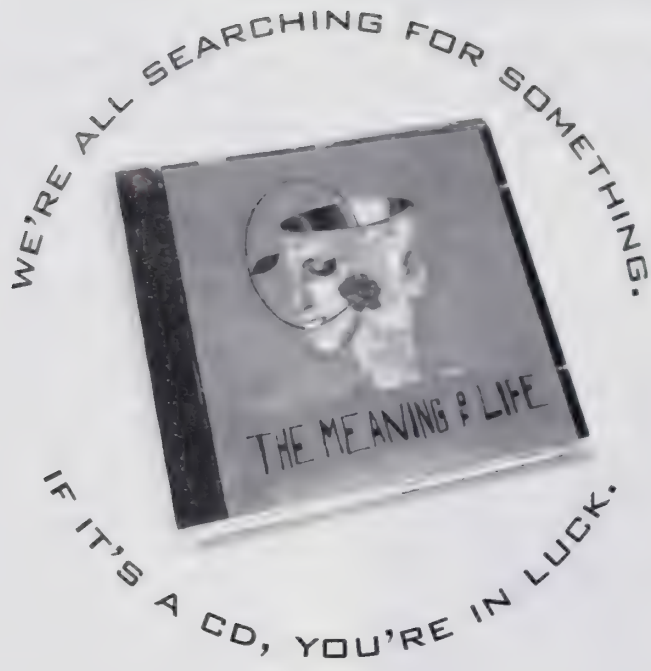
With dessert the conversation drifts to talk of exit strategies, the price of bodyguards, the best tax havens for billionaires, and the travails of Bermudian citizenship. Over coffee, Jordan offers a parable: Back when it was flush, the Central Bank had decided to buy an American satellite to monitor electronic trading across Russia's eleven time zones. No sooner had they launched the satellite than it spun out of orbit. Eventually, it disappeared altogether.

V. THE DEPOSED

In the coveted neighborhood of Nikitskiye Vorota, nestled among small parks and large embassies and behind the poplar-lined boulevard that circumscribes the city center, stands a squat building of beige brick and broad balconies. The building once housed Politburo members, titans of Soviet industry, and even Dolores Ibarruri, the notorious doyenne of the Spanish Communists. ("That's the apartment of Mikoyan, designer of the MiG," Nikita Khrushchev—grandson of the Soviet ruler—tells me one evening as we tour the building where he has lived since childhood. "And in that apartment," Nikita exclaims, "lives Lenin's niece!") Today, the chief of the IMF's Moscow mission, a jovial bald economist with a hefty pinkie ring, lives in the old flat of Andrei Gromyko, the long-serving Soviet foreign minister. Directly below resides one of the last living overlords of the Soviet empire, Grigori Vasilievich Romanov, who lives in an apartment filled, I imagine, with little more than must and an overstuffed Warsaw Bloc living room set.

I am to meet Romanov on a subzero afternoon beneath the iron statue of Yuri the Long-Armed, founder of Moscow, and across the street from Mayor Luzhkov's lavish offices. I spend twenty minutes at –17 C examining each passing face. This is fine. I've been waiting to see Romanov for two years.

I see him shuffling slowly, painfully, down the crowded sidewalk long before he sees me. As he approaches, a silver Mercedes—a FOR SALE sign taped to its rear window—nearly runs him down. Romanov is short, no more than



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five five, and I remember hearing how, when he was in the Politburo, he placed his desk atop a raised platform to make himself appear more imposing. Today, Romanov wears a gray topcoat, with just a thin sweater beneath. A faint stubble shades his sagging square cheeks; tufts of gray jut from beneath his brown fur hat. At seventy-five, and despite a recent heart attack, he's in far better shape than his phone voice led me to believe. His pale blue eyes are tearing up from the cold wind.

"It's not that I don't trust journalists," he says straight off, dabbing his eyes with a folded handkerchief. "I don't trust anyone. But someone has to say what has happened here. Someone has to speak of Russia's misery."

Romanov came to prominence in the 1980s, when he and Mikhail Gorbachev served as lieutenants to Yuri Andropov and his ailing successor, Konstantin Chernenko. Romanov, who ran the Soviet military-industrial complex, was the darling of the Politburo's hawks, the truest of the cold warriors, but after Chernenko's death, he was ousted by Gorbachev. To my knowledge, Romanov has not spoken to a foreigner in years. "The only people he hates more than foreigners," joked one of his neighbors, "are reporters."

Today, he puts both biases aside and begins an almost pauseless rant: "Gorbachev will pay for his sins! I can't stand the sight of his pig's mug! He's a traitor to the motherland! To hell with Gorbachev. He started this disaster. He was a catastrophe, a peasant who had no right coming to the big city. . . . Yeltsin? Who is Yeltsin? A swine who drinks. He got drunk on power. I can't even speak of him. He's a criminal. A common thief who's robbed his motherland and killed his people. All these Gaidars, Berezovskys, these so-called oligarchs, they're all Yeltsin's little children. Now they want to ban the Communist Party. Do you think all people are born the same? Of course not. Some are born to make things—to create, build, and work. Others are born to take, to steal. Gorbachev is one of the takers. He started the fashion. Now look where it's led us."

Romanov lives on $60 a month. "I'm entitled to several war pensions. I'm a veteran and an invalid. And I received the Hero of Soviet Labor. Politburo privileges? What a joke! We have noth ing. No dacha, no car, no privileges a all. Only the apartment." Once it wa a very different story. After runnin Leningrad for twenty-five years, he wa summoned to Moscow by Andropo in 1983. There, he survived variou Politburo wars, until he was finally out flanked by Gorbachev. "In Februar 1985, Chernenko called me out to th dacha. He was weak. He sat up in bec I stood beside him. 'Just wait,' he sai 'Relax. It'll come to pass.' He relied o the defense sector. He knew the im portance of our work. He never want ed Gorbachev. . . . We all knew Cher nenko couldn't last long. He was i very bad shape. . . . There were two can didates discussed at that time—Shcher bitsky and Romanov. . . . No one talke about Gorbachev with any seriousness.

A few weeks later Chernenko diec and within hours Gorbachev wreste control of the Politburo in a close late night vote. It was a bit of spectacula luck, or so his biographers have held that three remaining Politburo mem bers with the power to vote, all o whom were rivals to Gorbachev, were absent from Moscow. "The week be fore Chernenko died, my wife and flew to Vilnius," said Romanov. "The had given us a trip to Lithuania. To sanitarium. The day Chernenko died we were there. They said the plan would only fly the next day. They me that day, hours after he died. But th three most senior members of the Polit buro weren't present! Kunayev was i Almaty. Shcherbitsky was in th States. And I was in Lithuania. By th time we got back to Moscow—he' already done it. That fast. That wa it. It was agreed to in public of cours at the Politburo meeting and at th Plenum. But he'd already cut the dea in secret with all of them. And yo think the timing, Chernenko's death I mean, was all accidental?"

In the aftermath, Romanov wa stripped of his power. He had lon been renowned as an epicurean lush ridiculed as "The Last of the Ro manovs." Gorbachev's cronies playe upon that reputation, spreading th rumor that to celebrate his daughter' wedding, Romanov had ordered th caterers to use Catherine the Great' Sèvres porcelain from the Hermitage and a few pieces had been smashed

y July, Romanov was summarily re-
red and sent—according to another
mor fed to reporters—to dry out.

I ask if he ever regrets not having
ade it to the top. "No," he retorts.
'm just sorry the wrong man did. The
aitor. Because if it had been me, the
vasion never would have happened."

VI. THE DACHA

One Sunday last winter, I head-
ed out to Nikolina Gora, a
dacha community about a half-
our drive from Moscow. Dachaland,
s many expatriates lovingly call the
ountry southwest of the city, is Russia's
Malibu. The two-lane road leading
om Moscow was once the best-guard-
d in the land, and foreigners—let
lone reporters—couldn't travel it.
These days the road is clotted with ar-
nored BMWs and Humvees ferrying
he Noviye Russkie, or New Russians,
o their outlandish haciendas.

It's a short drive past a string of vil-
ages—real ones, where people live as
hey have lived for centuries in little
vooden houses with neatly painted
vindow trim, though a few villagers
ry to dress up their cottages with the
mported frills of the new era: alu-
minum mailboxes, plastic kiddie pools,
patio furniture. The road winds past
babushki selling cabbage and pickles,
past billboards advertising heated floors
nd Swiss Jacuzzis. A half-dozen vil-
ages later, a right turn across a narrow
ridge—the site of Yeltsin's famous
989 nocturnal fall into the frozen riv-
r—leads to a wonderland built in the
930s for the cultural elite. A few of the
ntelligentsia still remain. Not far from
Prokofiev's old dacha live the film-
making brothers Andron Konchalovsky
nd Nikita Mikhalkov. Down by the
iver lives the chess master Anatoli
Karpov. Nearby lives Yuri Bashmet,
one of the world's top violists.

Poor Bashmet. His practice sessions
have been drowned out by the din of
cranes and work crews toiling round
the clock in the woods next to his
house. There, on one of the priciest
plots of Dachaland, on a hill rising
above a pastoral bend in the Moskva,
a four-story, Kremlin-red brick building,
surrounded by a wall fit for an Alpine
schloss—or a maximum-security labor
camp—is being erected. Twelve feet
tall and spiked with wrought-iron

You deserve a factual look at...

"Sacrifices for Peace"

What else does the world expect Israel to do?

There is persistent pressure on Israel to bring "sacrifices for peace." It is understood that these "sacrifices" refer to greater "flexibility" in dealing with the Arabs, but mean primarily that Israel should allow its dismemberment, in order to bring peace to the region.

What are the facts?

A Bizarre Concept. The concept to bring "sacrifices for peace" is a new one that has never before found application in world history. It was created by Arab propaganda to induce Israel to agree to its dismemberment, to give strategic assets to those who are determined to destroy it.

Since its creation in 1948, Israel has been subjected to almost constant Arab terror, to unceasing Arab aggression, and to three major wars. In the Six-Day War, it recovered its heartland of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and the eastern part of Jerusalem; it captured the Golan Heights from Syria, which had been used for decades to shell and spread terror over much of northern Israel; and it conquered Gaza and the Sinai Desert that had been used by Egypt as staging ground and invasion route to Israel.

> Here are three good sacrifices that the Arabs could bring for peace: (1) Abandon the insistence on recovering the Golan; (2) Stop the clamor about the division of Jerusalem; (3) Disarm the Palestinian "police".

Many Sacrifices for Peace. In order to achieve peace with its neighbors, Israel brought sacrifices for peace that have no precedent in the history of the world. For peace with Egypt, Israel returned the entire Sinai. There is little thanks on the part of Egypt for this generosity and this sacrifice for peace. The controlled Egyptian press spews daily anti-Israel venom. President Mubarak has never visited Jerusalem. It is the coolest possible peace. A sacrifice for peace brought in vain—probably a major act of folly on the part of Israel.

Israel made sacrifices for peace by signing a peace treaty with Jordan. In that peace, Israel granted Jordan a large yearly allowance of fresh water from its own dwindling and meager resources and accepted a petty demand for "border rectification"—yielding of land. As for Syria, no offered sacrifice for peace seems to be sufficient to satisfy its dictator, President Hafez Assad. He is unwilling to consider even an ice-cold peace, except for Israel's total surrender of the Golan Heights. Fortunately, under the current Israeli government such a surrender is not in the cards.

The greatest sacrifice for peace that Israel has brought was the resuscitation of the bankrupt and moribund PLO terror organization and the acceptance of it "chairman" Yasser Arafat as a negotiating partner. In this ill-advised process, foisted on Israel by world pressure and by its previous government, Israel has made far-reaching and existential sacrifices and concessions. It has yielded control of the Gaza Strip and of all major "West Bank" cities to the Palestinian Authority and has agreed to detailed plans to grant further autonomy to the Palestinians. In what is probably the ultimate folly in this process, Israel has tolerated the formation of a Palestinian "police force" (actually an army) of 40,000 men—the largest police-to-population ratio in the world (!)—and has equipped this "police force' with a complete arsenal of automatic weapons. As the world now knows, these weapons were turned on Israeli soldiers and civilians at the very first opportunity that the Palestinian leaders provoked.

The Arab countries, not Israel, are killing peace in the Middle East. The PLO, apart from the bloody crimes that it has committed against Israel, has now established a virtual dictatorship in the territory allotted to it. In Egypt, thousands of Copts have been killed and their churches burned. President Assad of Syria has occupied Lebanon and has killed and tortured thousands. Iraq, under its dictator Saddam Hussein, is a rogue state attacking its neighbors and killing its own citizens. Saudi Arabia is a monarchical tyranny. Sudan is engaged in the systematic slaughter and enslavement of its black African people. How strange that nobody asks the Palestinians or any of the Arab states to bring any sacrifices for peace. Here are three good sacrifices that the Arabs could bring for peace: (1) Abandon the insistence on recovering the Golan; (2) Stop the clamor about the division of Jerusalem; (3) Disarm the Palestinian "police." Billy clubs are good enough for London Bobbies. Why should any more be needed to patrol Nablus, Hebron and Bethlehem?

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56B

grings, the wall could easily cost a million dollars. Only a handful of Russians, Sokolov had told me, could afford, financially and politically, such a dacha. It had to belong, the auditor had hinted, to Yeltsin, or, as the papers speculated, to his thirty-nine-year-old daughter and closest aide, Tatyana.

I scaled the wall and peeked over. I could make out workers, guards, dogs. The dogs arrived first. Before long, I was being interviewed by a young blond rent-a-cop, from Moscow's abundant supply, who refused to smile at my dumb questions. But I noticed a sign lying in the mud that bore the name of the contractor, one linked by the Russian media to Mabetex, a Swiss-registered firm that handles the Kremlin's construction needs.

The house embodies a popular saying these days: *pir vo vremya chumi*—"a feast in the time of plague"—which just as easily fits Tatyana herself. When she was appointed to be her father's "image-maker" in 1997, she vowed to stay "in the shadows." She has, though her fingerprints are all over the Kremlin, especially in last year's cabinet cleanings. Her ailing father's minders appreciate her political intuition. (Tatyana, after all, was the one who bid him to jig at campaign rallies.) On the other hand, her enemies claim that Tatyana enabled Berezovsky to rape the country and that she acts as if she's Catherine the Great.

The dacha doesn't help Tatyana's bad press. Before he made his triumphant assault on the Kremlin, Yeltsin religiously attacked the privileges enjoyed by the Soviet elite. As he wrote in his 1990 memoir, *Against the Grain*: "As long as no one can build or buy his own dacha, as long as we continue to live in such relative poverty, I refuse to eat caviar followed by sturgeon. I will not race through the streets in a car that can ignore traffic lights. I cannot swallow excellent imported medicines, knowing that my neighbor's wife can't get an aspirin for her child. Because to do so is shameful."

I decide to visit my friend Vanya while I'm in the area. Vanya, who chauffeurs a Parisian linoleum importer, lives in a little village of factory workers and potato farmers across the river from Nikolina Gora. He built his little wooden house himself, unlike Tatyana, says Vanya with a wink. No one's proven that the dacha is hers, I reply. "Look," he says. "I know the guys who brought the bricks. I know the guys who welded the iron. I know the guys who delivered the cement. They say it's hers." And not her papa's? "Could be." He shrugs. "Look, it doesn't really matter, does it? It sure the fuck ain't for you or me."

VII. THE CODA

A few months after my first interview with Sokolov, I went back to see him. Since our first meeting, there had been more scandals, more stories of starving children, more people culled from the cabinet. Much, and little, had changed. We sat somberly in his office, mulling the popular notion that Russia is, once again, in a pre-revolutionary state. I quoted the lines the poet Anna Akhmatova wrote in 1921: *Everything is plundered, betrayed, sold,/Death's great black wing scrapes the air,/Misery gnaws to the bone/Why then do we not despair?* Sokolov nodded. "Yes, we are in for more troubles," he said slowly. "Now I wonder, maybe it's not worth tracing the money trail. We may get some arrests. We may get some of the money back. But of course we'll never get all of it back. And you know, that may be for the best."

When I first met Sokolov he had seemed energized by his task, but now he appeared beaten, as if it were all futile, and I soon found out why. In February, Prosecutor General Skuratov made yet another of his famous pronouncements: that the Central Bank had used an offshore company in the Channel Islands to "manage" $50 billion of Russia's reserves. This time, however, Skuratov's assertion was confirmed by former Bank officials. A few days later Skuratov "quit," on the same day that companies linked to Berezovsky were raided by government agents, presumably on the orders of Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov, who hates Berezovsky, or factions of the Yeltsin camp, who wish to extract Tatyana and Boris from the man they call Rasputin. Was Skuratov forced out because he was too scared to go after Berezovsky, or because he had done so, or because his "attack" on the Central Bank had disturbed the wrong people, or because he had failed to get convictions on the plague of contract killings, and Yeltsin finally had had enough? The Russian press writhed with speculation for six weeks, until March 17, when Skuratov announced that he was returning to office in defiance of Yeltsin. That night the main government TV channel aired a videotape of Skuratov in bed with two young women, neither of them his wife.

Skuratov responded to the *kompromat* by saying that the tape was aired to stop his investigation of Mabetex, which, he hinted, had won padded deals to renovate Yeltsin's Kremlin residence, the plush office of auditor Sokolov, and even the mysterious dacha. But far more explosive, given the anti–NATO/U.S. sentiment blooming in Russia, was that Mabetex is run by a Kosovar Albanian, a fact quickly twisted by Communists and nationalists to imply that Yeltsin was abetting the Kosovo Liberation Army. When Yeltsin's apparatchiks claimed $4–8 billion in additional foreign loans were in the pipeline, his enemies claimed it was hush money to keep Russia from defending Serbia and tried unsuccessfully to restart their efforts to impeach him.

Lost in the excitement was an announcement made a few weeks earlier by Khachim Karmokov, the head of the Audit Chamber and Sokolov's boss, that the report on the Central Bank would be given to the prosecutor general (whoever that might be) sometime in April. But don't expect any great revelations, Karmokov told reporters; these so-called signs of corruption—currency reserves funneled through offshore companies, a missing billion or two in Western aid—were explainable because "the Central Bank and we simply have different ways of accounting." It was a remarkable statement but was met with almost total indifference, a telling sign of Russia's mood. Russians feel betrayed by America's economic policies, threatened by what they see as our military expansionism, fatalistic about the honesty of their leaders and the hope of reform. After the tumult of the last year, this familiar mix of nationalism and resignation may even be comforting to them. But a Russia that feels impotent and angry should be no comfort to us.

UNMAKING FRIENDS

Norman Podhoretz as crumb

By Christopher Hitchens

Discussed in this essay:

Ex-Friends, by Norman Podhoretz. The Free Press. 256 pages. $25.
Making It, by Norman Podhoretz. Random House. 360 pages. (Out of print)

Evelyn Waugh, discoursing on the etiquette of book reviewing, observed that one must always give favorable treatment to the work of close friends. Quite apart from anything else, he explained, it was the height of bad manners to give a poor review to a book one had not read. Waugh's remark may have been cynical, but it had a certain lightness and paradox to it. Whereas Norman Podhoretz has no levity—unbearable heaviness is his preferred métier—and never strays into paradox, and gives a series of chiefly posthumous but always spiteful reviews to several authors whom he may have read but certainly has not understood. This is bad manners cubed, boorishness wrenched almost into a literary form.



Illustration by Steve Brodner

Christopher Hitchens is the author of No One Left to Lie To: The Triangulations of William Jefferson Clinton *and is a contributing editor of* Vanity Fair. *His essay "Goodbye to All That" appeared in the November 1998 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

True, the former editor of the supposedly solemn *Commentary* magazine has always himself sought to ease the life of the book reviewer. He does this small but welcome favor by making all his faults crashingly apparent from the very first page, sometimes even from the opening paragraph. Here are the initial two sentences of *Ex-Friends*:

> I have often said that if I wish to name-drop, I have only to list my ex-friends. This remark always gets a laugh, but, in addition to being funny, it has the advantage of being true.

If he *does* say so himself. To be invariably witty and unfailingly truthful is a claim many of us might wish to make or perhaps (shall we hint?) to have made on our behalf. To reduce the claim to an assertion, frequently advanced—as we are assured by the author himself—and no less often mirthfully received, is to force the question: Who is the audience for this sapient gag? How often does it meet, and where? Who pays for the dinner? Then again, if Podhoretz stands alone in a forest, and falls over as a result of laughing at his own mordant humor, and there is nobody to hear or to see, does he still look and sound such a fool?

But seriously, folks, Norman doesn't want you to think that he is a mere Catskills jester, nor yet a pure and ascetic intellectual. Let us proceed, drying our eyes, to page two, where it is confided with perfect gravity that

> It will seem even stranger to my more recent acquaintances that in my younger years I was also full of fun, as Norman Mailer confirmed when he said that I was "merrier" in the "old days." The same word was once used by Max Lerner, the historian and columnist (now among the almost forgotten), who after spending a few days in my company described me (to general agreement) as "the merry madcap" of the group.

Must have been quite a party. Norman setting the table on a roar and bearing Lerner on his back to the land of infinite jest. In the corner, perhaps, Irving Kristol screaming, "Stop! You're killing me!" But as I contemplated this lugubrious fiesta, the image of Yorick faded from my mind to be deposed by that of Polonius himself, endlessly finger-wagging to the young and making himself useful around the court. He gave way in turn to Justice Shallow, cackling senescently about the chimes of midnight and the tales he might have told of a laddish youth.

A melancholy lesson of advancing years is the realization that you can't make old friends. This is redeemed somewhat by the possibility of making new ones, and in his late maturity—some might say that like the medlar fruit he went rotten before becoming ripe—Podhoretz has found companionship and solidarity with some new chums. He mentions them shyly, as if he were back in his lonely childhood and his mother had secretly bribed them to play with him.

> Here, in what is for me a rare submission to the principles of affirmative action, which dictate that I should strive to achieve greater name-dropping "diversity," I will single out Henry Kissinger and William F. Buckley, Jr.
>
> In spite of our failure to form ourselves into a cohesive family, we have managed to join forces as a dissenting minority of "heretical" intellectuals who are trying to break the virtual monopoly that the worst ideas of my ex-friends hold (even from beyond the grave) over the cultural institutions of this country.

The purpose of recruiting these new chums is clear: to enlist them in the urgent task of pissing on the graves of the old ones. This makes them more like cronies, or accomplices, than actual friends. But perhaps that's better than nothing. Is it Henry and Bill, perhaps, who get together and agree to laugh at Norman's jokes? Whatever the case, the man who can describe this gleesome threesome as a trio of heretical dissenters is certainly eager to please.

For the purposes of comparison, here's what happens when Podhoretz encounters an authentic dissident:

> When on a visit of my own to Prague in 1988 I was taken to meet Vaclav Havel, . . . the first thing that hit my eye upon entering his apartment was a huge poster of John Lennon hanging on the wall. Disconcerted, I tried to persuade Havel that the counterculture in the West was no friend of anti-Communists like himself, but I made even less of a "dent" on him than Ginsberg had made on me thirty years earlier.

Good of Podhoretz to have spared so much time to put Havel straight. But that's the sort of guy he is—always willing to oblige. Also, the fact that Havel was under house arrest may have helped both men to concentrate.

The above anecdote occurs in the chapter on Allen Ginsberg, the most recently dead of Podhoretz's exes. (As a literary critic, he rather resembles an undertaker scanning the obits for trade.) You can take whatever view you like of Ginsberg's poetry, or of his vague teachings about hedonism, or of his fierce commitment to *penetratio per anum*. Podhoretz thinks that Ginsberg was a serious and gifted poet, that his views on family and society were destructive, and that (great wailing walls of glossy video in every heterosexual porn shop notwithstanding) anal sex is something that fascinates only homosexuals. The last point is an obsessive one in the neoconservative school, incidentally, and requires professional attention from someone better qualified than the present author. But the fact remains that the two men were once friends, and that they quarreled bitterly over Vietnam and the war on drugs and everything else, and that the cruelest words in the dispute were probably uttered—if only because he had the superior command of language—by Allen Ginsberg. In 1986, however, Ginsberg began to speak more softly about his old antagonist:

> He then followed up—I forget exactly when—with a handwritten note very warmly inviting me to a seminar. . . . *This* invitation, unlike the one some thirty years earlier to his apartment in the Village, I unhesitatingly declined, knowing that the new Ginsberg's lovingkindness would put me even more uncomfortably on the defensive than the young Ginsberg's rage had done.

On Ginsberg's seventieth birthday, he gave an interview in which he again sought to repair the breach:

> Another invitation then arrived, not from Ginsberg himself but from a television producer who wanted to put us on the air together. But once more I passed up a chance to see him again. Six months later he was dead.

So let us recapitulate. At Columbia, Ginsberg had published Podhoretz's long poem about the prophet Jeremiah in the college literary magazine. Podhoretz had later written favorably about Ginsberg and compared him to Pound and Whitman. Then there was, for intelligible reasons, a major falling-out. And then, not once but twice, Ginsberg extended the hand of reconciliation, and Podhoretz, writing for the first time since his former friend's funeral, takes an obvious pride—a pride in his own integrity—in having slapped that hand away. Small wonder, then, that when he needs a friend these days he has to rely on Henry Kissinger, who probably bills him for meetings.

The Russian exile writer Vassily Aksyonov—another example of the real as opposed to the bogus dissident—once wrote that Podhoretz reminded him of all the things he had left the Soviet Union to escape. He had, said Aksyonov, the mentality of a cultural commissar. As the Ginsberg essay demonstrates, he has the soul of one as well. And the literary sensitivity and imagination: most of the chapters here are regurgitated in great chunks from previous jeremiads such as *Making It* and *Breaking Ranks*. Here is what Podhoretz wrote about Norman Mailer in *Making It* in 1967:

> Like most famous writers, he was surrounded by courtiers and sycophants but with this difference: he allowed them into his life not to flatter him but to give his radically egalitarian imagination a constant workout. He had the true novelist's curiosity about people unlike himself—you could see him getting hooked ten times a night by strangers at a party . . . He would look into the empty eyes of some vapid upper-class girl and announce to her that she could be the madam of a Mexican whorehouse.

If you consult page 193 of the present offering, for which The Free Press is charging a tidy sum, you will be informed that

> Like many famous people, Mailer like to surround himself with a crowd of courtiers, many of whom had nothing to recommend them that I could see other than their worshipful attitude toward him. . . . [H]e could be positively intolerable—posing, showing off, bumping heads (another of his favorite sports), bullying, ordering about, and, underneath it all, flattering.
>
> The flattering was especially in evidence with women, not only or even primarily as a means of seduction but mainly as a way of romanticizing and thereby inflating the significance of everything that came into his life. He would inform some perfectly ordina-

and uninteresting girl that she could have been a great madam running the best whorehouse in town.

This is not just boring and tenth-rate. It is *sinister*. Like Andrei Zhdanov, Stalin's literary enforcer, Podhoretz doesn't content himself with saying that a certain novelist is no longer in favor or no longer any good. That would be banal. No, it must be shown that he *never was* any good, that he always harbored the germs of anti-party feeling, that he was a rank dissident from the get-go. Then comes the airbrush, the rewritten entry in the encyclopedia, the memory hole. Even some of Zhdanov's hacks would have made the effort to employ some new phrases and new disclosures. I once noticed a column in the London *Spectator*, written by someone named Niki Theodoracopulos and devoted to a hysterical attack on anal sex borrowed whole cloth from an earlier diatribe by Norman Podhoretz in Rupert Murdoch's *New York Post*. I wrote a letter to the editor of the *Spectator*, asking if no more elevated source for plagiarism could be found. I now feel I owe Theodoracopulos an apology. Podhoretz, in stealing from himself, has found a real mug for a victim. He's also found some real new friends for reviewers—William F. Buckley Jr., writing, or typing, in the *New York Post*, now compares the congealed regurgitations of Podhoretz to Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians*.

The other essays, on Hellman and Trilling and so forth, are also sterile reworkings and recyclings of ancient grudges, and you should go to the library to reread them, if you must, and not reward The Free Press for its marketing of old rope. For old hands, there is the occasional and unmistakable Podhoretz touch, like the knot of imperfection in an inauthentic Turkish rug. "Having reportedly spent eighteen years in psychoanalysis," he slyly says of Diana Trilling, as if unable to make an unambiguous assertion to her face, even now. "Reportedly." That's a nice word. Nor is it the only breast-beat of courage donned by our critic. Indeed, his instinct for a place of safety is something that he still can't resist delineating in detail. Faced with a conflict between two of his early patrons—F. R. Leavis and C. P. Snow—he decided that Lionel Trilling should be his human shield:

> As an additional bonus, since the article would be coming from America's leading critic, I would not be held responsible (as I would have been if I had commissioned a lesser writer) for anything he might say that would offend either of the two warring parties.

But it didn't work out, because all parties to the dispute decided that Podhoretz had acted in a surreptitious manner, and so we are treated to staves of self-pity and recrimination, as if the sentence just quoted did not already manifest the cowardice of its own convictions.

There is such a thing as a disagreement on fundamentals between old friends. Fallings-out do occur in real life. One way of measuring the depth and intensity of such divisions is intuitive but sound: Does either party maintain that there was no real comradeship to begin with? Or does either party repudiate, with glacial attitudes masquerading as principles, a genuine attempt at a later composition of the quarrel? There's a relevant instance in this very book. Podhoretz parodies the views of the late Irving Howe, who generally sought for civilized relations with his former City College associates, many of whom had traded up and become apostles of the market, "free" or otherwise, and of the military-industrial complex, however defined. Yet for saying what was perfectly true about Irving Kristol—that in 1952 he had written in highly euphemistic terms of Senator Joseph McCarthy—Howe is indicted for taking a cheap shot. This may not be "the politics of personal destruction," as Mr. Clinton's many hired slanderers refer to arguments that go against them, but it is certainly the reduction of essential dispute to petty rancor.

A suggestive counterexample is touched upon in this book but is skated over, in a single paragraph, as if it had not really occurred. When Joseph Heller published *Catch-22* in the early 1960s, Podhoretz rushed to praise it in a glossy sheet called *Show*. As a consequence, Heller and he became social friends. But as the years passed, and as Podhoretz began to fawn more openly on Richard Nixon and the Israeli general staff (as if rehearsing for the engulfing, mandible-straining blow job that he would later bestow on Ronald Reagan), Heller hauled off and dealt him a sock in the jaw in a letter to *The Nation*. He rammed this home, as it were, with a sprightly caricature of our Norman in his novel *Good as Gold*. One can now see the cruelty of Heller's tactic. He not only repudiated his old friend but stabbed him in the front! And he did so at a time when the tide was running in Podhoretz's favor. I ran into Heller, by a happy chance, while I was cogitating this review. "Yeah," he said. "I never gave him the chance to dump *me*."

What Heller saw coming is what we now term "neo-conservatism." This is a protean and slippery definition, and very inexact as a category, but not all that hard to parse. If you take the version offered by its acolytes, you discover a group of New York Jewish intellectuals who decided that duty, honor, and country were superior, morally and mentally, to the bleeding-heart allegiances of their boy- and girlhoods. If you take the version offered by its critics, you stumble on an old Anglo-Saxon definition of the upper crust: "A load of crumbs held together by dough." They just might have set out to do good, but there is no question that they ended up doing well. Podhoretz, of all the old gang, is in the weakest position to rebut this charge. His book *Making It* is perhaps the most vulgar paean to pure and simple arrivism that has ever been penned. He still broods over the yellowing reviews that made sport of him, in particular over the shudder of distaste that both Trillings evinced at the sheer crumminess of his aspirations. Norman Mailer, if you will credit this, told Podhoretz to his face that he quite liked the book, and then trashed it in the pages of *Partisan Review*. Treachery defined! Yet Podhoretz calmly tells us that he stayed on good terms with Lillian Hellman in just the same way, so as to remain on her party list. When, in the 1980s, the country-club Republicans found that there were tame New York intellectuals to be had for

the asking, and from places like Brooklyn College at that, their polite surprise was evident. They had not been paying attention to the many attention-getting rehearsals, at which these old tarts had been dropping veils as if they were going out of style.

Podhoretz is accidentally right, as it happens, in maintaining that there is also a special *ad hominem* venom on the left, and an extreme willingness to attribute the very lowest motives to those who transgress its codes. Not long ago, having had a series of public disagreements with an old political friend, I clinched matters by making public something that, although it was public business, could have been described as privately held. Immediately, all evidence of my own strictly private shortcomings was placed on view by former comrades, an operation that I am half-ashamed to say required the spilling of much ink. Having come across this syndrome more than once, I have learned to regard it with resignation, as yet one more aspect of radical impotence in America. But the sufferers from said syndrome can acquire no worthwhile lessons from a crass power worshiper whose only regrets are for himself, and who can conceive of no cause larger than his own esteem. "The sweet solipsism of youth," says the poet. The solipsism of embittered old age is a lot harder to bear, if not for the writer then at least for the reader. ■

THE REANIMATORS

On the art of literary graverobbing

By Jonathan Dee

Discussed in this essay:

The Hours, by Michael Cunningham. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998. 230 pages. $22.
The Executioner's Song, by Norman Mailer. Little, Brown, and Company, 1979. Paperback: Vintage, 1998. 1,072 pages. $15.
Ragtime, by E. L. Doctorow. Random House, 1975. Paperback: Plume, 1997. 288 pages. $11.95.
Libra, by Don DeLillo. Viking, 1988. Paperback: Penguin USA, 1991. 464 pages. $11.95.
The Public Burning, by Robert Coover. Viking, 1977. Paperback: Grove Press, 1998. 544 pages. $14.
I Was Amelia Earhart, by Jane Mendelsohn. Knopf, 1996. 144 pages. $18.
John Wayne: A Novel, by Dan Barden. Doubleday, 1997. 176 pages. $21.95.
The Blue Flower, by Penelope Fitzgerald. Houghton Mifflin, 1997. $12 (paper).
Arrogance, by Joanna Scott. Linden Press (Simon & Schuster), 1990. Paperback: W. W. Norton, 1991, 288 pages. $10.
The Master of Petersburg, by J. M. Coetzee. Viking, 1994. 256 pages. $21.95.

Michael Cunningham's *The Hours*, published last fall to admiring reviews and winner of both the Pulitzer Prize and the PEN/Faulkner Award for the year's best work of fiction, bravely offers as its animating force that most unfashionable of love objects, a book. Not just any book, either, but *Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf's slim, exacting treatment of one June day in the life of a group of Londoners, some of them related by friendship, some by birth, and some only by a kind of magical transfer of authorial sympathies as the characters pass one another on the street. Completed in 1925 (part of a six-year explosion of Woolf's genius that also saw the publication of *To the Lighthouse*, *A Room of One's Own*, and *The Waves*), *Mrs. Dalloway* is one of the peaks of Woolf's achievement, which is another way of saying that it is one of the signal achievements in all of Modernist literature; still, it takes an unusually ardent devotion to imagine, as Cunningham does, that Woolf's novel might enter the world as an instrument of fate, influencing lives for three-quarters of a century—even the lives of those who have never read it.

The Hours plaits together the stories of three women, each of them observed over the course of one June day in three radically different times and places: 1923 London, 1949 Los Angeles, and 1998 Greenwich Village. The present-day narrative is the dominant one, and it takes the form of a somewhat overdetermined contemporary replay of the very events of Woolf's novel. Cunningham's central figure is Clarissa Vaughan (same first name as Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway), whom we first see in the throes of preparation for an important party at her home that evening (same as Clarissa Dalloway). The coincidences pile up rapidly from there: Clarissa Vaughan's ignorance of them (in spite of the fact that she has even been nicknamed "Mrs. Dalloway" by a friend) is what saves these chapters from reading less like an act of homage than like a particularly highbrow episode of *The Twilight Zone*. Much more original and affecting is the novel's second, less emulative narrative strand, which concerns the tremulous existence of Laura Brown, a smart young housewife in suburban Los Angeles in the years of the post–World War II boom. Married to a doting war hero, mother of a three-year-old boy and with another child on the way, Laura is on a quiet course toward some sort of nervous breakdown, possibly even suicide; on the June day in question—her husband's birthday—she checks into a hotel room by herself and lies on the bed for two and a half hours reading *Mrs. Dalloway*. Never far from her mind is what she knows of the ultimate end of the woman who wrote the book she is holding; "How, Laura wonders, could someone who was able to write a sentence like that—who was able to feel everything contained in a sentence like that—come to kill herself? What in the world is wrong with people?"

Jonathan Dee is the author of the novels St. Famous, The Liberty Campaign, *and* The Lover of History. *His essay "But Is It Advertising? Capitalist Realism at the Clio Awards" appeared in the January issue of* Harper's Magazine.

The third character in *The Hours* is rginia Woolf herself. She, too, is en on an imaginary June day, eigh- n years before her suicide by drown- g (a scene that forms the book's pro- gue), a day on which she is struggling th the opening pages of a new nov- —the novel that will become *Mrs. lloway* but whose working title is he Hours." These chapters are nar- ed in the same psy- ologically intimate ird-person style as are ose chapters centered ound the women who e entirely Cunning- m's creation. And al- ough there is no mis- king the fact that this rrative—indeed, the hole novel—is con- ived by Cunningham a sincere tribute to a edecessor whom he veres, still it is remark- le to watch him dem- strate that there is no rner of Woolf's extra- dinary consciousness at, for reasons of mod- ty, he might shy away om attempting to re- eate. For the most part, e narrative sticks ndly to the quotidian rangements of Woolf's y (washing her face in the bathroom, anning a lunch menu); but we are al- made privy to the less penetrable ysteries of her creative process:

> It seems good enough; parts seem very good indeed. She has lavish hopes, of course—she wants this to be her best book. . . . But can a single day in the life of an ordinary woman be made into enough for a novel? Virginia taps at her lips with her thumb.

Ve are in Woolf's head when she en- ges the madness with which her dif- cult life was fired: "she can feel the earness of the old devil (what else to all it?), and she knows she will be ut- rly alone if and when the devil choos- s to appear again." And, of course, in e prologue mentioned above, we are ffered access to that consciousness ven as it extinguishes itself, on the fternoon Woolf walks into the River use with stones in her pockets.



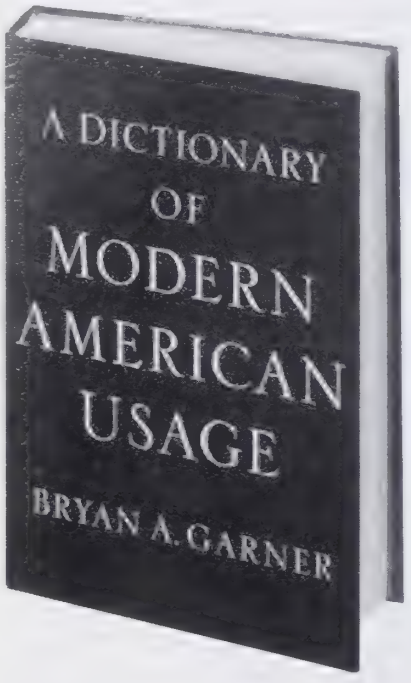
The appropriation of genuine historical figures—people who actually lived—as characters in fiction is an act of imaginative boldness that, through simple attrition, readers of contemporary fiction have come to take entirely for granted. The past several years have seen a torrent of such novels, by Russell Banks (on John Brown), Pat Barker (Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon), Jay Parini (Walter Benjamin), Thomas Pynchon (Mason and Dixon), Susan Sontag (Lord Nelson), John Updike (James Buchanan), and a legion of lesser-known writers. The coming months will bring new fiction by Joyce Carol Oates on Marilyn Monroe, Richard Lourie on Joseph Stalin, a novel by Ron Hansen entitled *Hitler's Niece*, and more. To one way of thinking, this verbal impersonation of the famous dead is a device as old as Shakespeare: after all, Brutus, Cleopatra, Henry V, were real people, and if virtually all we now know of their lives is contained in Shakespeare's reimagining of them, well, so much the luckier for them. Tolstoy, too, drafted the generals of the Napoleonic wars onto the stage of *War and Peace*. Malraux wrote a novel about the adventures of the young Chiang Kai-shek.

But whether or not it's true (and I think it's untrue) that the relationship between the real and the invented in the art of prose fiction hasn't changed significantly since Shakespeare's time, there's no debating that the practice of conscripting flesh-and-blood people into novels has become a veritable epidemic in the last twenty-five years or so. It is more than mere postmodern fashion, this appetite for the real among those whose traditional stock-in-trade is invention. It says something important—and, to those of us who care about making the case for the novel's continued vitality, something ominous—about the way in which fiction writers imagine their relation to the world.

What makes a novel a novel—what distinguishes it from other forms? More, surely, than the question of invention: "invention" is a continuum, after all, and I know no fiction writer who would be so bold as to claim that no aspect of his or her characters had its origin in something observed in the real world. More, too, than its dependence upon language, or its use of story as a kind of tonality to be either relied upon or rebelled against, or its deployment of moving, speaking, acting human figures as the elements of art (all of which it has in common with movies and plays and television shows). If there is one thing the novel offers that no other form can approach, it is the opportunity to know those human figures *completely*, through the fiction writer's full, uncompromised access to his or her characters' interior lives, as well as to the ways in which they define themselves through the observable phenomena of speech and action. In a novel, the discrepancy, large or small, between what a person does and who that person is can be if not exactly erased then at least accounted for so fully as to provide a picture of human nature that

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we feel is sufficient in its totality. The satisfaction of knowing others—or even ourselves—in that kind of totality is a satisfaction with which our real lives most definitely do not provide us. And it is precisely this imaginary bridging of the gulf between the knowable and the unknowable about human motives that makes of fiction an alternate life: a life that transcends this one, and that brings us into closer contact with our natures than real life—that is to say, the life outside books—is capable of doing.

This idea, of course, is not new. "In daily life," E. M. Forster wrote in *Aspects of the Novel*, "we never understand each other, neither complete clairvoyance nor complete confessional exists. We know each other approximately, by external signs, and these serve well enough as a basis for society and even for intimacy. But people in a novel can be understood completely by the reader, if the novelist wishes; their inner as well as their outer life can be exposed. And this is why they often seem more definite than characters in history, or even our own friends; we have been told all about them that can be told; even if they are imperfect or unreal they do not contain any secrets, whereas our friends do and must, mutual secrecy being one of the conditions of life upon this globe."

A more historically minded accounting can be found in Milan Kundera's 1986 manifesto *The Art of the Novel*. Centuries before the invention of the novel, Kundera says, in the work of the great storytellers like Boccaccio and Dante, "we can make out this conviction: It is through action that man steps forth from the repetitive universe of the everyday where each person resembles every other person; it is through action that he distinguishes himself from others and becomes an individual." Four hundred years later, in the work of proto-novelists such as Cervantes and Diderot, Kundera finds a more complex portrait of existence starting to emerge: the unlucky hero of Diderot's *Jacques le Fataliste*, for instance, "thought he was starting an amorous adventure, and instead he was setting forth toward his infirmity. He could never recognize himself in his action. Between the act and himself, a chasm opens. Man hopes to reveal his own image through his act, but that image bears no resemblance to him. The paradoxical nature of action is one of the novel's great discoveries. But if the self is not to be grasped through action, then where and how are we to grasp it?" Out of that last sentence's primary existential problem, the novel as we know it is continually reborn.

Fiction's relatively recent vogue for the appropriation of real-life characters can probably be traced to the great and gaudily successful changes in the course of non-fiction writing in the 1960s and '70s. The "New Journalism" was primarily a realization of the fantasy of carrying the novelist's fundamentally unreal power of perception into the world of real people and events. The satisfaction of the best-written exemplars of the form, such as Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* or Tom Wolfe's *The Right Stuff*, are as undeniable as they are counterfeit; they break the taboo by entering with a novelist's droit du seigneur into the minds of those real-life men and women upon whom they report.

But if we are to select one book as the culmination of this trampling of the fences between the world of the novel and the world outside the novel, that book may as well be *The Executioner's Song*, Norman Mailer's Pulitzer Prize–winning, thousand-page account of the crimes, trial, and execution of Gary Gilmore. Distilled from hundreds of interviews with the living participants (by Mailer and others), *The Executioner's Song* stands as one of the two or three pinnacles in Mailer's wildly uneven body of work. One wishes it could be remembered simply as a beautifully written, staggeringly detailed work of reportage, unfortunately marred by a few journalistic lapses: a great book, which, like many great books, occasionally goes too far. Instead, its author insisted on releasing it into the world as a "true life novel," an exasperating designation that a great many critics swallowed whole.

In the interest of readability, Mailer provides no direct sources for any fact or observation or re-created exchange of dialogue in the book, and

ere are dozens of passages (one will ve to suffice here) where he is quite early touching up what the interview bjects really said and remembered:

> Schiller sat and relaxed and let the heat of the room pour over him and the fatigues of twenty-five years perspired slowly, a drop and another drop from the bottomless reservoirs of fatigue, and he sat there quietly thinking, and let his sins and errors wash over him, and reviewed them. He considered it obscene not to learn from experience.

rly on in the book, Dr. John oods, a psychiatrist consulted by ilmore's defense team, has a eam—recounted in conspicuous tail—in which he interviews a lleague about the effects of a cerin antipsychotic drug given to ilmore in prison. It's only in Mail's afterword that we're told that r. Woods in fact never dreamed is dream: it is actually an interew Mailer conducted with a differt doctor several years later, the anscript of which, Mailer says ithely, "has been placed in Dr. oods's mind with his kind permison." We also learn, in that same terword, that Mailer has rewritten rts of Gilmore's letters to his girliend, Nicole—vandalizing our nly chance to hear Gilmore's voice the book unfiltered by the coniousness of Mailer or of those he terviewed—because "it seemed ir to show him at a level higher an his average. . . . Besides, he rote well at times. His good letters e virtually intact."

In his capacity as a "reporter," lailer feels that the world offers itlf up to him not as a phenomenon be comprehended but as raw marial for his own creation. In place the truth, we get a magnificent rchestral arrangement of subjectivies, each of them equal to the othrs, at least in terms of their subrdination to Mailer's own.

"I called it a novel," Mailer has said, ecause it reads like one." What can is mean? Surely something more subantial than the mere fact that the ilmore case forms a compelling, susenseful story. The story is so good, in ct, that it would probably work in a ore traditional roman à clef form,

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NOTES FOR "'A' FOR EFFORT":

Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).

ACROSS: 1. s(tage)-as-s; 4. stout, 2 mngs.; 9. homophone; 10. * (gone at); 11. *; 12. Go-th(r)s, 13. s(t)ewed*; 14. *; 15. damask; 17. route*; 19. (T)okays; 20. pun; 25. hidden; 27. Foy-er, pun; 29. hidden; 30. C(Ross)-mimeo*; 33. no-sib (rev.); 35. *; 36. me-Ted; 37. im(a-Gl)ne*; 39. pl-over; 40. a-be-t(hing); 41. *; 42. pun.

DOWN: 1. *; 2. S.A.-M.B.A.; 3. w(her)e; 4. (t)oil; 5. wonder*; 6. gut(rev.)-boat; 7. ET-ET (rev.); 8. t(o)-rash; 10. homophone; 14. B(u)G; 16. ma-p(a); 18. mantra(p); 20. *; 21. ac(hie)ve*; 23. grand-pa(id); 24. NY-m(ayor); 26. reversal; 28. O-games*; 31. fa(U)x; 32. (d)inner; 34. reversal; 38. sam(e), rev.

with a few names and details changed in such a way as to inform the reader that the writer has released himself from the commitment *not* to conflate fact and invention, or to ameliorate what he knows to be true; this approach certainly worked well enough for Dreiser, Solzhenitsyn, Orwell, Robert Penn Warren. But Mailer can't resist the fillip of omniscience that comes with the notion of "authoring" something that really happened—a kind of God complex, evidence of which has turned up elsewhere in Mailer's writing to be sure.

As for the lasting harm this approach has done to non-fiction writing, that's a subject for another essay—one that, fortunately, someone else has already written. Way back in 1980, John Hersey's "The Legend on the License" issued a strongly worded condemnation of three works by Mailer, Wolfe, and Capote on the grounds that they had violated journalistic first principles; namely, that you can't just make stuff up. Hersey takes the three writers to task in painstaking detail; but what's most eye-opening about his essay is its closing peroration—broad, yet convincing—which connects the sort of journalism to be found in *The Executioner's Song* and *The Right Stuff* to the widespread acceptance of the whole phenomenon of lying as an accepted element of public discourse, from politics to law to public relations to advertising. This is why getting to the bottom of what's true or half-true or unverifiable or pure invention in a book like *The Executioner's Song*—or *The Hours*, for that matter—is finally something of a red herring. More to the point is literature's role in the cultural sea change that slowly establishes a total equivalence between what's real and what's plausible.

The compulsively readable landmark works of the New Journalism established a whole new territory for narrative—a realm in which an absolute comprehension of one's fellow human beings is posited not just on a hypothetical plane but here, now, in the world. The temptations this new liberty presents to the writerly ego are obvious; obvious, too, in retrospect, is fiction's rush into this uncharted territory to stake a claim of its own.

The phenomenal success of *Ragtime*, E. L. Doctorow's novel in which a fictional (and nameless) New Rochelle family interacts with such dashing turn-of-the-century figures as Harry Houdini, Evelyn Nesbit, and Booker T. Washington, legitimized once and for all the novelist's equal treatment of the historical and the imaginary. The incorporation into a novel of such recognizably real characters as Henry Ford, J. P. Morgan, and Emma Goldman seemed downright radical at the time (nine years after *In Cold Blood*, four years before *The Executioner's Song*); reading the novel now, one is struck more by its general mood of restraint in regard to these dead celebrities. Doctorow keeps their presence in the book mostly dramatic—that is to say, he invents things for them to do and say but shies, almost always, from the kind of divine gaze into their thoughts that gives his portraits of Mother, Father, Younger Brother, and the other imaginary figures the familiar depth of the fictional.

Those actions that Doctorow invents—perhaps because they are theoretically observable, and therefore theoretically refutable—have a suppositional quality that keeps them from offending our sense of the real. The long, outrageous lesbian episode involving Emma Goldman and Evelyn Nesbit, for instance, embarrassingly self-gratifying though it is ("Goldman rubbed the oil into her skin until her body found its own natural rosy white being and began to stir with self-perception"), belongs clearly to the realm of the hypothetical, the realm of play. But Doctorow does sometimes slip, usually just for a sentence or two, into the minds of his real-life characters. The casual nature of these violations suggests that, all along, his observance of the distinction between real and invented people is more instinctual than dogmatic. Mark, for example, in Doctorow's recounting of the last days of Evelyn Nesbit, how the last sentence diverges from the sentences preceding it:

> She gave money to the legal defense of labor leaders who had been thrown in jail. She gave money to the parents of children mutilated in mills and factories. Listlessly she doled out her hard-earned fortune. The public never knew this because she insisted on anonymity. . . . She looked into the mirror and saw the unmistakable lineaments of womanhood coming into her girlish face. Her long beautiful neck seemed to her like an ungainly stalk upon which was perched a sad-eyed ridiculous head of a whore past her prime.

One small step for Doctorow; bu in such modest sentences, no matte how convincing or moving, the doo is opened for the novel to join non fiction in the decidedly unreal worl where the chasm between action an self—between the record we leave be hind on this earth and the hidde complexity of the living mind—ha been closed. We can call it, for lack c a better term, the birth of the psycho historical novel.

Of course, the novel does hav a legitimate and time-honore role as a carrier of history, certain type of history at any rate– the tales of those customarily left ou of official or academic accounts, tol most often through fictional stand-ir for countless real people. One think first and foremost of John Dos Passos *U.S.A.* trilogy, an edifice of fictio memoir, document, and biography th no work of straight non-fiction coul conceivably supplant as a history this country in the years surroundir World War I. Such anti-histories a by their nature acts of political opp sition, and in this generation they hav emerged as well, though in a less ol jective form.

Don DeLillo's *Libra* is bold enoug to offer up, from twenty-nine diffe ent points of view (most real nam are used, some not), the entire secr history of the assassination of John Kennedy. For what it's worth, in th telling a group of rogue CIA agen stung by the failure of the Bay of Pig conceives a plot to shoot at the pre dent and miss, leaving a trail that w connect the attempt to Castro hi self. Oswald is drafted by the ager as the shooter. The plan goes aw when one especially insane rogue C agent realizes that shooting and mi ing isn't half as "provocative" as sho ing and not missing. It's entirely pla

ble—which, one could argue, makes both more and less dangerous than e similarly "speculative" histories we e accustomed to seeing in the movies d on TV, most egregiously in the ork of Oliver Stone. If every civiation gets the Gibbon it deserves, rhaps Stone will be ours. Still, ovies are by their very nature forced to a certain honesty with their auence on these historical matters: for e thing, in Stone's films we are manstly not looking at, say, Nixon, but Anthony-Hopkins-as-Nixon; for anher, movies are formally incapable of ossing that line into the heads of eir characters—even their most outgeous distortions are distortions of tions, of speech, and therefore contute a kind of alternate body of evence, rather than a novelistic deepning of the existing one.

Libra is a technical masterpiece, far ore sophisticated in its design than en the much lauded *Underworld*. In any ways, it's this increasingly cenal writer's best work; at the same me, it seems to me, there is someing fundamentally compromised out any novel whose characters—eir physical appearances, their fates, e actions by which they will be reembered—are known to us before e even open the book: it calls to mind obert Frost's well-known apothegm out playing tennis without a net. early all the real-life characters in *bra* have something else important in mmon as well: they're all dead. Sevral times, the action of the novel is spended for a kind of roll call of all e people caught in the vast web of e assassination plot who in the years ter 1963 died mysteriously, prematurely, often violently—a circumstance at greatly unrestricts DeLillo's efrts to imagine himself into the oughts of these people; there's no e around to tell him, or anyone else, at he got it wrong. And this, too, is art of what rankles about the phemenon of the psycho-historical nov. It is an enterprise whose imaginave capital is death.

A few fiction writers, though, refuse to be cowed by the inconvenient existence of their ubjects. If a similar sense of creative ompromise doesn't haunt Robert Coover's great burlesque *The Public Burning*, that's because the "characters" who populate it—Richard Nixon, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, Dwight D. Eisenhower, William O. Douglas, etc.—are clearly inhabiting not the compellingly plausible what-if of *Libra* but an alternate universe entirely. The novel opens with a glimpse of the construction of an electric chair atop a stage in the middle of Times Square—part of the preparations for the grand finale of an elaborate, televised execution "pageant," under the direction of Cecil B. De Mille and Walt Disney, featuring high school marching bands, a middleweight title bout, and a performance by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. If we don't understand from the outset that this is a madly inventive satire with no interest in fidelity to the official record of anything, surely we get it by the time we come to the scene wherein the superhero known as Uncle Sam (his Communist counterpart is called "The Phantom") flies through the window of Nixon's White House office and catches him masturbating over a picture of Ethel Rosenberg.

The Public Burning was actually a bestseller upon its release in 1977, goosed along by the notoriety it achieved when several lawsuit-shy publishing houses wriggled out of their commitments to publish it. The reason for the controversy was that roughly half of the novel is narrated, in first-person form, by Nixon himself—this in spite of the fact that the Trickster was then, though entombed in his disgrace, in a corporeal and legal sense still very much alive.

The novel's subversive masterstroke is its use of real speech by the historical figures who populate it, drawn from the public record but utterly recontextualized, in such a way as to highlight its absurdity. Ethel Rosenberg's actual clemency appeal is turned into a staged play; *Time* magazine's reporting on the case is typeset as poetry (indeed, in Coover's world, *Time* has been officially named Poet Laureate of the United States). Lines sung by a Chorus ("This is the story of two kinds of justice—Russian and American!") in

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an opera about the Rosenberg trial [illegible] verbatim from the Congressional Record. For all that it unfolds on a plane of exorbitant fantasy, *The Public Burning* is as exhaustively researched a novel as Tom Wolfe could ever hope for.

It's a brilliant performance, as scathing as it is hilarious. At the same time, it's interesting to consider how unthinkable such an act of historical vandalism would have been to an equally committed left-wing fiction writer of generations past—Dos Passos, say. The novels that make up *U.S.A.* are rigorous in their separation of fictional and nonfictional elements. Literature was, to Dos Passos, sufficiently a part of the historical record of its time that he had a real responsibility to get that history down right. Coover operates from a very different principle. He could not dare to do what he does without a liberating acceptance of the idea of the novel's status as cultural underdog, its diminished voice, its relegation to the margins of historical importance. His fiction aspires only to be a thorn in the paw of America's image of itself.

An entire generation of novelists has by now had time to come out of the broad shadow of these predecessors. But contemporary psycho-historical fiction is also, in part, a product of trends less rarefied than the developing logic of the form of the novel. That same generation has been witness to an enormous shift in the whole notion of what constitutes a private life, mostly in the case of public figures but in the case of ordinary citizens as well.

Perhaps the most financially successful debut novel of the last decade is *I Was Amelia Earhart*, Jane Mendelsohn's slim, speculative explanation of the mystery of what happened to the great aviatrix on, and after, her final flight. The likely truth—the plane crashed in the Pacific and she was killed—would make for a short book, of course, so Mendelsohn's vision involves crashing instead on a desert island loaded with food sources, building crude shelters, and then carrying on a liberating love affair with her navigator, the dashing, alcoholic ne'er-do-well Noonan. The book makes no claim to operate on any level other than that of pure fantasy. It's the quality of that fantasy that's so depressing. *I Was Amelia Earhart* is full of nonsensical details: "By now," we are told late in the book, perhaps at the suggestion of a copy editor, "Noonan's rigged up a permanent device for extracting fresh water from salt." Come on, the reader wants to say to Mendelsohn; you can try harder than *that*. Elaborate meals are the prelude to lovemaking sessions of unprecedented ecstasy on the beach: "[W]e had never felt such a cascade of passion. . . . [Later] he watched the breath flow in and out of my nostrils, with a concentration that he had not devoted to anything since he had tried to watch a flower grow when he was a child. When I woke up he was able to tell me all about my dreams."

It's always discouraging when cloying hackwork like this becomes a publishing behemoth. But what's especially upsetting about Mendelsohn's novel is that—unlike, say, *The Hours*—it's no sort of tribute or homage to anyone or anything, no attempt to supplement or to contravene history; instead, it is all about feeding the age's appetite for the denial of the unknowable. Its project is to colonize one of the few remaining pockets of indigenous human mystery in our century.

The veneer of a greater ambition coats Dan Barden's *John Wayne: A Novel*, an irony-soaked effort that puts even greater strain on the notion of personal privacy. Alternating chapters are told from the close third-person point of view of Wayne himself: "Duke couldn't help thinking that he'd been cheated, that this wasn't the kind of father he deserved. The more he thought this way, the more ashamed of himself he became." In the other chapters, Wayne appears in purely dramatic form, as a character who walks and talks and speaks but whose thoughts are discernible only through the evidence his speech or his manner provides. In these chapters, though, Barden has another stunt, for they tell the story of the dissolution of the marriage of Barden's own parents (his mother is still alive), using their real names as well as his own, capturing their thoughts even when those thoughts are in complete discrepancy with their observable selves.

The element of "invention" that entitles Barden to call this a novel and to consider it his intellectual product, is in fact a violation; but who cares, really, what violence is done to the notion of the unknowable as applied to a celebrity like John Wayne? Without that little thrill, this novel would be indistinguishable from a hundred other novels about sensitive children in unhappy households—yet another novel giving credence to the champions of the memoir genre in their claim that novels are really just memoirs underneath a cowardly patina of lying. Even to a reader who, like myself, finds the cultural adulation of John Wayne faintly embarrassing, Barden's decision to enlist him as a character in his own work, only to then score points off the received notions of masculinity he embodies, is like shooting fish in a barrel.

Some novels appropriate mass cultural icons (Wayne, Nixon) either to rehabilitate them or to have ironic fun at their expense; others, like Thomas Mallon's *Henry and Clara* (a relatively staid historical fiction about the other couple in President Lincoln's box at Ford's Theatre the night he was assassinated), retrieve real people from deep historical obscurity in the only way available—by fleshing out the meager record with outright invention. But if the modern psycho-historical novel has one dominant strain, it is that exemplified by *The Hours*, in which contemporary writers take upon themselves the task of impersonating geniuses—ostensibly as an act of homage, but also, not coincidentally, as a way of grabbing up the genuine cachet those geniuses still deliver, in order to enhance the value of one's own work. Often the writer is simply not equal to his or her subject. But it comes as a surpris

, discover that some of the most
pressive psycho-historical novels
recent years succeed on the rela-
vely high plane their own main
aracters set for them.

Penelope Fitzgerald, who has had
e of the most hearteningly unusu-
careers in recent letters (she pub-
hed her first novel at the age of
ty; now over eighty, she has writ-
n nine novels, one of which won
e Booker Prize), took home the
97 National Book Critics Circle
ward for her spare, brilliant fiction
e Blue Flower, by any measure one
the most delightful books of the
st few years. *The Blue Flower* resur-
cts the true story of the great Ger-
an Romantic poet Friedrich von
ardenberg, known by the pen
me Novalis. Talented, cultured,
hereal Hardenberg, seemingly on
e doorstep of a brilliant career (he
ed at twenty-eight; his work be-
me well known only posthumous-
), at age twenty-two shocked his
mily and friends by announcing his
tention to marry a twelve-year-old
ild named Sophie von Kühn, a girl
ho was neither especially bright
r especially attractive. If there was
ore than mere artistic perversity to
s choice, no one around him could
vine it. Domestic life in the age of
oethe, the endearing absurdities of
e Romantic movement, the
imaginable benightedness of eigh-
enth-century medicine—all are
rought wittily to life, with a light-
ess of touch that is the last thing
e associate with the costume-drama
mosphere of most historical fic-
on. Yet Fitzgerald's real achieve-
ent is to render convincing the
e element of the book that might
e said to lie outside time—the no-
on that a young poet's love for a
ain girl, whose most salient quality
her suspension between the world
f childhood and the world of matu-
ty, might be completely, even ad-
irably, genuine.

Joanna Scott's *Arrogance*, a fictional
fe of the great Austrian expression-
t painter Egon Schiele, attracted
odest attention when it was first pub-
shed in 1990; since then, its bur-
eoning reputation among other writ-
rs has made it one of the most
espected books of the last decade.
Using a multiplicity of viewpoints—some historical, some not—and moving back and forth like a hummingbird across the years of Schiele's pathetically short life, Scott's rendering of the tortured mind of a young man who considered himself a genius and was actually right—and who was hounded and jailed for immorality by the residents of the small town he lived and worked in—is exhilarating. There's no way, of course, to gauge the accuracy of it, but it is thoroughly plausible, which in this case is no mean achievement.

Arrogance and *The Blue Flower*—along with, perhaps, J. M. Coetzee's year-in-the-life account of Dostoevsky, *The Master of Petersburg*—are among the best of the psycho-historical novels; and I would not refuse them their due as some of the best novels, period, of the last ten or fifteen years. And yet for anyone who cares about the future of novels in general—who feels, as I do, personally diminished by any evidence of their diminished vitality—there remains something disquieting about even those few psycho-historical works that can lay a legitimate claim to greatness. Part of it has to do with the feeling that just as Norman Mailer bears some responsibility for the journalistic laxities of, say, Joe McGinniss or John Berendt, so must Fitzgerald and Scott answer in some way for Jane Mendelsohn. It may seem unfair to tar great books with the sins of the lesser books they spawned—Hemingway, after all, isn't diminished by the hundreds of his bad emulators—but there is, in the end, an ethical as well as an aesthetic question here. It's not just a matter of discovering a new potentiality in one's form but of extending the license of it. Kicking down the door between the world of the novel and the world outside the novel was an impressive stunt; but the door then remains open, and biographies featuring internal monologues by their dead subjects, TV movies about the secret lives of royalty, and other lesser life forms scurry through it.

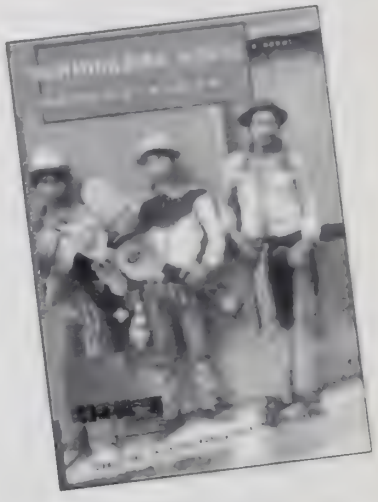
Part of my apprehension, too, has to do with a nagging sense, even in the most sophisticated of these books, of a lowering of the literary

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[illegible] creating a character out of [illegible] and making him or her as [illegible] and memorable as a real person might be is perhaps the hardest of the fundamental tricks a novelist has to perform. Simply adopting or impersonating an already interesting real-life character—Lee Harvey Oswald, J. P. Morgan, Amelia Earhart—cannot be considered as substantial an achievement as creating a character who enters the reader's consciousness as a total unknown. Coetzee's Dostoevsky is marvelously convincing; regardless, he will never be (and that novel will never be) as great a work of art as Coetzee's own masterpiece, *Waiting for the Barbarians*. The narrator of that novel, a provincial government administrator, may be no Dostoevsky, but he is a *creation*; and as such his burgeoning humanity, by novel's end, is thrilling beyond compare—more thrilling, even, than genius.

The same goes for *The Hours*'s Laura Brown. It takes nothing away from the greatness of *Mrs. Dalloway* to say that Cunningham's depiction of Woolf's struggles with that novel do not—cannot—transfix us as thoroughly as does his depiction of pregnant, fragile Laura's struggles to bake a simple birthday cake with the help of her son:

> He nods with such guileless, unguarded enthusiasm that her throat constricts in a spasm of love. It seems suddenly easy to bake a cake, to raise a child. She loves her son purely, as mothers do—she does not resent him, does not wish to leave. She loves her husband, and is glad to be married. It seems possible (it does not seem impossible) that she's slipped across an invisible line, the line that has always separated her from what she would prefer to feel, who she would prefer to be. . . . It seems she will be fine. She will not lose hope. She will not mourn her lost possibilities, her unexplored talents (what if she has no talents, after all?). She will remain devoted to her son, her husband, her home and duties, all her gifts. She will want this second child.

In a 1986 interview in *The Paris Review*, Doctorow, in the wake of *Ragtime*'s considerable critical and commercial success, responded to the suggestion that in writing that novel he had "fiddled" with history:

> When President Reagan says the Nazi S.S. were as much victims as the Jews they murdered—wouldn't you call that fiddling? Or the Japanese educators who've been rewriting their textbooks to eliminate the embarrassing facts of their invasion of China, the atrocities they committed in Manchuria in 1937? Orwell told us about this. History is a battlefield. It's constantly being fought over because the past controls the present. . . . I meant it when I said everything in *Ragtime* is true. It is as true as I could make it. I think my vision of J. P. Morgan, for instance, is more accurate to the soul of that man than his authorized biography.

"Accurate to the soul" of a man Doctorow himself never met, never saw; quite a claim. But if there is an arch sense of empowerment in Doctorow's attitude toward his work, he is hardly alone. In an eight-page afterword to his novel *The World as I Found It*—an erudite group portrait of the philosophers Ludwig Wittgenstein, Bertrand Russell, and G. E. Moore—Bruce Duffy portrays himself as a kind of intellectual freedom fighter: "[L]et me be plain here: I was disgusted—no, *outraged* is the word—that to some, Wittgenstein's life was clearly considered off-limits, was considered a form of intellectual, professional, and even national property." The most eloquent defender of the psycho-historical novel is Don DeLillo—and he, too, is unafraid of grand claims on behalf of the genre. "Fiction," he has written, "slips into the skin of historical figures. It gives them sweaty palms and head colds and urine-stained underwear and lines to speak in private and the terror of restless nights. This is how consciousness is extended and human truth is seen anew." And then, of course, there's Mailer, who says, regarding the genesis of *The Executioner's Song*, "God was at least as good a novelist as I am."

Mailer's tongue is obviously in his cheek here; nonetheless, the comparison to God is very much to the point. "An author in his book," Flaubert wrote, "must be like God in the universe, present everywhere and visible nowhere. Art being a second Nature, the creator of that Nature must behave similarly." For a fiction writer to carry that notion of his own divinity into the real world—which includes the real world of the historical past—is profoundly fraudulent; it is, if you like, a matter of creating graven images. At the very least, the representation of human consciousness this approach begets is not "extended" but falsified.

In a 1960 speech, Philip Roth famously remarked on what he saw as the growing challenge, for the novelist, in simply keeping pace with the level of fantastic invention real life threw at him:

> [T]he American writer in the middle of the twentieth century has his hands full in trying to understand, describe and then make *credible* much of American reality. It stupefies, it sickens, it infuriates, and finally it is evel a kind of embarrassment to one's own meager imagination. The actuality is continually outdoing our talents, and the culture tosses up figures almost daily that are the envy of any novelist

Thirty-nine years later, reality's triumph over the novelist's powers of invention is nearly complete—not by virtue of fiction's diminished importance or diminished sales, but because the notion that novels are merely a kind of Cliff's Notes to history has entered the consciousness of the novelists themselves. The increasing displacement of the notion that fiction is existence worked out on an imaginary plane—that its value lies not in its denial of the tragic inadequacy of the records kept by history or our senses, but in its imaginary alternative to that inadequacy—threatens the novel's sense of itself; each new psycho-historical novel is like another white flag raised in the face of reality. Defenses of the practice of applying to real people the novelist's godlike comprehension of fictional ones are almost always couched in the invigorating rhetoric of the novelist's freedom, the novelist's power; when in fact every psycho-historical novel furthers fiction's abdication of its own uniquely, transcendently unrepeatable power to apprehend, and meditate on, the nature of our existence.

MIND ON FIRE

By Julie Hecht



I had a panicky feeling. Too panicky to do the breathing exercises recommended for anxiety by Dr. Andrew Weil in his recent newsletter, and every health-food store was sold out of kava in vegetarian capsules. I'd read in the newsletter that kava should be reserved for severe anxiety. It was last summer, and I thought the situation qualified.

All I wanted to do was lie down on the couch, where I'd be compelled to watch the many news shows about the investigation of the President's personal life. Not that I was interested in his life—I couldn't believe that we live in a world where such questions are asked. Each night, every hour, I hoped to hear that something had happened to put an end to it.

I'd recovered from the alarm of January, when I'd seen a TV reporter standing in front of the White House saying, "FBI agents are fanning out all across the country." Why would they be fanning out over this? I wondered at the time. In the beginning, the shows were a good distraction and helped me to stay on the treadmill for more than half an hour. I think I once got my heart beat up to a dangerous level by going too far and too fast while watching Geraldo and CNN and another even worse cable network. But then it got to be the same story every day. One night, I was just about to fall asleep when I heard Geraldo say, "Did she go to visit Betty or did she visit Bill." That sounded like the plot from an old Archie comic book and startled me so that after laughing out loud for a second I was wide awake and had to watch another whole show to get near sleep again.

The head man on the next program had a voice more like a punishment and a torture than a human voice—you have to ask why a speech coach for the TV station didn't step in and take this fellow in hand. Still, he's not as low as another one on the worse network, one who doesn't have even seventh-grade grammar under his belt. This is our country now. I couldn't believe what I was hearing—to say nothing of the hairdos.

It would be bad to lie down on the couch and listen to all that over and over, I thought, because they're desperately scraping the bottom of the barrel, and when I watched and listened to the scrapings I knew that I was wasting valuable moments of life. "Life is an ecstasy," said Ralph Waldo Emerson, and I agreed with him.

Julie Hecht is the author of Do the Windows Open? *a book of stories.*

Photograph by Joel Meyerowitz

I was counting the days until the return of the psychiatrist I'd been consulting. I wanted to request one of the brief phone appointments we'd agreed on for the summer vacation, but every time I thought of the word "phone" I thought of the word "sex." Could we have a phone appointment? I wanted to ask, but feared the sentence would come out with the words "phone sex." And it wouldn't be a Freudian slip, it would be from having heard the words over and over on the news. I also wanted to mention how alarming it was that descriptions of sex were on the front page of the *Times* and on all the newscasters' lips, but I knew I couldn't say the word "lips," either.

How will I discuss the topic without using any of the words necessary? I wondered. I didn't want to upset the psychiatrist even though I knew that listening to this had to be part of his job. But his analysis was obviously a failure, and he remains a shy, stammering, befuddled person who's easily embarrassed. Or else that's just an act he uses to control people and get what he wants. I was referred to the doctor for the condition of severe anxiety. And this was before the summer. I should have breathed my way out of the anxiety, but I was already breathing and exercising so much that between the walking and the breathing and the treadmill I had scarcely a moment for anything except lying on the couch and watching the news. A vicious cycle would begin, and that's not counting the news cycle.

Last winter, the lying on the couch would start with *Crossfire*, at seven-thirty P.M., and I'd tell myself, I'll just watch this one program—that's it—then I'll turn it off and go back to work. I was trying to sort through hundreds of landscape photographs I'd taken in Nantucket for my next book. But after *Crossfire*, I'd have to watch *World View*. Then, at nine, it would be time for Geraldo, with a quick switch over to *Burden of Proof*, at nine-thirty. My favorite of all the lawyers was Greta, but where does the Scientology fit in and allow her to think so clearly? Maybe the rumor of Scientology isn't true. Then the ten o'clock *World View*—it would be the same as the eight, perhaps with a new detail added between eight and ten.

At eleven, there would be no reason to watch the local news, other than waiting for the weather report. That's usually a relief—or maybe the History Channel would have Hitler's life story or the biography of some other Nazi. It was often Hitler week on one of those channels. There's always something new to learn about Hitler's early life—for example, that his feelings had been hurt by rejections from art schools or that Wittgenstein insulted him once. Then, a quick break for David Letterman and back to the repeat of Geraldo and *World View* on CNN.

The second round of Geraldo was the one where the lying on the couch turned into sinking into and becoming one with the couch. This is the time when the self with any sense of human dignity disappears. After one A.M. it got to be too hard to get up and do the things necessary to go to sleep. I had to boil the water to evaporate the alcohol out of the teaspoon of valerian tincture—a double dose of valerian would be necessary after hearing what members of the right wing had to offer. The condition can't be called tired—it's not awake, it's not asleep, it's not alive, it's not dead. After watching this cableful of shows, it's being and nothingness, it's the living dead.

Months later, with all this still going on, I took a moment out to realize that it was the most beautiful summer day I'd ever seen. Probably I'd seen equally beautiful days, but had only recently come to understand Emerson's idea that the days are gods. Yet he and his friend Thoreau didn't have the prosecutor and Geraldo to keep them from appreciating every day and night, the way we did. So this particular day was really a god, and I'd wasted most of it racing to flower farms, trying to get the last white annuals to add to the window boxes of our rented house in Nantucket. If it had been our own house, I could have had the cable turned off. After I saw the Geraldo episode with the discred ed criminal detective explaini how to collect DNA with a Tip—that was the end for me, un the real end, when I saw an e teemed professor of law use the w "slobber." I couldn't believe t word. "Saliva" he said, then he s "slobber," then "from kissing." Tl was the end.

There was a time in Ameri when we read about people throwi an ax through the TV screen, a this was just for the usual progra Then there was the lucky Elvis Pr ley, who was reported to have use gun to shoot out his TV screen wh Robert Goulet was singing. But, o I was in the rented house; and, two didn't have a gun handy. If I'd hac gun in hand, and saw the speci prosecutor, could I have controll myself? He's the one person on ear with whom we can't shake hands other than Charles Manson and va ous international killers. Every d people drop dead, but the prosecut is evil, he's a chubette, yet he liv on with his black garbage bag hand. "A rat, a roach, a snail h life," or "a dog, a horse, a rat . . . ," King Lear said. Shakespeare m have had this kind of sit ation in mind.

This was the summer I had fin ly arranged to be in Nantucket photograph every pond, clou flower, and vine. Even thou people love computers and b movies, my first book of photograp had earned enough to pay the re to work on the next one. But th came the doom-filled seventeen da in August—the days of waiting f the President to testify. I'd see hi on the news, and he didn't see worried. In fact, he'd begun to r mind me of Alfred E. Neuman "What, me worry?" was his attitud Maybe he'd been influenced by M magazine in addition to John Kennedy.

During the first week of the se enteen days, I went to the organi produce store every day. I remem bered reading that the aroma peaches had cured people of seve anxiety. Even when I didn't ne any produce, I wanted to see th

ilboats in the harbor and the hite clouds in the blue sky, and is store was a good place to buy e *Times*. The newspapers were pt outside underneath a rock, in tween pots of lavender. On one of ose days, the owner asked, What's wrong, are you worried out something?" He was tuned in his organic-produce customers.

I had just seen that Greta was owning when I checked out CNN. e had been forced to talk about NA, and also she said she was wor- ed about what her mother would ink.

"I can tell by your aura that some- ing's wrong," the fruit manager id. I had never heard her use the ord "aura" before.

"I'm worried about the dress," I id.

"Nobody cares. It's the handshake the Nineties," the owner said.

"I'm only worried that they'll use to get him," I said.

"You'll see. Nothing will happen. atrick Buchanan was never elected anything," he said with confi- nce as he put the *Times* into a bag peaches.

I had postponed buying the news- per as long as I could, so the entire y wouldn't be ruined, but the after- on still lay ahead. I'd tried to bar- in with my husband to watch only NN at night, but he informed me at it was the same as any other ca- e station. I was surprised. Didn't ne Fonda have any influence? It was ue that CNN's bearded correspon- nt, who used to stand outside the hite House reporting the most seri- s world events, now stood outside very night and uttered the words esident," "affair with," "sex with," nd then that name, which I can't ar to have pass through my mind. he correspondent seemed to have own shorter during these months and now had begun to re- semble Toulouse-Lautrec.

At one time we were friends ith a Republican, but it ended over his. I had said to him way back in nuary, after our first bitter fight, We want to be friends, so let's gree never to discuss this again." ut the Republican refused to agree, which is too bad, since he knew a lot about Beethoven and how he came to write the Emperor Concerto and the Ninth Symphony. But I'd have to get musical tidbits elsewhere, I figured, when I saw into his right-wing soul. And to think, at one time we all went for nature walks together.

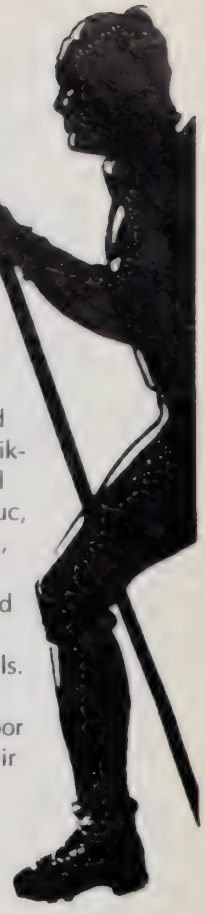
After the fight, we managed to attend one more dinner at the Republican's home. Somehow, his wife was a feminist and a liberal. Even though the Republican was only forty-one, he was sitting in an easy chair with a glass of cognac in his hand. He had tried putting some Mozart on his stereo, but the guests weren't interested. Some were in the new generation that knows only the music of the last couple of decades.

I had gotten a panicky feeling as soon as I'd arrived and looked around the room checking for intellectuals, Jews, homosexuals, and Gypsies. There were none. It was a large room filled with Republicans and normal Americans. These people were the minority in the small town we lived in. They were acting overly polite and considerate, engaging in a lot of that empty small talk I'd seen in movies from the 1950s. "Would you like some more this or that?" "Wasn't it a nice day?" "We did some yard work." "We helped the minister with his lawn mower."

As I wandered from room to room, searching for someone who might be a Buddhist, a Unitarian, a Democrat, a Quaker, a Shaker—anything—I came across some young women looking at a photograph of themselves from their college days. The girls had been piled up for the fun photo, all smiling and appearing to have nothing much on their minds but good grooming and clothes. I stared at the photo and couldn't help saying, "You all look like —— ——." (That was the first and last time I said the name.)

I pictured the face of Patrick Buchanan and the frown of Greta Van Susteren while I paid for the *Times* and some peaches on that hot summer day of the seventeen days. Why must each day begin with the *New York Times*? I asked myself as I

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looked at the wretched headline. "How many a man continues his daily paper because he cannot help it, as is the case with all vicious habits?" Thoreau said in a lecture in 1854. "The mind may be made an arena for the affairs of the public, or a quarter of Heaven," was his other sentence I had in mind whenever I was outside, although Nantucket was now down to only an eighth or a sixteenth, especially in August. Range Rovers, trucks, mopeds, Rollerbladers, dishonest real estate brokers, and the development of the moors had reduced it to this fraction.

The events of August had begun to heat up, along with the greenhouse weather, and, in addition to all that, I was in a rented house with a black kitchen—black sink, black leather-grain refrigerators—and two gigantic black TVs. I couldn't believe my ears when I heard them begin to discuss the dress. The psychiatrist was so lucky to have been in Tibet, but I knew I'd have to mention it somehow when he returned. He's the sort who might have been visiting a Buddhist monastery. In fact, he'd forgotten all about the phone appointments. I should have been prepared for that. But I'm never prepared for his strange behavior. I started with the panicky feeling. I didn't even ask how his trip was. What's the correct etiquette in a case like this? "But you missed the worst part. About the dress," I said. Immediately, I regretted it. The sound was excruciating—not only the word "dress" but also the word "the." The two together were unbearable.

"The dress has gone away, I thought," he said in a casual way. I guessed that he was reading another patient's chart.

"No, you don't know," I said. "Now it's back."

I had to remember that the man was never up on current events. His reason was that he got home too late to watch the news. You had to pity him for that. What about the eleven P.M. news? Too late for that, too, he said. Maybe you had to envy him and pity him at the same time.

Why did we have to talk about this? I had my own life once—what was it? I couldn't remember. The only people I thought about now were the President, his family, and his lawyers. "I can't talk about it," people would say, and then start right in talking about it.

The doctor had told me to call anytime in August, after he came back from his short vacation. I waited a couple of days after the date of his return, figuring he'd be busy on his first days back, since he was always complaining about his schedule and the amount of work he had. Not because he was a complaining type; the opposite was true—he was a selfless, sacrificing, saintly person. The reason for the complaining, I soon deduced, was: he simply wanted to get rid of my case. He wanted me to see that he had no time for my kind of problems—he preferred psychoses and insanity—and, like most doctors, he didn't understand the benefits of preventive medicine but liked to wait for emergencies, where he could intervene with strong drugs, electroshock therapy, or maybe even lobotomies. He was probably a secret passive-aggressive, too. Why did I continue after I had his number? Sheer entertainment—entertainment and research into humanity.

He claimed that he hadn't had time to look at my book of photographs. "If you would look at even the first one or two, it would help me," I said. They're only landscape photographs. What's the harm? I should have known he was crazy right then. "Are you crazy?" was something I didn't want to ask—it's such a cliché.

Where will it be worse to purchase the *Times*, I thought, as I tested the August heat to see whether to bike or drive. I pictured the coffee store where I'd have to see the fun-loving twenty-year-olds on the staff. Fun was their whole life, unlike Nietzsche, who wrote, "I have forty-three years behind me, but I'm as alone as when I was a child." Then I pictured the people who frequented the organic-produce store—the Yoga people, the Buddhists, the kava seekers, the St.-John's users. This store declined to carry Dr. Weil's books, choosing *Eat Right 4 Your Type* and *Are You Getting Enlightened or Losing Your Mind?* Still, I decided to go there for the water view. When I arrived, a young woman was juicing fruit and talking about her failed romance. "How will I get along without him?" she asked me, as if I might know.

"Maybe you can patch things up," I said.

"No, too much has gone on between Jim and I," she said with sadness.

"'Jim and me,'" I said. "Object of a preposition."

"Really? It sounds wrong. 'Jim and me.'"

"'Between Jim and me.' 'Between us,'" I said.

I remembered the host—if such a man could be called a "host"—of the cable show *Hardball* saying, "A picture of my wife and I." Can you call in to these Republicans about their grammatical errors? One good thing about the President is his excellent grammar and his understanding of prepositions and of the objective case. "Between Miss —— and me," I was happy to hear him say. (But shouldn't it have been Ms.?) The rest of the sentence was of no consequence. Had he said, "Miss —— and I," that would have been bad.

"Look," I said, searching for a paper napkin to write on—at least the had the ecologically correct, unbleached, tan kind. I grabbed it and wrote down a bunch of prepositions: "Between, of, for, to, about, from."

Then I wrote down all the objective that came to mind—"me, him, them, her."

"Didn't you diagram sentences in seventh grade?" I asked. "It was such much fun."

"Yeah, I guess we did, but it still doesn't sound right—'between Jim and me.'"

"Try to say 'between us' until you get used to it."

Then the fruit-juice girl held out a little tin labeled "Truly Organic Peppermints—Over One Hundred Mints Per Tin!"

Inside the tin was a clear starched tissue paper neatly filled with little tan wafers. I could see something printed on the inside of the cover: "THE MEASURE OF MENTA

EALTH IS THE DISPOSITION TO FIND OOD EVERYWHERE." RALPH WALDO MERSON.

I couldn't believe my good fortune. Based on the quote, I decided take one mint.

"When you've finished the other nety-nine, would you save me the n?" I asked.

Because I made a plan right then d there to bring the tin to the ychiatrist. Suddenly I understood at in order to promote mental alth, he pretended that problems dn't exist. It had to be some new st-Freudian idea. When I understand the doctor completely, I'm going to quit going there, I decided.

We agreed that the President's eech would be too painful to tch. Instead, we went for a walk ound the hot, humid town. Other ople were dining out, buying oks, or walking around, the only ree activities possible. But during r walk, I kept thinking about how e speech was going, the way it is hen someone you know is having en-heart surgery.

When we got home, I called the okstore to order a book about ietzsche's last days. Reading that uld be better than watching the ws. The manager answered and d he was busy listening to a friend scribe the speech.

"He reports that the President did ll," he said.

I flicked on the TV with the mote.

"You'll be sorry," my husband said.

"Oh no, that bitch is on," I said to the phone.

"Which one?" the manager asked. e knew the whole cast of the right ng and was a big fan of *The Nation* agazine.

"The one who's Buchanan's ter."

"Oh, that one," he said in a dismal ne. The thought of these people had immediately depressed him.

I had to face it—the psychiatrist dn't heard about the speech. And didn't dare bring up the photographs—this was now the bête noire of all the appointments. In fact, he'd forgotten about the appointment itself.

"I haven't had a moment! I have too many patients in the hospital, I'm simply run ragged!" he said in a desperate way. I pictured people going crazy from the investigation of the President's sex life and the broadcast of it on the news day and night.

I dreaded being put in the mental ward of the doctor's hospital, or even a better place like McLean's, where Ralph Waldo Emerson's brother had been treated, so I tried everything Dr. Andrew Weil recommended—kava, St.-John's-wort, breathing, walking, Yoga—because these wards had nothing to offer but drugs and worse, and from my questioning of the psychiatrist I saw that he knew nothing about feng shui, and hadn't even heard that the color light pink was good for calming psychoses and that it was used in padded cells. "You're making that up!" he'd said in his mad way when I mentioned it. I pictured grayish white or light green walls at his hospital—I knew that his patients couldn't be recovering.

All summer I'd been trying to read the biography *Emerson: The Mind on Fire*. I had ordered the book after reading *Thoreau: A Life of the Mind*. Even though I quickly forgot everything in that book, I thought I'd like to pack my brain with knowledge from this new one. Then I'd go back and reread *A Life of the Mind* before I forgot what was in *Mind on Fire*. In that way, I'd be able to have all the information in my head at once. Where could I fit in Nietzsche's life story? That would be difficult. To the authors of biographies, I'd like to say: "Too many facts, in no particular order, can be hard to take in."

The picture of Emerson on the cover had made me want to have the book. The expression on his face was an expression I'd never seen on any other face. I mean, compare this face with the faces of Patrick Buchanan, Orrin Hatch, and Jerry Falwell.

After reading here and there all

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over the book, and feeling too infe- Emerson and the other tran- dentalists to keep going, I put the book on a chair next to the bed where I could always see the picture. After a while, the weather got so hot that I had to close the window and turn on the air conditioner, but the window wouldn't stay closed. The one book heavy enough to weigh it down was *Emerson: The Mind on Fire*, spine down. Only on nights when it cooled off could I remove the book, let the window pop open, and have a chance to read it. Finally I gave up and left the book on the window. I had to look at Emerson's face sideways for the rest of the time in the house with the black kitchen.

Soon after the speech, we moved into a house with a light pink kitchen. The long white counter had room for all my vitamins and space left over to chop vegetables, but when did I last chop any? Even though it was impossible to have any appetite for dining, we went out every night to avoid turning on the TV. In the hip luncheonette-turned-cheap-restaurant, I could often hear the news being discussed. Nantucket was like a college town without a college.

The clematis was way ahead of last year due to global warming, another reason why they want to destroy the President—for allowing the Vice President to bring up that subject. I had expected to see the usual article about clematis vines in the local newspaper, but while I was looking for it, to my dismay, I discovered a special quiz asking whether the President should be removed from office. Since all nine respondents said no, I became more sure in my resolve to move to Nantucket someday. There—or Italy. I'd read that only in Italy had Nietzsche found peace of mind.

"There is indeed a great emptiness around me. Literally there is no one who could understand my situation," Nietzsche wrote. I had read this in *The New York Review of Books* in July, as I crossed the sound by ferry from Hyannis back to Nantucket at night in a thick fog. I'd dug my emergency cell phone out of my canvas camera bag and left a message for my husband at his office in Boston: "I'm on the ferry in a dense fog." I compared my situation to that of the philosopher, and right there got the idea for a title for my next series of photographs: "No Cell Phone for Nietzsche."

I'm all alone, I thought, just like Nietzsche. I wished that Greta Van Susteren were my friend. It was the middle of the night and my friends were asleep—even those in the western time zone. I had only one and a half subjects to talk about: one, the investigation; then the half subject, the psychiatrist's failure to look at the photographs. I had a close friend who was awake, but she didn't have cable TV up in Blue Hill, Maine, and didn't know how the Supreme Court worked. The most spiteful right-wing Republicans weren't on her list of people she'd like to slap in the face.

I decided on the day of the Report that I wouldn't read any part of the paper. "It is important to preserve the mind's chastity," Thoreau said. What's wrong with the special prosecutor? He'd begun to remind me of Liberace—the voice, the smile—I couldn't put my finger on it. The editorials had gotten to be forbidden, too—they resembled editorials in a high school newspaper. Even the weather page felt wrong to the touch.

"Thoreau would have the mind feed upon the works of nature, and not trouble itself about the news." I was thinking of this as I decided not to watch the President's testimony. Just the idea of it was making me feel sick. "Think about your own problems," my husband said. "Try to get your royalty statement," he added with insensitivity.

The next afternoon, my Yoga teacher came by to give me a private lesson in exchange for photographs I had taken of her doing Yoga with her cat. She stepped up onto the porch, threw her Yoga mat onto the floor, and started to unbutton her shorts. My teacher and I have become friends based on discussions of veganism, vitamins, and our sympathy for the President, even though she tries to get me to stand on my head and once asked, "Have you ever taken LSD?" She's a wild thing, as in the song "Wild Thing," by the Troggs, the way she stands outside on the porch pulling her shorts off and putting on her Yoga pants. It is true that there were no neighbors around to see her disrobe, and the porch was surrounded by branches with leaves and big hydrangeas still in bloom, but all in one smooth movement that must have come from years of Yoga and dance she threw down the mat, unbuttoned her shorts, and pulled them off, and she said, "I looked up 'sexual relations' in the dictionary, and he is right about the definition." Although it's only our third class, in our present times a polite forty-year-old woman has to say this right out the bat.

"Did you look it up?" she asked.

If only she hadn't been standing there in her white underpants as she asked this.

"Why does the whole world have to think about the definition?" I said.

We could have been talking about the lives of Thoreau and Emerson. During our second class my teacher mentioned that the Nantucket Atheneum library had copies of lectures by our two idols.

"You can go to the Great Hall and stand where they stood," she'd told me. "You can pick up their vibes."

At one time, I didn't care much for the President and neither did my Yoga teacher. We both voted for Ralph Nader, after we were sure that the Republicans were losing. I think I used to complain about the blow-drying of the President's hair. Even now, that's much worse than the other. Because the hairdo is out in public. The other—I admire him for trying so hard to keep it a secret.

"I admire his strength of character," she said, finally pulling on the Yoga pants.

"I do, too. The worst thing he's done is to drink diet Coke during the televised testimony."

"Or any kind of Coke," my teacher said.

It was the hour for *Crossfire*, but

cided not to watch unless Michael nsley was on. "Well, you did come this show, and we *are* talking out it," he'd recently said to a Republican who tried to pretend he s above discussing something. Instead, I went upstairs to check the t light of the day on the field. eauty had made Emerson its slave ny a time," I'd read, and figured at this was an example of that d of slavery.

On my way, I noticed from the l window that the American flag s flapping around in the wind. hy do people hang the flag outside? All of a sudden, I couldn't nd looking at the flag and hearing it flap around anymore. Some ghts the flapping kept me awake, t I dreaded asking the psychiast to refill the emergency sleeping prescription, because the last he I'd asked him to, even though 's only fifty-eight, he had no rection of what the drug was, or t he'd ever prescribed it.

On an evening like this, I ought, the best solution is to take wn the flag. It's the patriotic ng to do. Because when people e the flag, they're reminded of nerica—our country—and what's ng on inside it. It's not like burning the flag. If asked about it by a ighbor, I could blame it on the nd—a breeze was always blowing Nantucket before the greenhouse ect kicked in.

I decided to lie down—I was all ed out from pulling on the flagle. The view through the window s even better without the red ipes. While I was looking at the d, the sky, the clematis blossoms, d the way the white petals were vering the fence, I knew that atever they were saying on *Cross*e, I didn't care anymore. If I rned it on to check, my mind uld be instantly besmirched by e opening salvos. What exactly is ight-wing Republican? Is it an al person? Is it a human being? I s thinking about our former end. How could he have ethoven's life story in his head, ng with the music of the Emperor ncerto, and continue to attack e President?

Even though I'm not psychic, I knew that the defense on the left wasn't strong enough. Why must they keep saying "deplorable conduct"? First of all, there are no grounds for comparison. One thing we do know—the investigation is the crime, a hate crime.

I think I might be falling in love with the President. Or else I love him like a brother. Certainly I admire him more than ever. I'm in the same generation as he is, though I'm the only one in our generation who's never smoked marijuana. We have things in common. We loved Elvis Presley, and then John F. Kennedy. Maybe he went overboard in emulating that president—it's not a crime. And I love Hillary like a sister. I wish I could be more like her—or even a little bit like her. And I wish she could be a little like me, with the Yoga and the botanical remedies and the soy isoflavinoids. I bet she could use some kava right now, but if word got out that they used herbal remedies, another investigation would start.

I'd wasted most of the summer thinking about all this while I walked the same lanes as Emerson and Thoreau. I stood right on the podium in the Nantucket Atheneum library where they both spoke, but I was in such a hurry to get back outside into the day that I tripped on my way down. The truth is I was rushing off the podium because I felt unworthy to stand where they stood after the news I'd watched and read.

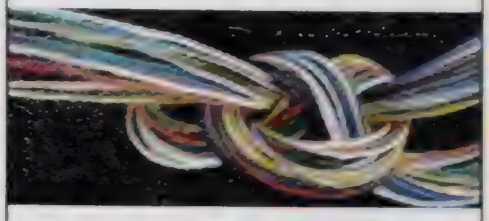
As I looked out at the field and the clouds and the sky, I remembered how much I love Massachusetts—more than any other state. And I remembered that I love America, too. It's better than Pakistan. And I love the American flag, even though it has three bright red stripes—I hoped no one would notice that one was missing. And if people did notice I hoped they would believe my reason for taking it down.

"EVERY THING I [illegible] THROUGH [illegible] AND TEAR IT."

I picked up the ■

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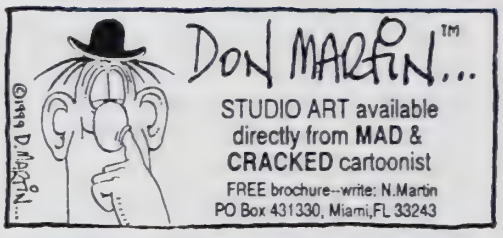
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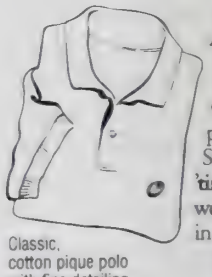
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LETTERS

Continued from page 7

chickens, I must say that most are timid, patient, happy little angels.

Ingrid E. Newkirk
President, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)
Norfolk, Va.

Let us please stop blaming our chicken victims for the behavioral degeneration and flat-out craziness that our hellish rituals and maniacal systems force on them.

Karen Davis
President, United Poultry Concerns
Machipongo, Va.

It has become the mission of PETA and other animal-rights groups to get cockfighting banned in every part of the country, but in devoting themselves to depriving Americans of the enjoyment of time-honored rural sports, these organizations never point out how well gamecocks are cared for, or how many broiler chickens die in this country in comparison.

A gamecock has a fighting chance at survival. If he wins a few fights, he is usually retired to breed with game hens. But meat chickens, raised for consumption, have no chance. All of them die. Visit a commercial chicken plant, then go to a gamefowl farm. Then think about the difference the next time you sink your teeth into a chicken sandwich.

Paul Leslie
Oakwood, Ga.

The Sound of . . .

Mark Slouka's "Listening for Silence: Notes on the Aural Life" [April] is a beautiful reflection on the meanings and ambiguities of silence, worthy of nothing short of the following in-kind response:

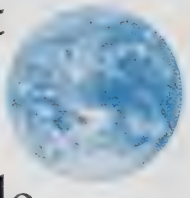
Steve Mosley
Cape Girardeau, Mo.

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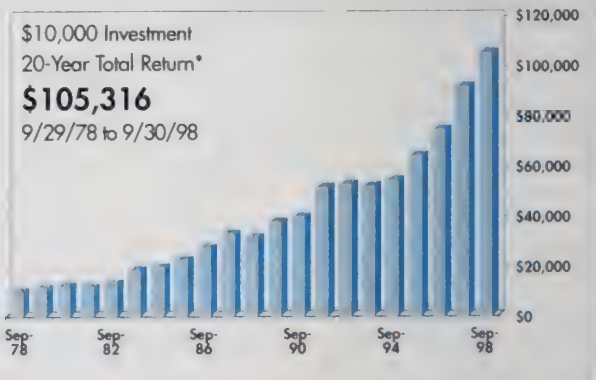
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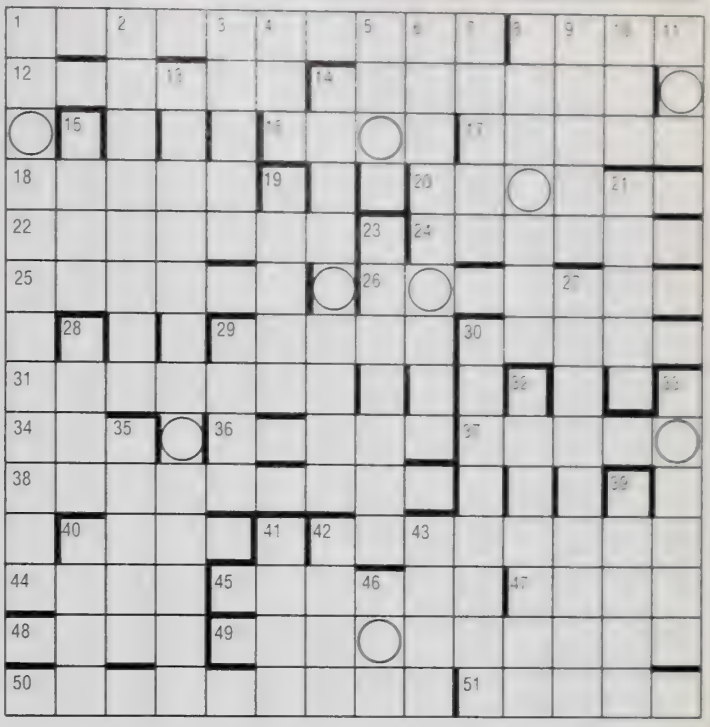
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The 1 Across

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.

Seven unclued Across entries—at 16, 17, 22, 26, 40, 42, and 50—are related in a certain way. This relationship is spelled out by the letters in the circled squares reading down the columns left to right. Seven unclued Down entries—at (in order of their association) 14, 33, 11, 32, 13, 6, and 1—are related to the unclued Across entries in a certain other way. One might say the solver is about to embark on a 1 Across.

Clue answers include two proper names. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 79.



ACROSS

1. *(See instructions.)*
8. Furbys, e.g.—the first character put on notice before season opener (4)
12. Relative to mimic Death (6)
14. Oil damp explosion provides ticket out (7)
18. Switch positions after getting back on—it's high time, high time! (5)
20. French spirit may walk about upset (6)
24. At the front end of freaky Ford car, '60s model (6)
25. Gone for ages, his life is on TV (6)
29. Building without people in it, in principle (5)
30. Mutiny in *Born to Dance*? Quite the reverse! (5)
31. Glass of milk? You can get it from one pail (7)
34. Novel when listened to is returned (3)
36. A cow is One Down! (5)
37. Center gets one run in the second with old bat (5)
38. Visionaries making fancy tables (9)
44. Places to make deposits I noise about (4)
45. Person who gets furs for resale, possibly (6)
47. Portion of Disney movie, with sound from hawk (4)
48. Same cut as flattop (4)
49. Raw, tasteless . . . (10)
51. . . . submission in small type test (5)

DOWN

2. Picture gold in the Canal Zone (8)
3. English solicitor turns up for new employment (5)
4. Cheer echoing when Puccini girl is given this (3)
5. I hear pub inventory is sickening! (4)
7. It might be below a connection (5)
8. Spare parts produce vigor with iron casing (7)
9. Amid, amid, returning, returning nomads (5)
10. Mass uplifted flier (3)
15. Track with no beginning, barely supported (4)
19. Look up, study, word with ancient meaning (5)
21. Settle on a place for putting a small number off (5)
23. Upon which the retort has no right existing (7)
27. Sucking up to nabbers given a break (9)
28. Outgoing, spouted, went over the limit (4)
29. Drawer of farm? (4)
30. Resort in which you go with the flow more than once? (8)
35. Cultivates editors that go after us (5)
39. Reporter submitting a story from a liner? (5)
40. Support a tart-maker? (4)
41. Lee singularly said, "I'm in the pool" (4)
42. Players who get thrown out? (4)
43. Follow an inclination—sounds right legally (4)
46. Sign of summer—in a while, October (3)

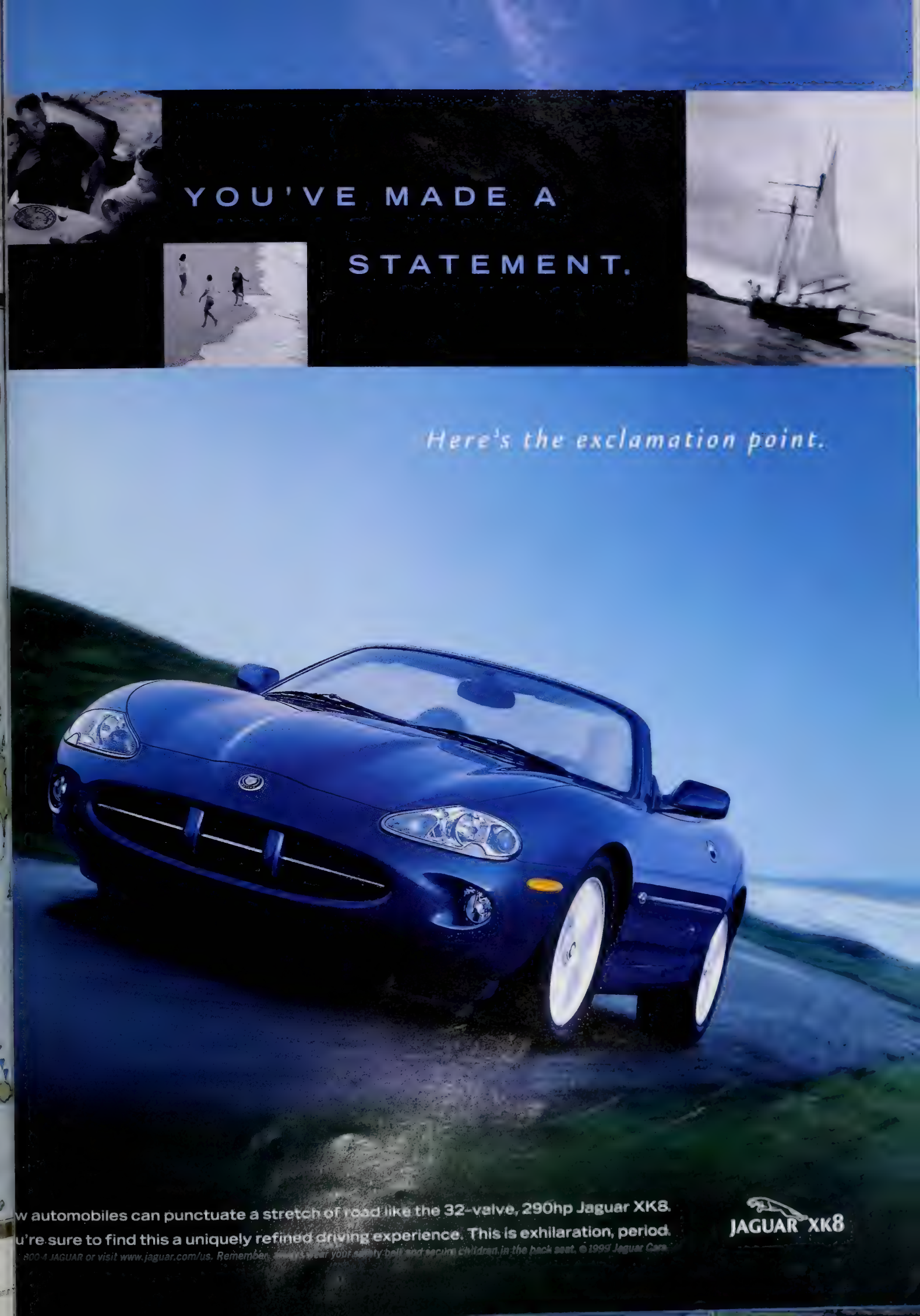
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MAP

Although the term "piracy" is today more likely to refer to copyright infringement than to high-seas robbery, armed pirate att have more than doubled since 1991, according to the International Maritime Bureau. Last year over half occurred in and ar the South China Sea, encouraged in part by the Asian trade boom and the reduced presence of U.S. naval forces. Local ernments rarely intervene, unwilling to defend foreign ships despite data suggesting that such intervention is highly succes Fewer than 5 percent of last year's attacks resulted in arrest. Cargo ships and tankers are the most frequent targets; eng other ship equipment, and paint (used to disguise stolen vessels) are the most common items stolen. Most pirates ar professional seamen in speedboats or underemployed fishermen in canoes; most attacks take less than thirty minutes



Illustration by Rodica Prato. Research by Benjamin


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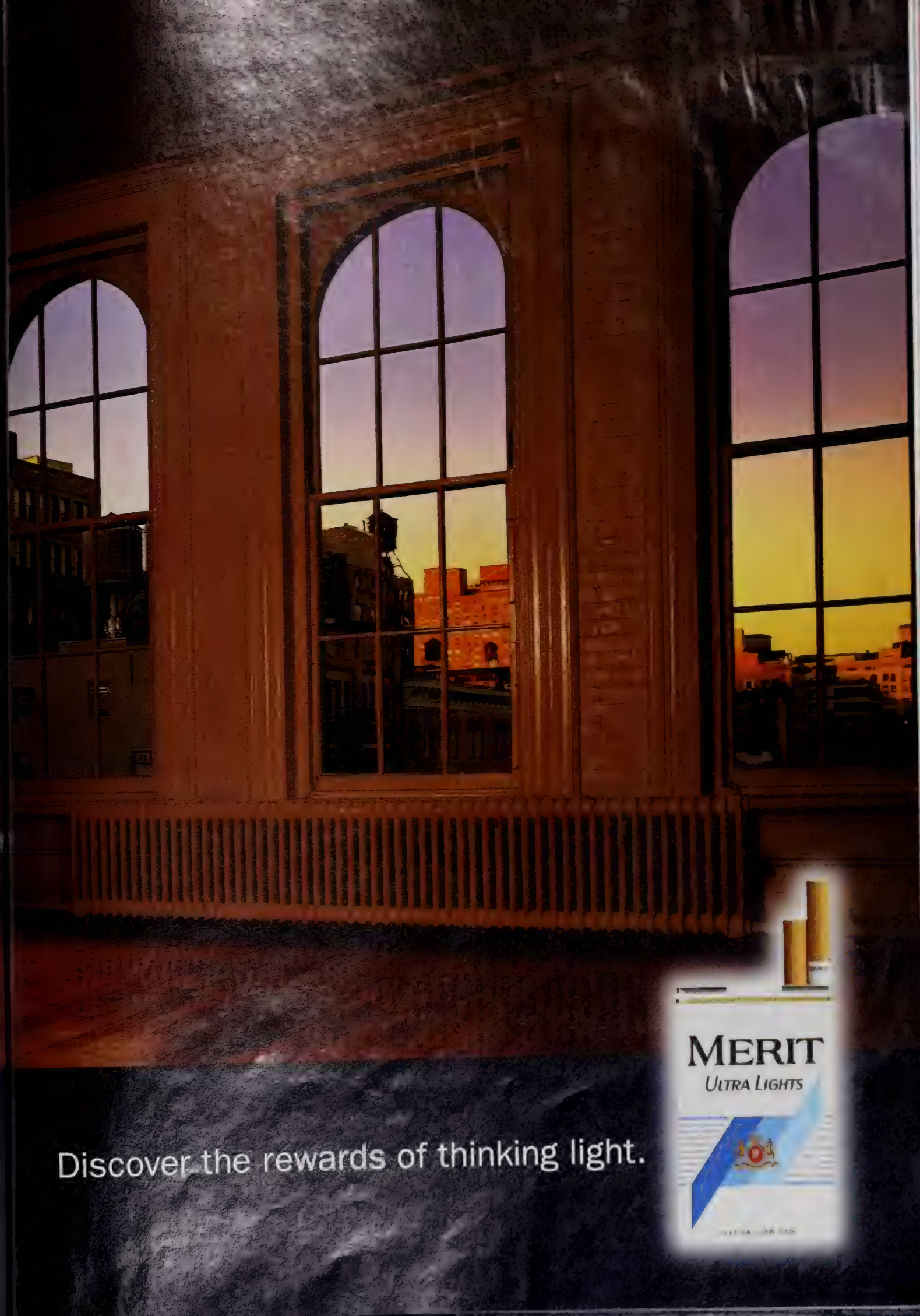
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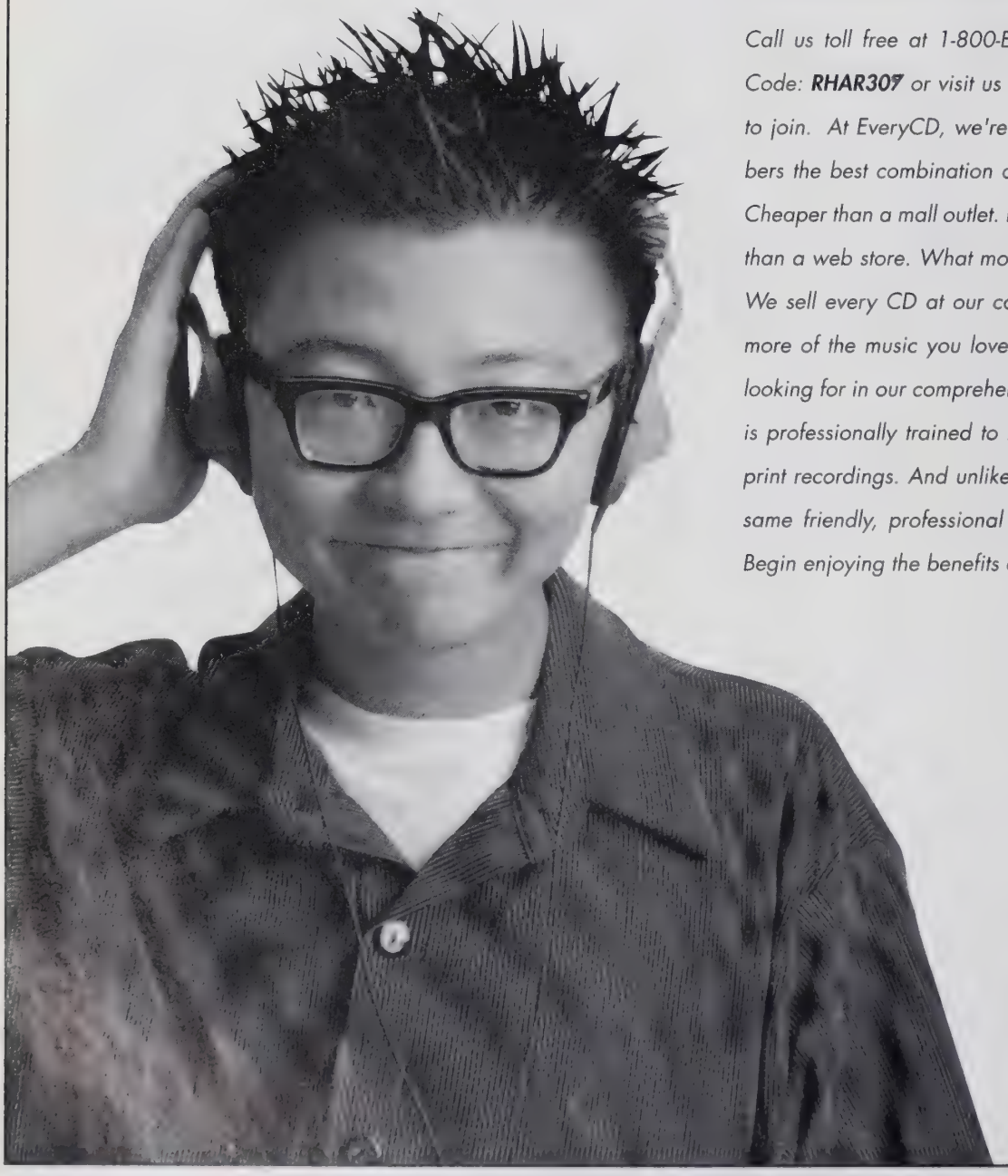
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RATION BY TULLIO PERICOLI

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LETTERS

Editor's Note: The following letters are responses to "The Ghost of Shakespeare" [April], in which ten essayists considered the true identity of the bard. Jonathan Bate, Harold Bloom, Marjorie Garber, Irvin Matus, and Gail Kern Paster defended the conventional belief that the plays were written by William Shakespeare of Stratford. Five others, Mark K. Anderson, Tom Bethell, Joseph Sobran, Richard F. Whalen, and Daniel Wright, proposed that the works were penned by Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford.

A Tale Told by Idiots?

Oxfordians maintain that the bard of Avon could not have written the plays attributed to him for the following elitist reasons: he had "little Latin and less Greek"; he left a banal will; he had an insignificant tombstone; he retired at forty; he would not have known about court life, soldiering, the experiences of sailors, and legal terms; and, as a grain merchant, he could not have possessed enough imagination or gained enough skill to achieve artistic supremacy. The author surely was an aristocrat or an academic, and—horrors!—Will of Stratford did not go to university!

But Shakespeare drank at taverns, notably the Cock Tavern on Fleet Street, near the docks and the In of Court. Sailors, soldiers, servan and law clerks also spent time the It's quite conceivable that he hea sailors spin tall tales about wond beyond the horizon. And a serva of the powerful, for a flask of wi might gladly speak of his maste luxuries and wicked ways—a ho tradition kept alive by Geor Stephanopoulos. All Shakespe would have had to say to a law cl was, "I am writing a play with court scene, and I do not want to it wrong." The plays' voices are thentic because a genius playwrig has a genius ear. Did Homer social with Aphrodite and Achilles? D he meet Circe, Calypso, the Cyclo and hear the Sirens' song? Wh was Aeschylus, the father of Weste theater, when Agamemnon sac ficed his daughter upon an altar?

Philippe Deane Gigantès
Hudson, Quebec

As one who formerly sided w Harold Bloom and company, I tha the anti-Stratfordians for putti presumptuous Will yet again in place and keeping the world safe aristocracy.

The Oxfordians' work, however barely begun. Other artistic imp tors await unmasking. Surely a p niless upstart from a shabby-gent Dublin family could not ha amassed the learning of "Geor

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rnard Shaw" simply by hanging
und the British Museum. "Leonar-
da Vinci" probably lent his name
a shy Medici, for it's unthinkable
at a literal bastard could have
nted *The Last Supper*. (How could
believe that our modern Medici,
l Gates, would pay so much for the
rk of less than his social equal?)
Could a reclusive spinster, even
m a "good" family, have written
ily Dickinson's poems? Given the
covery in recent years of lesbian
ertones in her work, perhaps we
surmise that Walt Whitman was
rrowing her name to express an
comfortable residual attraction to
men. This theory is bolstered by
fact that if you play backward a
ording of "I heard a fly buzz when
lied," you can almost make out
e words, "I'm really a guy from
mden."
Coincidence?

C. Willment
dgewood, N.J.

That a bright middle-class lad
uld acquire legal and political
owledge and incorporate that
rnedness into a successful play is
rtainly a more plausible scenario
an the alternative: that a scion of
e hermetically sealed world of six-
enth-century aristocratic England
uld absorb the voices and behav-
s of the working class, and then
pertly render them into blank
rse. This is akin to saying that
orge Bush had a better shot at do-
g gangsta rap than Ronald Reagan
d of becoming president.

ymoor Nabili
w York City

Tom Bethell labels the Stratford
an "a litigious businessman," as if it
ould be apparent to all that such a
rson could not possibly have writ-
n the plays. Daniel Wright reasons
at the author had to be a man
ith something more than money
a motive for his art." Although we
nnot recover the motives of the
thor today, it would not be the
ast bit surprising if, in addition to
ring about the quality of the writ-
g, he was also concerned with per

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sonal gain. It would be difficult to find a present-day author who is not, though some protest too much their unconcern.

Eric Freed
Norwalk, Conn.

It is no accident that the "authorship question" arose in the mid-nineteenth century. It arose, that is, a generation or so after Romanticism had established the ideal of the artist, who disdained to serve Mammon, and just as the English-speaking world was going through its first frenzy of enthusiasm for the market principle. During this period, four major writers, Twain, Whitman, Emerson, and Dickens, all took pains to point out the contradiction between the grandeur of Shakespeare's plays and the mercenary preoccupations of the man. And yet all of these writers were themselves ambitious and successful self-promoters of middle-class origin. Their willingness to believe that Shakespeare didn't write the plays may have derived precisely from uneasiness about their own status: were they artists, or were they merely entrepreneurs?

Alexander Scala
Kingston, Ontario

It is sad that any controversy still surrounds the authenticity of Shakespeare's authorship, but sadder still is the weakness of the Oxfordian argument, which rests primarily on a paradoxical combination of arrogance and amateurishness. If it so much bothers the Oxfordians that Shakespeare, unlike Edward de Vere, was not a nobleman, why are they not similarly bothered by the fact that the Earl was not an ancient Roman, Greek, or Trojan, a medieval Celtic or Scottish king, a Moor, a magician, a Jew, a shrew, or a hunchback? The notion that a writer's life can, and often does, inform his work is perfectly sound; the idea that it must, in such neatly linear ways, is perfectly senseless.

John Davis
Mount Vernon, N.Y.

The greatest fault of the lunat fringe who promote the idea th Someone Else wrote Shakespeare their obvious ignorance of tl process of mounting a play. We Shakespeare the dramatist n Shakespeare the actor, how could have responded effectively wh asked for revisions to the texts, was surely sometimes the case? T actor's "cover" would have be blown at once. Neither Oxford, nobleman for whom, his champio tell us, it would have been a disgra to appear at the theater, nor anyo else, could explain or revise a text a distance. That grunt work is nec sarily done on-site.

Charles H. Stats
Oak Park, Ill.

Most Oxfordians would have believe that for twenty years an act by the name of William Shakespea fronted for de Vere, and yet the ot er actors did not know it, or did n talk about it. Advocates of de Ve have never spent much time in green room, have they? If Shak



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are were a fraud, not only his fel-
v players but most of London
uld have known about it.
Gossip was mother's milk to Eliza-
hans. Shakespeare was the most
pular writer of his day. A good
centage of the populace attended
plays, and they talked about
m, and London was then a small,
se-knit city that relished a good
ndal. A story this juicy would
ve been the rage of the coffee-
uses and taverns. That so much
k could have existed without a
rd of it getting recorded and sur-
ing somewhere is unimaginable.

Ben Tarver
nta Fe, N. Mex.

I assume that everyone agrees
at Will from Stratford wrote his
n will. So if we can prove that
e will displays the same quality of
nd that appears in the "Shake-
eare" plays, we can assume that
ill from Stratford is the author of
se plays.
Will's will leaves his second-best
d to his wife. If this were a strictly practical arrangement, the document would also indicate who gets the first-best bed, which it doesn't. So the first-best bed cannot be a piece of furniture. It must be Will's grave—which is, of course, everyone's first-best bed.

That sounds to me like the mind of a playwright.

David Black
New York City

Full of Sound and Fury

The Oxfordians win, five–zip.

Gail Kern Paster would have us believe that doubters of Stratford are ferocious snobs who want to "deny the life of William Shakespeare its central accomplishment." In the twentieth century, she avers, it is anachronistic to suppose that only a lord could have produced the Shakespearean canon. This is true but irrelevant. On the other hand, it is anachronistic to suppose that modern egalitarianism obtained in Elizabethan England. Then, a man's social origin might indeed have affected his life's pursuits, whether he was an enterprising but provincial actor or an earl who was forced to hide the extent of his involvement with a troupe of public players.

Sean Fitzpatrick
Johnson City, N.Y.

What forever cools me to the notion of a Stratford Shakespeare is his quiet early retirement. This squares with nothing we know about great artists.

Melville "retired" from writing but still wrote. Rossini "retired" from composing but still composed. Hardy abandoned the novel but still produced volumes of poetry. Thomas Wolfe and Flannery O'Connor wrote through their fatal illnesses, Hemingway through his depression, and Fitzgerald through his drunkenness. Writers write until they die. To believe, as Stratfordians would have it, that this was not the case because people were "different" back then belies everything the plays' characters tell us.

Mark Woodward
Norwich, Vt.



The April issue reminds us that even the strongest Stratfordian argument can be summarized as follows: "You can't prove he didn't."

Jerry Dorbin
Santa Fe, N. Mex.

I am struck by the shrillness of the Stratfordians. Gail Kern Paster sniffs that to query her about the authorship question "is like asking a paleontologist to debate a creationist's account of the fossil record."

As a physician steeped in the scientific method, I think that if I were a paleontologist, I would welcome a debate with a creationist. Science teaches us that all theories worth defending must be continuously subjected to reevaluation and retesting. Even scientific hypotheses that are accepted as fact one year may be recognized as fiction a year later (as proven by Einstein's 1905 breakthroughs, before which it was a given that space and time are separable). Theories about creation can be argued using evidence as diverse as the size of the universe and radiocarbon dating of the fossil record itself.

But the Stratfordians did not offer any comparably compelling evidence to support their hypothesis that William Shakespeare of Stratford authored the plays, believing, apparently, that a defense of tradition is an unnecessary bother. This petulance does not put their argument in a good light.

The Oxfordians, to their credit, did not stoop to calling their adversaries names, unlike Harold Bloom, who, in his very first sentence, denounces the other side as "the subliterary equivalent of the subreligious Scientologists." They marshaled facts rather than insults to support their arguments. To the extent that style counts for anything, I would score one for the Oxford side.

Leonard Sax
Poolesville, Md.

The blithe Stratfordian contention by Jonathan Bate that "the dramatist who Anglicized the name of the historical Amleth Prince of Denmark was a certain Stratford gentleman who named his own son after his old friend Hamlet Sadler" distorts the fact that "Hamlet" Sadler was christened Hamnet Sadler and that, likewise, William Shakespeare's son was baptized and buried Hamnet.

This example reflects perfectly the sort of wishful make-believe the Stratfordians now rely upon in their struggle to hold on to a sacred but essentially indefensible tradition.

Derran Charlton
South Yorkshire, U.K.

Signifying Nothing

Why bother? The forum was a fascinating read, but we'll never have a certain answer, and it doesn't much affect our appreciation of the plays or how they are produced or acted. All the argument does is show academics at their vitriolic worst.

There is, however, one practical reason to support the Oxfordians: Stratford is the smarmiest, most tourist-ridden place I've ever visited and could only benefit from proof that its countryman did not write the plays. On the other hand, I recall walking through the graveyard, now a private park, in London's borough of Hackney, where the Earl of Oxford is buried, and it occurs to me that Hackney could use, and would probably absorb gracefully, the boost in self-esteem and revenue it would enjoy if Oxford were proved to be the Onlie Begetter.

Mary L. Dugan
Kennett Square, Pa.

If we need to know what influences affected the creation of the works of "Shakespeare," we need only study the age in which they were written rather than the biography of the author himself or—why not?—herself. After all, no writer is a universal arbiter of what is truth for all ages, but rather a mere product and barometer of his or her quite limited age.

Larry Martin
Utica, Miss.

Is there not a shadowy fear lurking in the heart of a learned Shakespearean of any stripe that the writ might be plural? If some of the co plays are proved to have been wri ten by Edward de Vere, and the les er by William Shakespeare of Stra ford, both men will have suffered catastrophic demotion in the eyes their advocates. Instead of one go like figure, we would be left with tw mortals, both damn good pla wrights. But so what?

It is unlikely that the Oxfordia can succeed in transferring the who corpus of plays and poetry over to t Earl's side of the ledger, but if th sow serious doubt that one writer a complished them all, they will ha killed the god. This is why the O fordians represent such a threat the other side. Professor Paster got backward when she likened the O fordians to creationists trying to e plain the fossil record. It is the ac demics who have invested everythi in studying and promoting the wor of one inexplicable genius who a trying to preserve a worldview that essentially religious.

Perhaps we need a single Shak speare, as perhaps we need a sing Mozart and a single Newton, to foc our awe in this secular age. And that is what it takes to get us to t plays, it can't be all that bad, wheth or not one such man ever existed.

James McCall
Louisville, Ky.

Consider this theory: the Earl Oxford and William Shakespea were secret lovers, and amidst t pillow talk, Edward de Vere recou ed to the impressionable young Will tales of his travels, literary h tory, and the idiosyncrasies of the n bility. He may have complain about his stuffy old father-in-la Perhaps he gave Will his marked- Bible, which was returned to t grieving heirs after the Earl's deat Oxford did seem to like young acto and every writer knows that sour materialize in the oddest places.

This seems no more far-fetched premise than any of the others, a it does tie up a number of loose en We could give the theory a nam start up a society and a Web pa and provide fodder for another ge

ation of young academics desperate r something new to say after four undred years.

ona Robinson
oronto, Ontario

"The Ghost of Shakespeare" was a elight. It would have been enanced, nevertheless, by this coment on the bard's identity, by Jorge uis Borges:

> History adds that before or after dying he found himself in the presence of God and told Him: "I who have been so many men in vain want to be one and myself." The voice of the Lord answered from a whirlwind: "Neither am I anyone; I have dreamt the world as you dreamt your work, my Shakespeare, and among the forms in my dream are you, who, like myself, are so many and no one."

obert Bové
rooklyn, N.Y.

The May issue of *Harper's* has just rrived at my door and rendered the ntire authorship dispute moot. In he classified section I found the folowing message: "TEACHERS: Stop rcing students to read my plays. ake them to a theater or show ideotapes, then discuss. W. S."

m Mica
haca, N.Y.

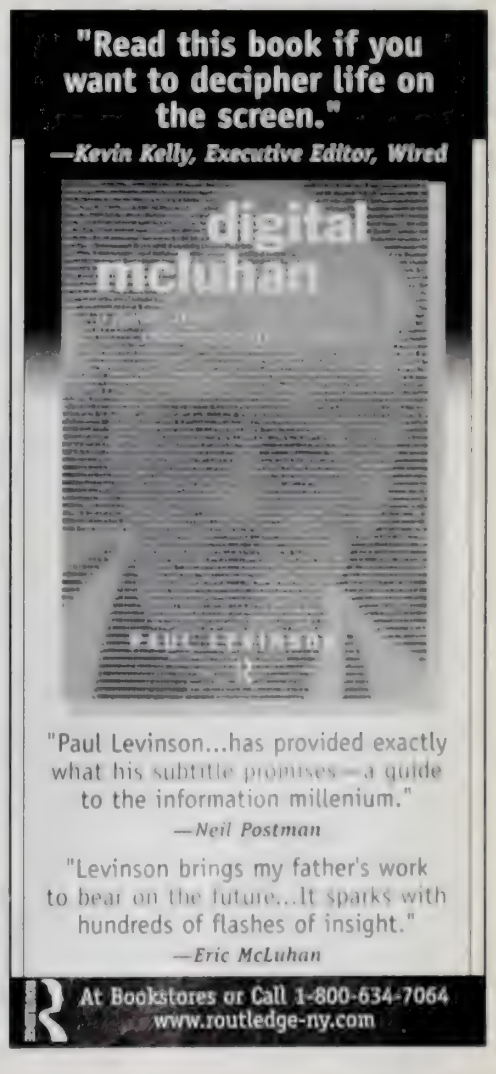
Never again, please. One attends raduate school to hear scholars uild their reputations on the ids nd identities of writers. One does ot, however, subscribe to a leading nagazine in order to suffer through ich parasitic material, whether the rguer be an Ivy League reactionary r a bush-league conspiracy hound. hose of us who love his works love he bard unconditionally. That is, e don't give a damn who he was.

had Poovey
icksburg, Miss.

larification: The "Extracts from the iaries of Adam and Eve" by Mark wain, which appeared in the June ssue, were originally published in *Harper's Magazine* in April 1901 and ecember 1905.







NOTEBOOK

War movie

By Lewis H. Lapham

Corruption at home, aggression abroad to cover it up. . . . Sentiment by the bucketful, patriotism by the imperial pint; the open hand at the public exchequer, the open door at the public house; dear food for the millions, cheap labour for the millionaire.

—Winston Churchill

When the NATO alliance began the bombing of Serbia in late March, I thought at first that the generals merely wished to send a message or make a statement. Slobodan Milosevic wasn't responding to polite diplomatic notes—"Please stop killing Albanians in Kosovo," "Murder is a crime," "You should be ashamed of yourself," etc.—and so the generals undertook to spell out their meaning in the block letters of high explosive. They assumed that the lesson would be both simple and brief. Show Milosevic some serious damage, and he would go quietly to the conference table, a chastened and obedient tyrant eager to sign the papers that Madeleine Albright, the American secretary of state, told him to sign.

But Milosevic was an even slower student than anybody in Washington or Brussels had guessed. He stared at the fiery diagrams posted on the blackboard of the Danube, saw bridges collapse and oil refineries disappear, and still he refused to follow instructions. Didn't change his attitude; wouldn't learn the German word for civility; couldn't identify the flash cards with photographs of Woodrow Wilson and Elie Wiesel; wouldn't quit killing Albanians.

Which presented the NATO commanders with a difficulty that they hadn't foreseen. Like their American sponsors and patrons, they were in the communications business, not in the business of waging war. War was a trade they had never practiced and one for which they were ill-prepared. They knew how to mount slide shows and organize impressive publicity campaigns deploying aircraft carriers as visual aids, how to simulate combat (both aerial and naval) on state-of-the-art computer screens, where to parade the tanks on national holidays. All worthwhile projects, of course, but not to be confused with the Normandy landings, the Tet Offensive, or any other battle in which soldiers ran the risk of being killed.

The Americans were very clear on the point. They had given a good deal of thought to the subject, and after conducting numerous studies and experiments (some of them with live ammunition), the senior officers at the Pentagon concluded that American troops were too precious to send into what Madam Albright designated as "non-permissive environments." Ever since the unpleasantness in Vietnam, American troops didn't travel abroad without all the comforts of home, and if any dying had to be done, the chore was best left to civilians. Civilians were good at the work, also much practiced. No fewer than 62 million of them had been killed in the century's wars (as opposed to 43 million military personnel), and they had proved their skills in all seasons and every quarter of the globe—in Israel and Cambodia as well as in Sarajevo and Baghdad. Whether buried in mud or sand, or stacked like cordwood in the rubble of a ruined town, they never failed to pose for striking photographs, sometimes managing only a faint grimace or a ghastly smile, but always glad to serve their country, always an asset to the annual request for a more patriotic defense budget.

Divorced from any literal-minded military objective, the NATO bombing campaign could be seen as a series of expensively produced public-service announcements—about the price of freedom, the wickedness of Adolf Hitler, and the importance of Western civilization—and although Milosevic declined the invitation to join the benefit committee, at least he understood the part about civilians. Operation Allied Force paid for the pyrotechnical effects; Milosevic's police supplied intimate close-ups of human misery on the Albanian frontier. No soldiers at risk on either soundstage, each of the co-producers free to advertise their politics as a popular detergent (Milosevic's ethnic cleansing, NATO's moral cleansing), cameo roles for the Russians and Vanessa Redgrave as well as for Jesse Jackson and the president of France.

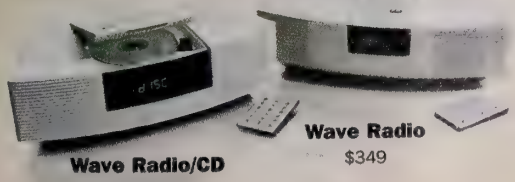
Within a matter of days the campaign acquired as distinctive a look and tone as the promotions for the Gap. Severe in manner and terse in speech, the military spokesmen appeared at a podium every night in Brussels or Washington to say that the NATO aircraft had enjoyed another wonderful day of bombing in Yugoslavia. They displayed maps and video-highlight reels, listed targets,

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[illegible]d sorties, apologized for occa[illegible] technical errors (the odd cruise missile wandering off into Bulgaria or hitting a hospital instead of a bridge), reaffirmed their faith in democracy, and said that the tyrant must not be allowed to continue his massacre of the innocents. A little later in the program the camera angles shifted to the mountains of Macedonia, where sympathetic news correspondents culled the herd of refugees for those among them who had brought prize-winning stories to tell. Here was Bajram, whose three sons had been beheaded, and there was Shala, who had been raped by fourteen Serbian soldiers in Pec, and over here, just behind this tractor, we have little Besim, age nine, who watched his father and mother being burned to death in a barn.

What was difficult to understand was the lack of connection between the two sets of images, the absence of cause and effect. To hear the gentlemen in Washington and Brussels talk about the avowed purpose of Operation Allied Force (to stop the killing in Kosovo), one might have expected to see some sort of military maneuver in the southern Balkans—possibly a few helicopters or the arrival of an armored vehicle. But Kosovo, alas, was a nonpermissive environment, too dangerous for allied soldiers (who might come up against mortars or machine guns), too dangerous for low-flying helicopters (which might encounter hand-held rockets), too dangerous for the briefing officers with the video-highlight reels (who might find themselves at a loss for an overhead projector and a sufficient number of leather chairs). And so NATO attacked Belgrade. Belgrade wasn't dangerous. The planes could come and go at will, dropping their bombs like sermons from the superior altitudes of moral certainty, leaving it to the tyrant Milosevic to study (study and commit to memory before the midterm examination) the symbolic relation between a pulpit and a B-52.

The days passed and nothing changed: the Serbian police continued to burn villages and deport Albanians; NATO continued to bomb Belgrade, sometimes complaining about the rainy weather but otherwise happy with the pictures of the resourceful crosshairs closing down on a truck convoy or a tobacco factory. The juxtaposition of the two sequences didn't make much sense until I understood that NATO and the Milosevic government were working at different tasks. Milosevic was waging war; NATO was making a movie. Not just any movie but a movie with an important message about how everybody in the world must learn to live together in the land of peace and justice under the protection of the Jedi knights.

As with most Hollywood epics, the special effects counted for more than the acting or the script, which was why it was hard to know what the movie was about. Too many people were looking at the daily rushes on CNN before the film editors had time to dub in the story line or fit the music to the soundtrack.

The confusion allowed for a good many differences of opinion, and in the newspaper op-ed columns during the months of April and May the numerous strategists offering technical and geopolitical advice sounded like studio executives desperate to find an upbeat ending (or at least a coherent plot) for what was beginning to look like a production as badly botched as Kevin Costner's *Waterworld*. Some moviegoers thought it was a Holocaust picture (NATO force rescues Kosovo and atones for the crime of Auschwitz); others saw it as a costume drama about the glory of the British or Roman empire (the golden days of law and order, when the native tribes knelt before the thrones of justice); the younger audience thought that the Pentagon should have sent General Spielberg or Keanu Reeves.

Tony Blair, the British prime minister, advanced a theory of postmodern imperialism "based not on any territorial ambitions but on values." Although he didn't say so, the values presumably were Christian, and what he seemed to have in mind was some sort of gunboat philanthropy. Old-fashioned imperialists plundered continents and captured slaves; up-to-date, enlightened imperialists gave lessons in conduct and deportment. As bearers of the rich man's burden, they were obliged to teach poor and ignorant dictators how to become gentlemen. Not always easy to do, and sometim[illegible]s the prefects had no choice but to e[illegible]ploy stern disciplinary measures, b[illegible]t rules were rules, and in the end, o[illegible]e the dictators saw their capital cit[illegible]s reduced to bombed-out ruins, th[illegible]y would know that the time had come [illegible]o renounce the childish pleasures [illegible]f sodomy and murder and apply fo[illegible]a charge account at Harrods.

Other voices in other screeni[illegible]g rooms expressed similar hopes fo[illegible]u happy return to the golden age of we[illegible]l empire. Blair had addressed his rema[illegible]s about "a new doctrine of internati[illegible]- al community" to an audience [illegible]n Chicago, and President Clinton, ec[illegible]h- ing the sentiment, told the Americ[illegible]n Society of Newspaper Editors, in S[illegible]n Francisco, that the bombing of Serb[illegible]a was meant to be understood as a sk[illegible]- mish in "the great battle between t[illegible]e forces of integration and the forces [illegible]f disintegration, the forces of globalis[illegible]m versus the forces of tribalism." The f[illegible]- eign-policy analysts supplying not[illegible]s to the *Wall Street Journal* seconded t[illegible]e motion for "transnational institutio[illegible]s capable of managing rebellio[illegible]s provinces with the sang-froid of i[illegible]s perial Rome. The genius of mode[illegible]n capitalism had produced a world ma[illegible]r- ket and a global economy, but whe[illegible]re was the world government? Where w[illegible]s the benign figure of the Emperor Ca[illegible]s- sar Augustus in whom Edward Gi[illegible]n bon had found the virtues of [illegible]s supreme magistrate . . . invested wi[illegible]h the sublime perfections of an Etern[illegible]l Parent and an Omnipotent Monarch?

Both Blair and Clinton could s[illegible]e themselves playing the part of the Ete[illegible]l nal Parent, awarding prizes as well [illegible]s punishments. The literary and acad[illegible]- mic sectors of opinion favored the ro[illegible]e of the Omnipotent Monarch. Thom[illegible]s Friedman, the *New York Times* colu[illegible]n- nist who conducts the paper's twic[illegible]e- weekly lesson on foreign affairs, r[illegible]e- gretted the absence of the Roma[illegible]n legions, who cut down their enemi[illegible]s without apology or remorse:

> The idea that people are still holdi[illegible]n rock concerts in Belgrade, or going o[illegible]t for Sunday merry-go-round rides, whi[illegible]e their fellow Serbs are "cleansing" Kosov[illegible]o is outrageous. It should be lights out [illegible]n Belgrade: every power grid, water pip[illegible]e- bridge, road and war-related factory h[illegible]s to be targeted.

Like it or not, we are at war with the Serbian nation (the Serbs certainly think so), and the stakes have to be very clear: Every week you ravage Kosovo is another decade we will set your country back by pulverizing you. You want 1950? We can do 1950. You want 1389? We can do 1389 too.

Friedman's column appeared in the paper on April 23, the same day on which the leaders of the nineteen NATO nations had gathered in Washington to applaud the alliance's fiftieth anniversary, and he worried about a possible loss of nerve on the part of the ornamental generals. The futility of the Serbian bombing campaign had dampened everybody's spirits and spoiled the celebration. Instead of attending military fly-bys and black-tie dinners, which had been canceled for fear of sarcasm, the captains courageous were attending worried councils of state, their movements in and around the Ronald Reagan International Trade Center preceded not by flags and drums but by press advisories offering photo-ops for such events as Leaders Walk to Working Lunch. Friedman undoubtedly wished to hearten the company with the rhetorical equivalent of a military fly-by, but his message to Milosevic bore an unfortunate resemblance to Milosevic's message to the Albanians, or Hitler's message to the Jews. Every Serb was guilty, and all the Serbs were vicious. Yugoslavia must be cleansed, an entire people cast into the purifying fire to rid the European Economic Union of their poverty and corruption.

If Friedman's remarks seemed at odds with the NATO public-service announcements about the sanctity of human rights, the contradiction could be explained by his prerogative as a moviegoer. Moviegoers weren't expected to know much about history, or military logistics, or dying in the mud; they expressed important opinions about the cinematography and the lighting, made clever references to other action pictures—*30 Seconds Over Libya, The Sands of Grenada, Seizing General Noriega, Dark Moon Over Baghdad*, etc.—noticed the strength of a performance or the weakness of the dialogue. Like Friedman, most of the other critics contributing commentary to the major news media were free with fanciful interpretations—Serbia to be occupied for fifty or a hundred years, Milosevic indistinguishable from Hitler, Serbia to be utterly destroyed, as Japan and Germany had been destroyed in 1945, as proof that, in the words of Jamie Shea, NATO's chief publicist, Europe "has no tolerance for brutality." Tony Blair likened to the young Winston Churchill, Madam Albright compared, unfavorably, with both Joan of Arc and Charles de Gaulle.

The film criticism proceeded from presumptions of omnipotence similar to those that have governed the making of American foreign policy for two generations. Because the United States bestrides the narrow earth like a colossus (the only superpower, the supreme magistrate and eternal parent), the studio executives in Washington assume that they can afford to look upon the world as so much painted scenery. They understand the acts of war not as a means to an end but as exemplary projections of moral virtue, peace without victory presented as illustrations of the democratic way of life.

The Serbian audience unhappily failed to see in Bill Clinton the obvious allusions to Luke Skywalker, and although by the middle of May the NATO alliance had bombed Belgrade for fifty days and fifty nights, the production was in serious trouble—the budget out of control, the script too preachy, the Russians and the Chinese refusing to work at union scale, too many refugees standing around in the canteen. The prospect of certain failure at the summer box office forced the studio executives to revise the focus of the picture. The stern rebuke directed at the brutal Serbs had become an inspirational message addressed to the vanity of the audiences in Washington and Brussels. The movie was about "the credibility of NATO," not about the future of the Balkans, and if more civilians had to be killed, surely they could take comfort in the knowledge that they were making the world safe for the Pentagon's briefing officers and Spielberg's camera crews. ■





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THOSE WHO APPRECIATE QUALITY ENJOY IT RESPONSIBLY.

HARPER'S INDEX

Chance that a NATO member country faces its own ongoing secessionist movement : 1 in 3

Chance that the leader of a NATO member country was once an antiwar or antinuclear activist : 1 in 3

Minimum amount that six defense contractors each paid last April to "sponsor" NATO's 50th anniversary summit : $250,000

Number of NATO bombs that have fallen on Bulgaria since the war in Kosovo began : 2

Hours after NATO bombed the Chinese embassy in Belgrade last May that the U.S. apologized to China : 23

Number of days before China's state-run media printed the U.S. apology : 2

Ratio of people killed this year in the Kosovo war to those killed in the Ethiopian-Eritrean war : 1:10

Number of ongoing civil and border wars in Africa : 13

Cost of the 105 bomb-proof boundary posts placed on the Iraq-Kuwait border after the Gulf War : $7,000,000

Ratio of "major" U.S. Army deployments abroad between 1946 and 1989 to those since 1990 : 1:3

Number of years that the U.S. military has been using video games to train soldiers to kill : 10

Average number of murders a U.S. child sees on television by the end of elementary school : 8,000

Percentage change since 1990 in the number of network evening news stories on homicide : +474

Bags of potpourri that the Littleton, Colorado, fire department made from flowers placed at Columbine High School : 3,000

Amount that an average U.S. consumer spends on clothes each year : $1,508

Amount that an average inner-city African American spends : $2,440

Fee that Nike offered Ralph Nader to say "another shameless attempt by Nike to sell shoes" in a TV ad : $25,000

Chance that a pair of women's shoes sold in the U.S. is sold by Nine West : 1 in 5

Chances that a sunscreen labeled SPF 30 delivers an SPF below 30 : 4 in 5

Percentage by which the incidence of skin cancer rises for every 1 percent decrease in the size of the ozone layer : 2

Factor by which the size of the ozone hole over Antarctica now exceeds the size of the continental U.S. : 3

Maximum portion of buttocks that one may legally bare next year in Manatee County, Florida : 2/3

Number of academic chairs worldwide devoted to the search for extraterrestrial intelligence : 1

Amount that the head of Chinese military intelligence gave Clinton fund-raiser Johnny Chung in 1996 : $300,000

Ratio of the amount that Chung spent on himself to the amount that he gave to the Democratic National Committee : 14:1

Amount that Gary Bauer's presidential campaign spent on coffee in the first quarter of this year : $6,297.39

Chances that a U.S. Catholic hospital does not provide emergency contraception to rape victims : 4 in 5

Number of male witnesses that Pakistan requires for a rape prosecution : 4

Chances that a Pepsi drinker has been sexually unfaithful : 3 in 5

Height, in feet, of a scarlet "A" a Sunnyside, Wash., woman put in her family's yard last fall to protest her father's adultery : 7

Chance that a man's method of breaking off a relationship is to "just stop calling" : 1 in 10

Number to which rats have been trained to count : 45

Number of voice commands a Jaguar S-Type sedan understands : 44

Percentage of the people living in France during the French Revolution who spoke French : 50

Percentage of the people living in Italy who spoke Italian when the country was unified in 1861 : 2.5

Fine levied against a Singapore political-opposition leader last winter for publicly reading the nation's constitution : $1,452

Chances that an American adult can't identify the source of the phrase "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" : 7 in 10

Amount spent last year by Mount Vernon's directors to give George Washington's reputation more "sizzle" : $3,000,000

Percentage of Americans who describe "barbecue" as the aroma that best defines America : 39

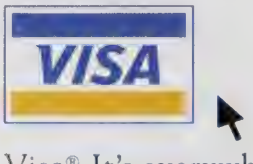
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READINGS

[Account]

PROFESSOR JENKINS GOES TO WASHINGTON

From an e-mail sent in April by Henry Jenkins to the students of MIT's Senior House Dormitory, of which he is the housemaster. The e-mail was subsequently posted on Red Rock Eater News Service. Jenkins is the director of the comparative media studies program at MIT and the editor of The Children's Culture Reader. *His essay "The Politics of Fandom" appeared in the June 1996 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

This is the story of how a mild-mannered MIT professor was called before Congress to talk about "selling violence to our children" and what it was like to testify.

Where to start? For the past several months, ever since my book *From Barbie to Mortal Kombat: Gender and Computer Games* was published, I've been getting calls to talk about video-game violence. It isn't really a central focus of the book. I was trying to start a conversation about gender, about the emergence of a girls' game market, about the place of games in "boy culture," and so forth. The video-game market is one of the most profitable sectors of the entertainment industry, as well as the real beachhead in our efforts to build new forms of interactive storytelling as part of popular, rather than avant-garde, culture. But all the media want to talk about is video-game violence.

The interviews always follow the same pattern. I talk with an intelligent reporter who gives every sign of understanding the issues. Then the story comes out with a seemingly endless string of quotes from anti-popular-culture critics and a few short comments by me rebutting what they said. My point of view got more attention a few times, but usually not.

The reporters would call once or twice a week all fall and most of the spring. After the Littleton shootings, the phone seemed to ring nonstop. There was a national witchhunt to determine which form of popular culture to blame for the mass murders, and video games seemed like a better candidate than most. I was interviewed by everyone from the *New York Times* to *The Village Voice* to *Time*. I found myself denounced on the *Wall Street Journal* op-ed page as a fuzzy-headed liberal who blamed the violence on "social problems" rather than media images.

And then the call came asking if I could fly to Washington two days later to testify before the Senate commerce committee. I asked a few basic questions, the answers to each of which filled me with greater dread. The other people testifying were either anti-popular-culture types, such as Senator Joseph Lieberman and William Bennett, or game-industry spokesmen. I would be the only media scholar who did not come from the "media effects" tradition, which has long dominated such hearings and most often empties media images of their meanings, strips them of their contexts, and denies their

consumers any agency over their use. It's an inadequate and simplistic representation of media consumption and popular culture.

My first thought was that this was a total setup: I had no chance of being heard, and nobody would be sympathetic to what I had to say. It seemed as if the idea that we as citizens might have legitimate investments in the culture we consume would be beyond anybody's comprehension.

A flashback: When I was in high school, I wore a trench coat—beige, not black. (Hell, in elementary school, I wore a vampire cape and a medallion around my neck.) I was picked on mercilessly and I spent a lot of time nursing both emotional and physical wounds. I was also a sucker for Frank Capra movies—Mr. *Smith Goes to Washington* most of all—and films such as *1776* that dealt with people who took risks for what they believed. As the editor of the school paper, I got into fights over censorship and promised myself that when I was an adult, I would speak up about the problems of free speech in our schools.

And now I was reading coverage of the crackdown on free speech and expression in schools across America in the wake of the Colorado shootings: Goth kids harassed for wearing subcultural symbols and pushed into therapy. Kids suspended for writing the wrong ideas in essays or raising them in class discussions. Kids pushed offline by their parents.

When all of this came to mind, it didn't take me long to say yes.

I was running a major conference the next day and had just twenty-four hours to prepare my testimony for the Senate. I culled what I had in my own writings and scanned the Web. I put out a call for some goth friends to tell me what they felt I should say to Congress about their community, and a number of them stayed up late into the night sending me information. I pulled an all-nighter to write the damn thing.

Then I made arrangements for a last-minute trip.

The situation in Washington was even worse than I had imagined. The Senate chamber was decorated with posters advertising some of the most violent video games on the market. Many of the ad slogans are hyperbolic and self-parodying, but that was lost on the senators. Most of the others testifying were professional witnesses who had done this kind of thing many times before. They had their staff. They had props and press releases. They had one another for moral support; I had my wife and son in the back of the room.

The hearings started and one by one the senators began to speak. They all—Republicans and Democrats alike—distanced themselves from popular culture and made "reasonable" proposals that edged toward censorship but never quite crossed the constitutional lines. It would have been political suicide to come

[Letter]

SMITH & WESSON'S ARTFUL DODGE

From a July 16, 1996, letter sent by Kevin G. Foley, vice president of product engineering at Smith & Wesson, to Robert Gilbert, then president of Saf T Lok, manufacturer of a push-button combination gun lock. Since October, eight cities have brought lawsuits against the nation's gun manufacturers, seeking to hold them liable for the public cost of gun-related violence. In several of the cases, the letter below has been filed as evidence that gun makers have been negligent by not installing locks on their firearms. Smith & Wesson is the country's largest handgun manufacturer.

Mr. Gilbert:

We have completed our review of the Saf T Lok gun lock that you provided. The conclusion we came to is that, although the Saf T Lok system can slow down or limit access to a firearm, it cannot be relied upon to prevent unauthorized use of that firearm.

The Saf T Lok system allows for a maximum of 999 unique combinations with no penalty for guessing wrong. Therefore, if one took the time, one could unlock the system within 999 attempts. Our real concern is that the practical number of combinations is somewhere between 6 and 84. Due to the time required to unlock the system, we do not believe that users will elect to use the numbers 6, 7, 8, and 9. The numbers 0 and 1 are also unlikely to be chosen due to the ease of unlocking, plus the fact that 0 represents no action. This leaves the numbers 2, 3, 4, and 5, which can create only 84 possible combinations. It is our opinion that the majority of users will select a combination that uses only the numbers 2 and 3, excluding 222 or 333. This leaves just 6 likely combinations: 223, 232, 233, 322, 323, and 332.

If you have any questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Kevin G. Foley



From House Hunting, *a series of photographs by San Francisco artist Todd Hido. His work is currently on display at the Inman Gallery in Houston.*

out against the dominant position in the room.

When William Bennett testified, he showed video clips, which, removed from context, seemed especially horrific. *The Basketball Diaries* was reduced to twenty seconds of Leo DiCaprio blasting away kids. The opening sequence from *Scream* was pared down to its most visceral elements. Women in the audience gasped in horror. The senators covered their faces with mock dread.

Bennett went on and on about how "surely we can agree upon some meaningful distinctions here, between *Casino* and *Saving Private Ryan*, between *The Basketball Diaries* and *Clear and Present Danger*." I was astonished by the absurdity of this claim, which has neither aesthetic credibility nor any relationship to the media-effects debate. *The Basketball Diaries* is based on the memoirs of a poet; *Clear and Present Danger* is a right-wing potboiler! Scorsese is bad but Spielberg is good?

Meanwhile, the senators began making homophobic jokes about whether Marilyn Manson is "a he or a she" that I thought went out in the 1960s. This struck me as precisely the kind of intolerant and taunting comment that these kids must have gotten in school because they dressed differently or acted oddly in comparison with their more conformist classmates.

And then I was called to the witness stand.

Now, the chair is something nobody talks about. It is low and extremely puffy. When you sit in it your butt just keeps sinking, and suddenly the tabletop is up to your chest. The senators peer down at you from above, and the power dynamic is terrifying.

As soon as I sat down, David Grossman, a military psychologist who thinks video games are training our kids to be killers, started to attack me personally, claiming that as a "journalism" professor and a "film critic," I had no knowledge of social problems.

I am not a journalism professor and I am not a film critic. I am a media scholar who has spent more than fifteen years studying popular culture: how culture works, how media is consumed, how media panics are started, how symbols relate to real-world events, and how violence operates in stories. I am also the father of a high school senior and the housemaster of an MIT dormitory. I spend my life talking with kids about their culture.

Even though his attacks were so far off the mark, I remained calm. But when Senator Sam



"Hillsborough, No.1," from Suburban Dreams, *a series of photographs taken in suburban California by Beth Yarnelle Edwards. Her work is on display this month at the Silver Eye Center in Pittsburgh. She lives in San Carlos, California.*

Brownback asked me to begin, utter terror rushed through my body. My throat was dry. I reached for a glass of water, and my hands were trembling so hard that I spilled it all over the nice table. I tried to read, but the words fuzzed out on the page.

Soon, however, I found myself debating the Congress about what they are trying to do to our culture. I took on Bennett for his distorted use of *The Basketball Diaries* clip, explaining that he didn't mention that this was a film about a poet, someone who struggles between dark urges and creativity, and that the scene was a fantasy intended to express the rage felt by many students in our schools and not something the character does, let alone something the film advocates.

I talked about the ways these hearings grew out of the fear adults have of their own children and especially their fear of digital media and technological change. Adults are feeling more and more estranged from the dominant forms of popular culture, which now reflects their children's values rather than their own. I explained how for many outcasts, the online world offers an alternative support network. I talked about the fact that youth culture was becoming more visible but its core themes and values had remained pretty constant. I attacked some of the extreme rhetoric being leveled against the goths, especially a line from a GOP hack that we needed "goth control" not "gun control." Then I waited.

Brownback immediately quoted a banal line from an ad for a goth nightclub that urged people to "explore the dark side." I explained what I knew about goths, their roots in romanticism, their nonviolence, their strong sense of community, their expression of alienation. I talked about how symbols could be used to express many things and that we need to understand what those symbols mean to these kids. I pointed to Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience* as a work that spoke to the current debate, because it spoofed the original goths, the Aesthetics, for their black garb and mournful posturing. I said that underneath, these folks were actually healthy and well adjusted, but that they were enjoying playing dark and soulful.

The senator tried restating his question, as if

he couldn't believe I wasn't shocked by the concept of giving yourself over to the "dark side." Then he gave up and shuffled me off the stand.

The press swarmed around the anti-violence speakers but didn't talk to me. I didn't mind. I just wanted to get out of there. I felt no one had heard what I had to say and that I had been a poor messenger because I had stumbled over my words. But several people stopped me in the hallway to thank me. And hundreds more sent me e-mail after seeing my testimony on C-Span or reading the transcript on the Web. And I'm starting to feel better about what happened.

But I'm worried that the question continues to be framed the wrong way. The key issue isn't what the media are doing to our children but rather what our children are doing with the media. Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold weren't victims of video games. They had a complex relationship to many forms of popular culture. All of us move nomadically across the media landscape, cobbling together a personal mythology of symbols and stories, and investing those appropriated materials with various personal and subcultural meanings. Harris and Klebold happened to be drawn toward dark and brutal images, which they invested with their personal demons, their antisocial impulses, their maladjustment, their desires to hurt those who had hurt them.

Shortly after I learned about the shootings, I received an e-mail from a sixteen-year-old girl who wanted to share her Web site with me. She had gotten kids nationwide to contribute an enormous array of poems and short stories drawing on characters from popular culture. Although these stories weren't written for class, they would have brightened the spirit of writing teachers. She had reached into contemporary youth culture, including many of the same media products that have been cited in the Littleton case, and found images that emphasized the power of friendship, the importance of community, the wonder of first romance. The mass media didn't make Harris and Klebold violent and destructive and they didn't make this girl creative and sociable, but they provided them both with the raw materials necessary to construct their fantasies.

Of course, we should be concerned about the content of our culture. But popular culture is only one influence on our children's imaginations. Real life trumps media images every time. Many teens return day after day to schools where they are ridiculed and taunted and sometimes physically abused by their classmates. School administrators are slow to respond and typically can offer few strategies for making the abuse stop. As one Littleton teen explained, "Every time someone slammed them against a locker or threw a bottle at them, they would go back to Eric and Dylan's house and plot a little more."

What will come out of these hearings in the end? Probably nothing in terms of policy or law, and certainly not much in terms of informed discussion or serious reflection. The bullies terrorizing kids who are different and the principals disciplining children who fail to conform to the narrow mainstream can be comforted that their views were being taken seriously by the U.S. Senate.

[E-mail]

ELECTRONIC BUSHWHACKING

From an e-mail message sent in April to college students who inquired about internships after visiting www.gwbush.com, a Web site that appeared to be maintained by the George W. Bush Presidential Exploratory Committee. The site was actually run by ®tmark, a group of professionals "dedicated to the sabotage of corporate products." The group revised the site after the Bush committee threatened to sue for copyright infringement.

Hi,

We would very much like to consider your résumé. In the meantime, would you be interested in doing a bit of research for the campaign? There are several issues we would like to explore in your region and demographic group.

One issue is how college students feel about George W. Bush's cocaine use during the wild days of his youth. We are certain that today's young people are clever and discriminating enough to tell the difference between George W. Bush's use of cocaine and, say, the use of cocaine by the felons who have been locked away for long periods during his governorship. But we want to understand our vulnerabilities on this issue so that we can address them as needed during the course of our campaign.

Please ask as many of your peers as possible four or so questions about the governor's former drug use. Your results will factor into our approach with the campaign. Devise the questions as you see fit, and keep us apprised of your progress.

Best wishes,
Roy C.
Presidential Exploratory Committee







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[Press Release]

THE GOP'S COMPARATIVE STUDY

From an April 22 press release that was sent by the Republican National Committee to talk-radio stations across the country.

Today, as America celebrates the twenty-ninth anniversary of Earth Day, we're reminded of the writing of two of the scariest environmental extremists around: Vice President Al Gore and the Unabomber, Ted Kaczynski. Whereas Gore compares so-called global warming to the Holocaust and calls for tons of new taxes and government regulations in his book *Earth in the Balance*, the Unabomber's manifesto demands complete anarchy. But check out the quotes below from Gore and Kaczynski and see if your listeners can tell which author wrote each statement:

Gore: Industrial civilization's great engines of distraction still seduce us with a promise of fulfillment.

Unabomber: Very widespread in modern society is the search for "fulfillment." . . . But . . . for the majority of people . . . , [technology] does not bring completely satisfactory fulfillment.

Gore: The increased productivity of assembly lines . . . requires many employees to repeat the identical task over and over until they lose any feeling of connection to the creative process—and with it their sense of purpose.

Unabomber: A theme that appears repeatedly in the writings of the social critics of the second half of the twentieth century is the sense of purposelessness that afflicts many people in modern society.

Gore: Some argue that a new ultimate technology, whether nuclear energy or genetic engineering, will solve the problem. . . . We have also fallen victim to a kind of technological hubris, which tempts us to believe that our new powers may be unlimited.

Unabomber: "Oh!" say the technophiles, "science is going to fix all that!" We will conquer famine, eliminate psychological suffering, make everybody healthy and happy!

[Profile]

YEVGENIY PRIMAKOV: INTERNATIONAL MAN OF MYSTERY

From "A Heavy Locomotive in the Acceleration Phase: A Rough Psychological Sketch of Yevgeniy Primakov," by Vladimir Vasilyev, in the April 1 issue of Obshchaya Gazeta, *a weekly newspaper published in Moscow. Vasilyev is the head of the Political Psychology Laboratory at St. Petersburg State University. In May, Russian President Boris Yeltsin dismissed Primakov from his position as prime minister. Translated from the Russian by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service.*

When we started this study, our intent was not to analyze the entire life and career of Yevgeniy Maksimovich Primakov but rather to determine "Who is Primakov today?" This is not a purely academic question. In politics, image is everything, and politicians can hire P.R. firms to give them any image they want. When the average citizen has to choose a leader, however, he should be able to identify the candidates by who they actually are instead of who they are trying to be.

To this end, we reviewed videotapes of the prime minister's public appearances between September 1998 and March 1999. We found that Primakov is a classic phlegmatic. The phlegmatic is distinguished by two characteristics: introversion (emotionally withdrawn, detached, and inclined to view himself and others from a functional and impersonal vantage point) and composure (inclined only toward calm, balanced, and moderate displays of emotion). These characteristics manifest themselves in a number of ways.

Clothing

Like all high-level government officials, Primakov wears classic suits, with a preference for dark colors. What distinguishes him from extroverts, however, is how he buttons his jacket. If he is standing or walking, his jacket is always buttoned. He also keeps his jacket buttoned during public events, even though procedural guides recommend an unbuttoned jacket to signify candor to the audience. Primakov unbuttons his jacket only when he sits down.

Gesticulation

Primakov has a distinctive handshake. He starts by raising his palm to the level of his shoulder a few steps before the point of contact, and then lowers his hand to grasp the other per-



"Ismael, pescador," by photographer Patrick Glaize, from Havana, *a collection of Glaize's photographs published by éditions Florent-Massot. Glaize lives in Paris.*

son's hand from above. This gesture, particularly in combination with his straight spine, shows that dominance is a major personality trait.

Primakov will also often lower his left hand onto the right forearm of the other person. In the language of gestures, this means: "I like you, but I intend to get my own way." That is exactly how Primakov greeted U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and IMF Director Michel Camdessus.

"Yes" in the Sense of "No"

We know from early childhood that agreement or disagreement can be expressed by a movement of the head. These gestures are so habitual that we often are not aware we are making them. Apparently, Primakov is not aware either. Here are some examples of statements the prime minister made while he was shaking his head in a negative manner:

"I have the highest respect for the president."

"A united team will be working in the government."

"Of course reform is necessary."

"Today many of our young people are extremely sensible."

Facial Expression and Blink Reflex

The prime minister's mouth reveals his introversion just as eloquently as his buttoned jacket does: The space between his upper and lower lips while he speaks is usually no more than half a centimeter and only occasionally a whole centimeter (in contrast, the lips of [ultranationalist leader] Vladimir Zhirinovsky are usually 2–3 centimeters apart).

The average person blinks approximately once every eight seconds under normal conditions. The frequency increases in response to unfavorable psychological changes (fatigue, irritation, anxiety, fear, etc.). The ability to hold a direct gaze without blinking is logically associated with certainty, power, and strength. Primakov passes the blink test with flying colors: he blinks only half as often as the average person, even in uncomfortable situations.

Subjective Stress Factors

Primakov's main stress factor is his relationship with the president, and the relationship has developed into the worst possible conditions for a phlegmatic—uncertainty, unpredictability, and inexplicability. Displays of deference and loyalty to the president are essentially lacking in the prime minister's behavior. During meetings with the president, Primakov takes his seat at the same time as the president (instead of after him), drops his briefcase on the table with a bang (others lay their binders down silently), and leans back in his chair without restraint, taking up the whole seat, instead of perching on the edge and leaning forward.

Conclusion

Primakov has been at the helm of government for seven months, about twice as long as his young predecessor, Sergei Kiriyenko. For the phlegmatic prime minister, however, seven months constitute only the initial planning stage. Whereas Kiriyenko was like a sports car, Primakov is like a heavy locomotive, slow to accelerate and still building up speed for a long trip along a straight and direct route.

[Thank-you Note]

TIPPING FOR GOOD INCARCERATION IS CUSTOMARY

From an October 26, 1998, letter sent by Jost-Burkhard Anderhub to the head of the Campbell County Detention Center in Newport, Kentucky. Anderhub, a retired sales representative, was jailed for three days for sending gun parts through the mail. He lives in Schlangenbad, Germany.

Dear Sir,

Having been released from Campbell County Detention Center just a few days ago, I want to inform you that my view of institutions like yours has changed dramatically. My treatment by your officers—especially Lt. Marshal, Mr. Fergarden, Mr. Barker, and another gentleman whose name I regretfully cannot recall—was absolutely flawless. The officers were very friendly, although very strict. They clearly are dedicated to their jobs. I feel lucky to have been imprisoned there.

Please accept as a small sign of my appreciation the enclosed check for $200 to be used at your discretion, be it for a Christmas party or whatever. Although I cannot say that I enjoyed my stay at the Campbell County Detention Center, I know my experience could have been far worse. Please accept my heartfelt thanks.

Sincerely yours,
Jost-Burkhard Anderhub

[Lawsuit]

DAVID CARRADINE IS NOT WASHED UP

From a complaint filed on April 26 in Los Angeles Superior Court by actors David and Marina Carradine against People *magazine, Time Warner Inc., Warner Bros. Pictures, and others. David Carradine, who starred in the television series* Kung Fu, *appeared recently in the film* The New Swiss Family Robinson.

1. *Who Weekly* is an Australian publication, effectively the *People* magazine of Australia. It is published by Time Inc., which also publishes *People*.

2. *Who Weekly* ran a picture and article that defamed the Carradines, who sued and settled with defendants. The article was deeply hurtful personally and to the reputations of plaintiffs. *Who Weekly* ran a major retraction of this previous libel.

3. The parties entered into a written settlement agreement in October of 1998. A gentleman's oral "side agreement" stated that an article favorable to the Carradines would be published by a magazine such as *People* or *Entertainment Weekly*.

4. In late 1998, the Carradines were flown first-class to New York and put up at the Plaza Hotel at the expense of Time Inc., so they could meet with Norman Pearlstine, editor in chief of Time Inc., who in his office profusely apologized for the previous libel. He promised that a nice story on the Carradines would be done for *People* or *Entertainment Weekly*.

5. Thereafter, *People* indicated it would like to do a story on the Carradines. An article entitled "Bouncing Back" was published in the January 11, 1999, issue of *People*.

6. The article focused on Mr. Carradine's recovery from substance abuse, and exaggerated any career difficulties he has had. He has not been "a drunk" for the last three decades, nev-


ABSOLUT CITRON.

er, as the article states, kept a liquor flask on the set, was not "unemployable," not in "one long career slide," and not "washed up." He was never "poison in Hollywood."

7. The recent *Kung Fu* series shot in Toronto is not a "pale remake" but was the fourth-rated show in syndication. Mr. Carradine was not in "some one hundred mostly regrettable film and TV roles." His work in *Last Stand at Saber River* earned him two Golden Boot awards and was the highest-viewed movie made for TNT in the history of cable television.

8. He and Marina Carradine did not get together "to find some way out of this mess." They got together because love intervened.

9. The article was on virtually the last page of the magazine—somewhat demeaning.

10. The statements were published with reckless disregard of the truth. The recklessness is especially pronounced given that this story arose from a previous horrible libel of the Carradines.

11. As a result of the foregoing, plaintiff has experienced profound emotional distress, including depression, chagrin, anger, and frustration, as well as professional embarrassment and discredit in the eyes of his peers. The libel makes it more difficult for him to obtain jobs. Finally, this incident is particularly stinging and hurtful to Mr. Carradine, as he has made tens of millions of dollars for Time Warner Inc. in the many television shows and motion pictures in which he has starred, particularly the series *Kung Fu*. Instead of a favorable story, as promised by Mr. Pearlstine, the tenor of the article is nasty and mean-spirited, apparently in retaliation for the settlement Time had to pay for its previous huge mistake.

[Essay]

CONSUMING NATURE

From an essay by Bill McKibben in Consuming Desires: Consumption, Culture, and the Pursuit of Happiness, *to be published this month by Island Press. McKibben is the author of* Maybe One: A Personal and Environmental Argument for Single-Child Families. *His essay "Curbing Nature's Paparazzi" appeared in the November 1997 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

To be under siege from a cloud of black flies is to feel your sanity threatened. In and out of your ears they crawl, biting as they go; in and out of your nose, your mouth, the corners of your eyes. If you've covered up everything but your hands, they will start there and crawl to your wrists, leaving welts wherever they feed. I went out to the garden one spring evening without my shirt tucked in tightly enough, and when I came in five minutes later my wife described the perfect row of bites, twenty or thirty of them, that ran along the narrow gap of skin that had winked open when I stooped to weed.

Black flies hover in a cloud about your face, moving with you for miles, so great is their need for your warmth and company and blood. Every writer of the mountain north has tried to describe their omnivorousness—"winged assassins," "lynch mobs," "jaws on wings." Here in the Adirondacks of upstate New York they constitute their own season, one that lasts as long as spring or high summer or fall color (though not as long as winter). For six or seven weeks, from before Memorial Day to after the Glorious Fourth, the paradise of a town where I live, an enormous expanse of mountain and river and stream and lake and pond, is a paradise flawed. Most of the land here is protected by the state constitution as "forever wild," but the legislature has never managed to resolve away the black flies.

It's not that no one's tried. As early as 1948, local towns seeking to extend the tourist season were spraying DDT from helicopters and tossing chunks of it in the streams. Rachel Carson put an end to that by 1965. In subsequent years, some towns used malathion, methoxychlor, and Dibron 14, usually sprayed from the air, but always in the face of opposition. Then, about a decade ago, some scientists began experimenting with a more natural method of control, a naturally occurring bacteria called *Bacillus thuringensis* that has been used for many years for organic control of garden pests. And so there was soon a small Adirondack industry of private contractors who would bid for the right to treat streams each spring, killing off the black-fly larvae in ways that appealed both to environmentalists and to tourist-seeking local businesses.

But our town had never gone in for BTI, in large part because it is a frugal place, with the lowest property taxes in the region. No one had ever brought it up, and so spring after spring we had black-fly season, hard on the heels of mud season. Then, last year, that changed.

The movement may have started one morning at a Rotary Club meeting in Smith's Restaurant, where a local realtor complained that she'd lost a sale when she couldn't even get a couple from car to house, the flies were so thick. Suddenly a petition was circulating de-

[Patents]

SEED MONEY

From "Patented 'Inventions' Based on Folk Knowledge, Plants, and the Human Body," a report forthcoming from Glenn Wiser and David R. Downes, lawyers with the Center for International Environmental Law. Since the mid-Eighties, the United States has granted a number of patents on plants that for centuries have been widely used and cultivated by other cultures, infuriating indigenous peoples around the world. The patent on turmeric described in the chart below was canceled after legal proceedings; the patent on the human-cell line of the Hagahai people has also been dropped. According to Edward Hammond, a researcher with the Rural Advancement Foundation International, "To claim a plant patent under U.S. law, you do not need to be the breeder or the cultivator of a plant. What you do need is a pair of scissors, a passport, and a backpack."

PLANT/ LIFE FORM	PATENT ISSUE DATE	PATENT HOLDER	SOURCE	TRADITIONAL USE	RIGHTS OF PATENT OWNER
Insecticide extracted from neem-seed oil	5/2/95	W. R. Grace & Co.	Traditional peoples of India	Used for centuries on Indian subcontinent as an insecticide	Right to market neem-oil insecticides produced by hydrophilic extraction
Basmati rice lines and grains	9/2/97	RiceTec, Inc.	Used by generations of Punjabi farmers of India and Pakistan; patent is for derivative of Green Revolution "super rice"	Subsistence use; primary source of livelihood for thousands of Punjabi farmers	Right to market any Basmati variety crossed with semi-dwarf strain grown anywhere in the Western Hemisphere
Endod berry *(Phytolacca dodecandra)*	10/12/93	University of Toledo	Ethiopian biologist observed traditional peoples' use of endod and promoted it as cost-effective way to control disease-carrying freshwater snails	Cultivated for centuries in Africa for use as shampoo, and for intoxicating and catching fish	Exclusive U.S. rights to market endod products for controlling zebra mussels, which can clog water pipes
Bitter melon *(Momordica charantia)*	1/16/96	National Institutes of Health/New York University/ and American Biosciences, Inc.	Traditional Chinese healers	Eaten by Chinese for centuries to protect against infection and tumors	Right to protein obtained from fruit and seeds for use as anti-cancer and anti-HIV treatment
Turmeric *(Curcuma longa)*	3/28/95	University of Mississippi Medical Center	Traditional healers of Indian subcontinent	Root has been used for centuries to treat sprains, inflammations, and surface wounds	Exclusive U.S. market rights to use turmeric to heal wounds
Human cell line of Hagahai people	3/14/95	U.S. Government	Cells of small group of hunters and horticulturalists living in highland fringe of Papua New Guinea	None	Exclusive rights to the Hagahai peoples' cell line, including rights to market medicines derived from it

manding that Johnsburg treat its streams. Soon the town board was busy drafting a set of specs so that they could put the job out to bid. Local innkeepers predicted that the cost might well be covered by the taxes paid by vacationers who would otherwise stay away. It looked like a done deal, as if our town would soon join the twenty-one other Adirondack communities that treat their streams with BTI.

Against most expectations, however, opposition, though not particularly organized—there was no official group, no "Save Our Flies"—began to form. Questioning letters started appearing in the local paper. Some of the comments concerned cost. "This is going to cost us $40,000, my share will be $56, and I don't even know if it's going to work," said one resident. Others questioned the effectiveness of the plans: Johnsburg covers a vast area, most of it deep wilderness, and since black flies will migrate a good distance in search of the blood they need to lay eggs, all those streams would have to be treated, which some experts said was a dubious proposition.

But, unexpectedly, most of the opposition was philosophical. For one thing, the messages of thirty years of ecological thinking have begun to really penetrate people's minds. The fact that there are millions of black flies around Johnsburg in the spring, several residents



"Ron with Hounds, Lochsa Valley, Idaho," by Barbara Bosworth, from the Fall/Winter 1998 issue of Blind Spot Magazine. *Bosworth lives in Wellfleet, Massachusetts.*

pointed out, means that something must eat them for dinner. Fishermen testified that they had slit open trout bellies to find them crammed with black flies; others worried about birds, or about bass, or simply about whether it was prudent to muck around with such Vast Systems.

And there were the people who said: this is not such a big problem. Sure, a few days a year, when there's no wind, it gets bad, and so I wear my bug veil or I stay indoors.

And then there was something more yet. A surprising number of my neighbors said—not always loudly, often a little backhandedly, maybe with a shade of embarrassment—that somehow the black flies were a part of life here, one of the things that made us whatever it is that we are. Could we still have the Black Fly Ball at the local tavern? someone wanted to know.

I once did an odd experiment in which I found the largest cable-TV system on earth, which was at the time a hundred-channel operation in Fairfax, Virginia, and I got people to tape for me everything that came across it for the same twenty-four-hour period. I took my 2,400 hours of videotape home to the Adirondacks and spent a year watching it, trying to figure out what the world would look like to you were that your main window onto it. And what I found was this one overriding message: you are the most important thing on earth. You, sitting there on the couch clutching the remote, are the center of creation, the heaviest object in the known universe; all things orbit your desires. This Bud's for You.

This is, of course, the catechism of the consumer society—the elevation of each one of us above all else. Sometimes it is described as "human nature," usually by people who would argue that you can't do anything at all about it. But of course in other times and other places, people have managed to put other things at the center of their lives—their tribe or community, their God, nature, or some amalgamation of these things. Sometimes that's been all to the good; visit an Amish community. Sometimes it's meant pogroms. All I'm saying is, there have been other choices on offer.

Whether that still is true, however, I'm not sure. We have grown up in cultures so devoted to consumption—grown up so solid in the understanding that you define yourself through

certain patterns of consuming—that I doubt very much we can truly shake them. How else would we behave? From "real needs"? Save for the relative few of us who ever experience actual hunger, or actual involuntary exposure to the elements, that sense of reality is as hard to summon as a sense of what it felt like to be chased by saber-toothed tigers. Poor people are just as interested in brand names as anyone else, just as devoted to the various cults (convenience, comfort, identity) of this central religion as anyone else.

And so it is no real stretch to say: the drive to eliminate black flies from this small rural town where I live is simply one more manifestation of our deep consumer urge. We want to consume bite-free air; we want to consume our cedar decks and our pools and our gardens free of any complication or annoyance. We want to consume them when we want (not just on windy days) and how we want (bare-chested, with no damn bug veil).

But what about those of us who opposed the black-fly treatment? We exemplars of biological virtue, eager to sacrifice ourselves for the sake of that great order Diptera and its thirst for our blood? How to explain our escape from the great consumer faith into which we were baptized?

Mainly, I think, by saying that we are just consumers, too. Why do I not want black-fly larvae killed in Mill Creek where it runs past my house? Partly because I don't want the biology of the stream tampered with; but at least as much because I live not in Generic Suburban America, where everything is supposed to be convenient, but in the Rugged Frontier Adirondacks, where everything is supposed to be a challenge. At some level, I fear that I like black-fly season for the same reason I like winter and bad roads: because it heightens the adventure of living here. I consume inconvenience, turn it into a pleasurable commodity; it becomes the fuel for my own sense of superiority. I don't feel special because I own a particular brand of clothes, drive a particular make of car, smoke a particular brand of cigarette; I feel special because I have a crappy car, because I wear old clothes all the time, because I drive twenty miles round-trip for a quart of milk. I like it when people call up from the city to talk and the power has just failed, or a blizzard has just struck, or the temperature has gone to thirty below. I feel larger because of all that, I think; it pumps me up the way a Nike, a Rolex, an in-ground pool, a Ford Explorer is supposed to pump you up. Black-fly season is a test, something to endure; I come out of it feeling tougher, stronger. Which means, I think, that I'm a superconsumer, too. Black-fly season is about me.

And in this I am not alone, I imagine. The shift toward voluntary simplicity now under way in some small corners of this culture is in some ways simply a shift toward a new self-image. Instead of defining yourself by what you buy, you define yourself by what you throw away.

There is clearly a sense in which this slightly submerged consumerism is more twisted than its straightforward counterpart. Elimination is a logical human response to black flies, BTI a giant and efficient version of the timeless slapping hand. Consuming fly-free air is, at some level, extremely logical. Finding a way to consume fly-filled air is more than a little nuts.

So is it all just a toss-up? If it's an age of endless irony, when nonconsumption is just another form of image-building, does it make any difference how we live? Can you say that one path is better than the other? Can you say we shouldn't kill all the damn black flies?

[Proposal]

THIS LAND WAS MADE FOR ME, NOT YOU

From a joint resolution proposed in the Oregon Legislative Assembly in April by Republican State Senator John Lim.

WHEREAS the late Governor Tom McCall foresaw that overpopulation would decrease the quality of life in Oregon; and

WHEREAS overpopulation causes problems with infrastructure in this state; and

WHEREAS overpopulation harms the air, the water, and the other natural resources of this state; and

WHEREAS overpopulation has a negative economic effect on this state; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon that the Department of Transportation is directed to place a sign at each highway entrance to Oregon that states, "You are welcome to visit Oregon, but please don't stay."

You can, I think, though you have to say it carefully, aware that your own sense of superiority is more than a little absurd.

Sometimes now I help with the campaign to return wolves to the Adirondacks. They were wiped out here in the last years of the nineteenth century by people who thought of them in the way that realtors now think of black flies—as an annoyance standing in the way of progress. I try not to pretend to myself any more than I have to that my main interest is with the wolves, or with the health of the forest that badly needs a top predator. I know that what I want is to hear a wolf howling in the woods, because it will make this place, and my life here, feel yet more romantic. I will consume that wolf howl, just as my predecessors consumed the quiet of their suddenly wolfless nights. But once the wolf is there, that howl will also carry certain other less obvious messages; and there will be the remote chance of an encounter with this other grand representative of creation, an encounter that might go beyond mere consumption. I saw a grizzly bear this summer in Alaska, not far away on a muddy bank on a foggy night, and the sheer reality of that encounter shook some small part of me out of the enchantment into which I was born.

Black flies accomplish this too, in a subtler way. They remind you, day after day in their season, that you really aren't the center of the world, that you are part food, implicated in the crawl and creep of things. They are a humbling force, and even if for a time I can involve them in my self-aggrandizing myths, they still exert a slow and persuasive pressure of their own. Over the course of a decade, living in a place dominated by high mountains, wild winters, summer storms, trackless forest, and hungry insects has in fact warped me in certain ways. I am not the same person who came here. I am still a consumer; that was the world I emerged into, the air I breathed for a very long time, and its assumptions still dominate my psyche. But maybe a little less so each year. And perhaps my daughter just a little less than that. There are times when I can feel the spell breaking in my head—the spell of the advertiser on the tube, even the spell of the mythmaker in my head. There are times when I can almost feel myself simply being.

At least for this year, Johnsburg decided not to use BTI. Instead, they're sending out a questionnaire with the tax bills: if the town decided to treat the streams, it asks, would you be willing to let the BTI crew on to your land? I think quite a few people—by no means a majority, but probably enough to make the plan unfeasible—will say no. Like me, they'll likely do it without quite knowing why. But it's one small sign for me that the enchantment is wearing off, that the incantation sung over our cradles by the TV may be less permanent than some think. That spring may be coming—and with it the biting flies, by God.

[Letter]

ONE FAN'S NOTES

From a letter sent in March by Lois Hirt to novelist Ann Hood.

Dear Ms. Hood,

I am a dental hygienist who writes a column, "Hygienists in Print: Fiction and Nonfiction," for the Los Angeles Dental Hygienists' Society newsletter. I offer "dental tidbits to nibble on" from books that have anything to do with dentists, hygienists, and dentistry.

I thoroughly enjoyed your *Places to Stay the Night*—especially the parts where you bring up a hygienist. Any mention of a hygienist is fantastic, because it might inspire readers to call their own dental office to set up an appointment.

I'd like to include your book in my column, but I will need you to answer the following questions:

- On page 8, you describe Libby's morning tooth ritual. Any reason for this?
- On page 86, Libby suggests that Sherri become a dental hygienist. Sherri replies, "I don't want to be cleaning some strange guy's teeth. Or getting zapped with radiation." Any reason for Sherri's attitude?
- On page 166, Millie's teeth turn black from radiation, and Renata promises to have them bonded to give her an ultra-brite smile. Again, any special reason for this?

Please also explain your motivations for the following:

- Pages 6, 155, 166, 198, 202, and 218 give teeth and breath descriptions.
- Pages 109 and 230 deal with Jenny and her braces, including their cost.
- On page 143, Dana remembers to put her toothbrush in her backpack.

Thank you for your help. Looking forward to your next book.

Very truly yours,
Lois Hirt





From Nervous Character, *a series of paintings by Amy Adler on display in March at the Margo Leavin Gallery in Los Angeles.*

[Analysis]

TEEN SOCIALIST IDOLS

From "The Buffy Files," by Tracie McMillan and Oscar Owens, in the Winter/Spring issue of The Activist, *the magazine of the Young Democratic Socialists. According to McMillan and Owens, the television show* Buffy the Vampire Slayer, *in which high school students meet during their lunch period to organize the defense of their town against vampires, could just as easily be about "a high school feminist or socialist club." Below are socialist undertones the authors found in selected episodes of the program. McMillan is the editor of* The Activist; *Owens is co-chair of the Young Democratic Socialists.*

Episode: "Welcome to the Hellmouth"
Plot: Buffy moves to Sunnydale and accepts her duty fighting vampires who threaten the city. A master vampire trapped underground attempts to rise through the kills of other vampires.
Socialist Subtext: Buffy faces her responsibility to be an activist and fight the secret elite who threaten the city. A capitalist restrained by regulations tries to rise through the use of subcontracting.

Episode: "Surprise/Innocence"
Plot: Vampires attempt to reassemble a demon whose body parts have been spread around the world. Once assembled, this demon will burn the humanity out of everyone on Earth.
Socialist Subtext: The breakdown of trade barriers is exploited by economic bloodsuckers to assemble products in a way that dehumanizes people.

Episode: "Reptile Boy"
Plot: A rich white fraternity is actually a cult that sacrifices girls to a large snake-demon. After Buffy slays the reptile demon, the frat's alumni start losing their privileges and the value of their stock portfolios plummets.
Socialist Subtext: The "old boys' club" is based on the domination of women. Powerful old men owe their success to pathetic social networks.

Episode: "Anne"
Plot: Street kids are kidnapped into an underground dimension called Hell, where they are worked until old age and then spit out. Once Buffy stops resisting her duty to save people from evil, she fights off the slave drivers with a hammer and sickle.
Socialist Subtext: Hell is a sweatshop; a sweatshop is Hell. It steals the young, strips them of their individuality, then spits them back out. It should be rebelled against and fought. Being an activist is a choice you make, but once you realize its importance, you can't ignore your responsibility to fight injustice.

Episode: "The Wish"
Plot: A goddess of scorned women grants a wish that Buffy had never come to Sunnydale. Suddenly, the world is a very different place, with the vampires triumphant, though

a small band of rebels still tries to fight back. The ascendant vampires introduce "mass production," which they will use to put people into machines that drain their blood.

Socialist Subtext: Without activists, the world would be even shittier than it is. The idea that the world can't be any better serves as a manipulative tool for those who want to maintain the status quo. The triumph of free markets is seen as the only possibility, and in its ascendance, people are drained of life, working at machines of mass production.

[Solutions]

PRESERVING MASCULINITY

From "Masculine Pages," by Becky Higgins, in the May/June issue of Creating Keepsakes, *a magazine for people who make scrapbooks, which is published in Orem, Utah.*

Who doesn't have a man in her life? We all have at least one, whether we're talking dad, brother, boyfriend, husband, fiancé, boss, son, neighbor, or best friend. Because we're scrapbookers, naturally we have men in our pictures too. But no man wants to see his picture surrounded by daisy paper and fancy writing. Here's how to preserve the memories of your men in the most effective way.

Themes

Sort through your masculine photos. What "male" themes do they contain? You can choose your own or pick from the following: collections, such as baseball cards; days in the military; favorite foods; goofing off with buddies; love of tools.

Texture

Don't you love men's rugged strength? Capture it with textured papers and page accents. You can create a fun look with corrugated paper, handmade paper, or even sandpaper! What if your guy's the gentler type? Try using suede. It's classy and soft, yet still masculine.

Color

When it comes to masculine pages, earthier tones (browns, deep greens) are a good choice.

Journaling

A couple of years ago, I got into the habit of letting my husband do his own journaling in our family albums. Great discovery! Capturing your guy's penmanship is a sure way to make his page more masculine.

Guy Stuff

You may not love every one of your husband's hobbies, but obviously he does. You know what makes him happy. Scrapbook it!

My husband likes to go shooting in the desert with his buddies, so I decided to save ammunition packaging from one of their excursions. Later, I sprayed it with a deacidifying spray and included the packaging on my page. How much more masculine can you get?

[Story]

A REMEMBRANCE OF INK PAST

"Notice," by Ken Kalfus. The story appeared in the April issue of Law & Politics *and is included in* Thirst, *a collection by Kalfus published by Milkweed Editions. Kalfus's collection* PU-239 and Other Russian Fantasies, *will be published in September by Milkweed; the title story appeared in the March 1996 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

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"Hanoi, 1998," by New York City artist An-My Lê. Her work was on display in May at the Scott Nichols Gallery in San Francisco.

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BURNING OLIVIER

The brief life and private burial of an infant son

BY GEORGE MICHELSEN FOY

When my infant son died, he had an arterial line stuck in his right wrist and a blood-oxygen monitor taped to one foot. A sensor on his chest and another by his neck measured his pulse. Twin wires from a pacemaker snaked beneath tiny bandages through holes in the boy's chest to his heart. A pair of tubes drained the incision over his sternum. An intravenous line in his left arm, braced by a cushioned board, led to a plastic manifold through which ten electric pumps and three gravity drips rationed out a cocktail of drugs and nutrients: dopamine to expand his rejiggered aortic arch; epinephrine to elevate his blood pressure; norepinephrine to do the same thing; and heparin to thin his blood so it would flow without clotting through the Gortex shunt the surgeons had spliced between the pulmonary and the carotid arteries. A broad-spectrum antibiotic in the cocktail steadily withered any infection that might flower in the chest cavity where his operations had taken place. A 20-percent-lipid emulsion and dextrose took care of his nutrition, while a saline drip met his need for fluids. Methadone both kept him sedated and weaned him off the morphine that had been sedating him before; Versed, a central nervous system depressant, prevented him from moving and from remembering any of this should he ever fully wake up. An oscillating ventilator, standing beside him like a loud, B-movie robot, held his lungs inflated while shuttling a mix of oxygen and nitric oxide in and out at set frequencies and pressures. And a peritoneal-dialysis catheter inserted well to the right of his navel periodically flooded his abdominal wall with a high-density solution that, in turn, pulled fluid from the wall's blood vessels, which was then drained into a cellophane bag.

None of it was working anymore. Not if you define "working" as the rational expectation of being able to live without support from space-age medicine. At the age of zero to four weeks you can with some justification equate a baby's character with his overall resilience, and by such standards our son was a fighter as tough as any Spartan soldier come to make his stand at the narrow defile against a thousand well-armed barbarians, taking all the cuts and spear thrusts they could inflict and still tottering on, forever willing to come back, and back again, at the slavering horde; but it finally had become clear that after twenty-nine days of struggle his opponents were growing in number and fierceness of attack and at some point he must submit. We gave him an extra twenty-four hours to make sure, but the dialysis continued to lose ground against the swelling that was the lethal end result of the complexity and length of his stand; the barbarians in this case being not only the failed redesign of his circulatory system but also a complex process of the body itself turning in sub-molecular disgust against the artificiality of life support.

On May 31 at seven A.M., therefore, I asked that the support be turned off. His nurses at Boston Children's Hospital, Kim Reiser and Jane Hersey, worked fast, probably because they

George Michelsen Foy is the author of seven novels, including To Sleep with Ghosts *and* Contraband. *He lives in New York City and teaches at New York University.*

knew what was going to happen. I had always been conscious of the extent to which Olivier's life was propped up by machinery. On the night he was diagnosed, after I had read up in medical journals on the cases that came closest to his own—hypoplastic left-heart syndrome, atrial septal defect, transposition of the great arteries—I had walked around the small city of hospitals centered on Longwood Avenue, trying to absorb the overdose of data on the hydrodynamics of newborn cardiac dysfunction and the complexity of technical measures necessary to correct it. I had stopped beside the hospitals' power plant, staring through plate glass at the brightly painted valves, pipes, and pumping stations, and thinking that there had to be a mechanical solution, some radical redesign of duct and feeder tube that would solve his huge malfunction and make him work again. It was, I suppose, my male training coming to the fore here, the illusion fostered in boys that they can always put together some smart-ass rig of twine and baling wire that will get them out of a jam at the last minute. The lesson of the last month had clearly been that technical solutions would not suffice. But Olivier's heart was beating strongly, his lungs were theoretically capable of functioning on their own, and on the morning he was to die I still dreamed of some miraculous event where we shut off all the machines and in the ringing silence of no-support the barbarians, astonished, laid down their spears, and Olivier lived.

I was not prepared for the speed at which he crashed as soon as the machinery was stopped. Kim was still untangling his wires when Jane picked him up and placed him in my arms. I watched the monitors—the precise meters blinking to nothing, the alarms buzzing as the various sensors were disconnected, the LCD question marks inserting their digital puzzlement into the greater analog field of ignorance about why this was happening at all, and why to my son, and why a baby whose eyes were so alert and hungry to embrace the supply-and-demand of living should have his ticket to this economy canceled at the very start. At last only his pulse monitor was left; a tiny pea-colored heart-icon flashing, a touch slower every time, over the blank blood-oxygen and arterial-pressure displays.

As I held him, the numbers that were his pulse rate started to go down. Regular, ominous as the fathometer on a depth-charged submarine, they dropped from 115, to 114, to 113. One digit every second: 110, 109, 108. At 99, Kim unfastened the pulse sensor. I sat in a chair with Olivier lying in the crook of my elbow, lighter than I remembered, and almost as stiff from the effects of the edema as if rigor mortis already had set in. I rocked him as if he could feel it. I talked to him as if he could hear. I looked at him as if he might look back through eyelids he no longer could open, so thick were they from swelling. I saw nothing happen, and yet a minute or so later I felt a loss of cohesion to him—a sense that the curve of his eyebrows and the jut of his lower lip and the other tiny details that had always been connected suddenly were not linked anymore. I have never found evidence to suggest the existence of a spirit, and I felt no such mystical subtraction now. I think what was happening was that my own inner clock continued the countdown as his pulse sank, and at some point I knew that the story of him I had made up could not survive such depths. Or perhaps I felt his internal muscles letting go as the brain shut down. Maybe it was all of these; but the image that recurred in my mind came straight from the story I had made up over the month and one day I spent with my son, and the image was this: of the two-pint warrior finally laying down his sword and accepting defeat in the battle he had waged over thirty of his thirty-two days of life.

I STILL DREAMED OF SOME MIRACULOUS EVENT WHERE WE SHUT OFF ALL THE LIFE-SUPPORT MACHINES AND, IN THE RINGING SILENCE, OLIVIER LIVED

I have always and instinctively distrusted morticians and other professional sympathizers. It strikes me as logical that a bulkhead of hypocrisy must be built into their solicitude, if only to protect themselves emotionally from the chronic erosion of loss. I see it as anathema that the final send-off of people whose stories you care about should be placed in the hands of those who must manufacture the emotions that connect them to the dead. Perhaps it might feel different if our communities remained small enough that morticians were linked to client families by ties other than gain. But such connection no longer is





typical of most of the United States after the dissolution of communities following World War II, and certainly not of Barnstable County, Massachusetts, where we lived at the time and where Olivier was born. In Barnstable County, nine of the fifteen "funeral homes" are now owned by national chains. They are well-organized and profitable businesses, the growth of which reflects their institutional embrace of the profits to be wrested from clients whose financial judgment has been suspended by grief. These "homes" are utterly devoid of the type of individual and affectionate care that Olivier enjoyed throughout his abbreviated life. There was no way in hell I was going to let the cold hands of those franchised carrion-feeders come anywhere near my son.

This, at any rate, was the short-term logic determining the actions I was to take once Olivier died. But our actions, or mine at least, are seldom based only on short-term calculations with all the data categorized and plain. There exists a long-term spectrum also, one that works off tensions and demands built up by living in the human marketplace. In this case, my actions fed off a hardwired directive to protect a kid, both as a continuation of my own genes and as a symbol of my childhood, a place of sweet potential and high innocence for which I had, by definition, huge empathy. There was more in this long-wavelength process; a mess of emotional software, unconsciously fashioned for me by parents who liked to project their sense of self onto the innocent—children, cats, hunted fauna—probably because it was easier than dealing with adults. It was powerful conditioning, and it meant that one could not abandon a child at any stage without jumping ship on part of oneself.

None of this I was particularly aware of at the time. All I knew was what I did. After a cardiologist had checked that Olivier's pulse was gone, I got to my feet. Jane came in and spread a baby blanket diagonally on the bed where he had lain until a few minutes ago. I placed him carefully on the blanket. Jane began to wrap him. "Wait," I said.

"You want to do it?"

"Yes."

Jane unfolded the blanket. I picked up the bottom right corner and laid it as far as it would

Photographs by Jen Fong (left); Joshua Sheldon (right) / Photonica

go up his small body. It covered him to the bandage. I picked up the left corner and laid it over his chest and tucked it under his right side. Then I did the same with the right top corner. It felt good to me that I could take care of my boy's body even after he had stopped breathing.

Once he was swaddled, I picked up my son again and held him for several minutes more. A social worker named Sarah Lualdi peered through the glass partition, saw what I was doing, and left. Jane and Kim busied themselves with their records. Brian Duncan, Olivier's surgeon, hung around outside, chatting to cardiologists. It was clear that he, too, was trying not to rush me. I think if any of them had showed impatience I would never have let go of Olivier, because I simply did not believe anyone had the right to prevent me from holding him now. But their compassion paradoxically made me conscious of my self-indulgence in keeping them from kids who were not beyond their help. Anyway, after I had yo-yoed several times through cycles of sobbing and relief, I was getting washed out by my own emotions.

"You better take him away," I told Jane. "I know I won't leave while he's here."

"Okay," she replied.

"Okay," I said. "You want him on the bed, you're going to wheel him, I don't know, wherever he goes?"

"No," Jane replied. "I'll just pick him up." And she put him to her shoulder the way a mother would burp her child, one hand supporting his back and neck. "He's still just a baby," she said.

She turned and walked through the door. I could see his blanketed head peeking over her shoulder as she disappeared. I had spoken earlier to Jane and Kim about not letting him be handled by strangers. Although Jane was not a stranger, watching her carry him away reinforced my determination that even on the far side of consciousness I was not going to let my son be handled by people whose prime interest was to make money. I was going to bury him, or burn him—whatever his mother and I decided on—and I would take him every step of the way myself.

I found over the next few days that the path to taking charge of handling your people once they are dead is, if not blocked, at least well hidden by a sort of interested neglect grown there like brambles by the industry that profits from death.

I also found a lot of danger attached to bucking the status quo, which takes it for granted that you will hire a mortician to do the job. The danger does not lie in opposition from morticians. It comes from inside oneself—from the emotional damage of being too closely imbricated in the process—from the too-high spikes and the too-low valleys whose irrational frequencies can scramble your calm as quickly as a bulldozer will crush a teacup.

There is a reason most people do not stray from the well-worn paths in these circumstances. The anesthesia involved in paying a stranger to handle one's dead is not unlike the separation effect in psychiatry. Anesthesia grows in direct proportion to the lack of personal linkage, and anesthesia is a state prized by the comfort culture of America, especially when the death of someone close blurs the TV and redirects our gaze toward reality's skull-like face.

In related ways, death works on the comfort society the same way life does; we take our cues and desires mostly from the actions of others. In this, too, we minimize risk and pain. I suspect that only a small percentage—prompted, perhaps, by Jessica Mitford's famous exposé of the funeral industry, *The American Way of Death*—end up questioning the role of the mortician. Even fewer query the plush language with which the industry, in exactly the same way it lines coffins with satin, upholsters its steel grip on the business of dissolution: "funeral directors" for morticians, "interments" for burials, "caskets" for coffins, "deceased" for the dead, "passing on" for dying, and "closure" (borrowed from the fuzz-speak of New Age gurus) for the whole messy process of puking up your rawest dependency and dread until the moment when your psyche cannot bear any more such emesis and injects the first blessed bolus of forgetting.

A further percentage of that minority of quibblers would probably choose to ignore the pale and proffered hands of the professionals and take up the burden of burial themselves if they were not stunned by the noisome grief imploding within them; if they were not too exhausted to reblaze a path of which few have heard and to which even fewer can find their way. So they simply do not bother. The fact of the matter is that, while in all but five states—Connecticut, New York, Indiana, Louisiana, and Nebraska are the exceptions—it is legal, under certain conditions, to handle and bury your own, in none is the way made obvious or smooth. That is the reason most consumers, and many officials for that matter, still believe it is illegal to handle your dead except through the medium of a licensed mortician.

I was a typical case. If the Children's Hospital people had not busted a gut to reassure me that I had time—that, in the rawest possible terms, the morgue would chill my son's body to a point where decomposition was not an immediate problem, so that I could make up my mind in a week or even two, if that's how long it took—I would

soon have sloughed off my convictions and grabbed my ankles for the status quo. Perhaps I would have settled for a face-saving compromise, choosing one of the last independent homes on the Cape or a mortician who had handled a friend.

For all my arrogance of opinion, I was in no shape for practicalities. Leaving Children's the morning Olivier died, I felt a physical trauma, as if somebody had slammed me in the chest with a baseball bat, because every time I had quit the hospital during the previous month, I had turned at the corner of Blackfan Street and Longwood Avenue to stare up at the sixth floor of the Pavilion building, there, to the left, over the walkway with the metal lettering. And I had muttered out loud to Olivier, "Don't worry," to let him know I was coming back. Because we had become friends, no matter how ridiculous that sounds in talking about a newborn, and I wanted to remind him of the fact; or, more precisely, I wanted the part of my brain that was occupied with him to be fully aware that I was not abandoning a friend—only taking a break, to visit his mother and sister, to fill up on the emotional fuel of our ongoing lives together as well as on actual food not thick with cafeteria starch and salt.

Now he no longer lived in that room where the Pavilion touched the orange sides of the New Building, and I have met nothing before or since—not the dread of mediocrity, nor the imminent possibility of my own death, nor the reality of loneliness, open-ended—more terrifying than that sense of utter loss.

And then, of course, I felt relief. Under the shock, I actually felt better, and for predictable reasons. The uncertainty was finally over, for him, for me, for the friends and brothers and sisters and grandparents who had been forced to deal with us through the smoked window of grief that divided Liz and me from the normal world.

The sense of relief lasted the rest of the day. That evening I read my three-year-old daughter, Emilie, to sleep. It was a tradition from before Olivier was born, before he blasted our placid schedule into the emergency zone. I had spent most of the preceding sixty hours propped in a chair in Olivier's cubicle, and as I read the last pages of *Make Way for Ducklings*, exhaustion came from behind like an assassin. I remember struggling to form the final words: "And when night falls they swim to their little island and go to sleep." Then it was I who passed out.

I slept eleven hours without dreaming. When I woke I lay in sleep-hangover, blessed blankness, for a few seconds. Then all at once it was as if the bed had disappeared and I had fallen into a chasm in my life. That chasm was the absence of Olivier, but it was also the loss of the campaign we had fought together. The fight perhaps was my conceit—no one knows how much he understood, even when the Versed wore off and he looked up with his periwinkle-blue eyes focused clearly on my face hovering large and pathetic, a pale Jupiter overhead. It is likely that my presence beside him every day and many nights made as much difference to the outcome as someone screaming "Stop!" at a hurricane, but the discipline it instilled in my life over that month was very real to me.

Because when I was trying to help Olivier amid the no-time of ICU neon, I lived harder and more intensely than I ever had in my forty-four years of existence. I lived so intensely, and, in many ways, happily, that the only memory that even came close was the very first few days of falling in love, or a trip I had taken in the Hindu Kush mountains, during which my life was sometimes at risk. Now I had to face not only this day but tomorrow and every sunrise with nothing whatsoever I could do to help Olivier anymore.

THE PATH TO TAKING CHARGE OF HANDLING YOUR PEOPLE ONCE THEY ARE DEAD IS WELL HIDDEN BY BRAMBLES GROWN THERE BY THE INDUSTRY THAT PROFITS FROM DEATH

It rained hard for twenty-four hours starting the morning after my son died. Of course it felt like the triumph of cliché, the sky mimicking our behavior and mood. Then the sun came out. We had moved out of our house in a neighboring village before Olivier was born; waiting to buy an apartment in New York, we were staying in two rooms over a garage at my grandfather's house, and it was not like living in the midst of a garden, it *was* living in a garden—lilacs bursting outside our windows in sugary violet explosions and the hawthorn blooming in delicate white clouds, forsythia like sunshine-made-stick, and the sunshine itself like all the forsythia in the

world melted into a billion reflections, which the ocean then folded back over us from different angles. The fractal pattern of anarchy and order that spring conjured out of the sandy soil of Cape Cod was as powerful as an H-bomb, as delicate as Schumann. Throughout Olivier's illness, Liz and I had found reassurance in the might and elegance of growth in these temperate trees and colors, sensing that somehow our boy could not die in the midst of such chthonic power. I found, now that he had died anyway, the reassurance was not disqualified, maybe because I had talked to him so often about the lilacs, about the thousand blues of Nantucket Sound and the forces of the season. Perhaps the story I used to tell Olivier about roots and the surge of sap had imperceptibly melded into the tale I was now making up about him—so that now I was describing Olivier to myself in the smells and sights around me.

Then, with no warning, Liz would turn toward me in the kitchen, and I knew from the refraction of light in her eyes what she was thinking about. In that moment it was as if not one atom of acceptance or relief had ever been released after the big bang of Olivier's taking ill; and we came together like matter and antimatter and sought annihilation in grief expressed.

None of this altered the decision I had made about taking care of Olivier's body. In a chain bookstore in Hyannis, four days after he died, I found a shelf heavy with volumes of do-it-yourself wills and estate-planning guides for the retirees who, during the last two decades, had chosen Cape Cod over Florida as a place to stop living. One of these books, behind the blank forms of final testaments, listed options available for disposal of the reader's corpse. At the tail of this list the authors mentioned the tiny minority of recalcitrants who, for reasons economic, philosophical, or just bloody-minded, refused the package-tour default for their last corporeal trip. The book said that some of the diehards had formed groups called "memorial societies," non-profit organizations that would perform burial chores at cost for members and provide further information for those interested. It cited one source only: the Funeral and Memorial Societies of America, in Egg Harbor, Wisconsin.

Three times I forgot to memorize the society's name. Finally I dug out my notebook and pen, neither of which I had opened since Olivier was born, and wrote it down. Back home, I walked into the garden, to the sunken area around the marble fountain put in by my grandmother, who nurtured delusions of Versailles. The colors seemed too bright here, the greens impossibly crammed with yellow and zinc, the blues of delphinium too rich in red. The fading lilacs still clutched to themselves bordello shades of mauve and purple. Yet once again their exuberance, instead of working against me, seemed to join forces with the memory of Olivier, in this place I had come to so often while he was alive. I flipped open my notebook to the name I had written. Then, without thinking about it, I began to jot down what was happening.

THE BURIAL PERMIT, IF I COULD OBTAIN IT, WOULD AFFORD ME THE LEGAL RIGHT TO TRANSPORT OLIVIER'S BODY FROM THE HOSPITAL TO A CREMATORY THAT WOULD BURN MY SON

It was a function of the enormity of what we had gone through that I had not opened my notebook for over four weeks. I am a professional writer, and normally I take notes constantly, about everything. Yet part of me, even then, felt it might be wrong to divert energy from burying my son to something so self-interested as work. At the same time, a stronger part of me was aware that my identity was inextricably bound up with my trade, and that to keep myself from writing about something this crucial would be as artificial and useless as trying to pretend I was not male, not American, not the product of the man and woman who had conceived me.

So while I took notes for ten or fifteen minutes, it was not guilt that finally forced me to cap my pen and fold the notebook into my pocket. As I scrawled the names that always constitute the first tentative breaths of any story—Olivier, Liz, Emilie—I realized that, for the first time in my experience, I might have found a story too strong for me to write about, a tale so perilous that to put it down on foolscap might destroy not only my mental balance but my motivation for writing in the bargain.

The next morning I dialed the beeper number for Sarah Lualdi, at Children's. When she

called back I gave her the memorial society's name, apologizing for my inability as yet to do the legwork.

Sarah had a chirpy manner that masked an impressive capacity for work. She took down the address. She said I should not have to shoulder such tasks. She called me back the next morning. The Wisconsin listing no longer existed, but in the local phone book she had found something similar: the Memorial Society of Boston. Its president was John Van Dusen. He wanted to talk to me, Sarah said.

John Van Dusen is a lawyer who practices in Marblehead, outside Boston. When I called, he waited for me to speak, as lawyers are trained to do in order to draw out all your inconsistencies and twisted notions for them to measure against the clean silver blade of statute.

Finally he said, "It's in the law."

I waited, as he had.

"The funeral directors wrote the law," he continued, "but they left one loophole. It says, 'A permit for burial may be issued to a funeral director *or other person*.' Other person can mean next-of-kin—the father, in your case."

The memorial society, Van Dusen added, in April of 1995 had petitioned the state Board of Registration in Embalming and Funeral Directing to rescind their longstanding rule that burial permits could be issued only to persons licensed by the board; in other words, morticians. The board is a five-person group, of which four are morticians, all appointed by the governor.

The board ignored the request. In April of 1996, however, the town of Lexington, after talking to a memorial society officer, agreed to issue burial papers—known as an Official Disposition, Transportation, or Removal Permit—to persons who were not morticians. After two days of heavy media attention, the state board notified the Massachusetts Department of Public Health that they would withdraw their objections to private burials. Shortly thereafter, DPH officially advised cities and towns to issue a burial permit when requested to do so by any individual legally responsible for the affairs of the dead.

The final decision on burial permits, however, remained the prerogative of municipal governments. At that point, only Lexington, Cambridge, and the four towns of Duke's County had taken a stand in favor of issuing burial permits to private individuals.

This burial permit, Van Dusen added, should I obtain it, would afford me the legal right to transport Olivier's body from the hospital to a cemetery or crematory. I then could hire the cemetery or crematory myself to bury, or burn, my son.

Van Dusen left a pause, which I did not fill.

A family in Cambridge had obtained such a permit and ferried the body of a man from his house, where he had died the previous winter, to the crematorium in Mount Auburn Cemetery, in the same city. As far as Van Dusen knew, no one other than a mortician had obtained a burial permit in the city of Boston in recent memory. Certainly no one had gone that route since the DPH advisory was issued.

The lawyer's tone had not changed throughout our conversation, but the spaces he left now were slightly longer. The guidelines he would send me later mentioned that the Massachusetts Funeral Directors' Association, along with the state medical examiner and the Association of Chiefs of Police, was planning to sponsor a bill to ban do-it-yourself burials. I had not seen those guidelines when I first talked to Van Dusen, but I did get the solid feeling that he was hoping I would act as a guinea pig for the memorial society, and was not about to discourage someone willing to amble down the jungle path of bureaucracy to see what manner of leopard jumped out.

Yet I did not mind facing predators for a group that sought to do what the Memorial Society of Boston wanted. Sometime in the first two weeks of Olivier's illness I told a friend that after having feared so hard and so much for my son, after so many of those fears had been realized, I could walk into a room full of sociopaths wielding assault rifles and feel only a casual angst. The idea of paper predators did not frighten me much.

One factor did scare me, though. It grew out of the progression of days since Olivier had died. I had by now figured out cycles in every twenty-four hours, of sorrow and relief, of acceptance cut by a panicked rejection of what actually had happened. I had experienced how good it felt at certain times no longer to strain every molecule to prevent Olivier's death, knowing we could not in the end affect the outcome. But underlying my ups and downs until now had been a kind of intellectual confidence that these highs and lows must soften, that the brutality of this progression must be attenuated; that even if progress were slow, it would become easier and easier for Liz and me to move around the furniture of our lives.

The trouble now—admittedly only five days into life without Olivier—was that things were not even beginning to improve. What terrified me was the idea that the scope and irreversibility of our loss might be too much to survive with any kind of joy intact. Liz and I were familiar with the theories of sorrow, yet as we touched





some of the classic Kübler-Ross bases over those days and nights—denial, anger, guilt—it seemed that no self-conscious contortion of emotion could or should alter the void at the pith of our lives, which was the absence of our newborn boy. Here, it seemed, was the new context of our marriage and family. And the yardstick of such terror was this: That the endless elapse of discovery in watching our three-and-a-half-year-old confront her days should give us exactly as much pleasure as always, and yet this pleasure might coexist with a galaxy of desolation and not fill even a minuscule corner of it.

Thus, perhaps the most useful aspect of the do-it-yourself funeral approach was that it dragged me backward into the process to the world where I had spent the last month—the cosmos of hospitals, of Boston, of medical rules and personnel—of which Olivier, alive or dead, remained the astronomical pole.

I waited until the morning after I talked with Van Dusen to make the calls that I hoped would press my tender theories against the hard edge of reality. I earlier had found that the diurnal cycles of emotion quickly drained the energy required to face the effects of this crisis, so it was better to take care of such business within a few hours of waking.

But the calls went well. It took five tries, getting bounced from number to number, to find the right office in the Boston city government. Eventually I was put through to the burial-permits section of the Boston City Board of Health. A woman answered. I explained what I wanted, and her tone remained open. You can tell tones, even on the phone: some people close up; some feign ignorance; some are reluctant to understand, which translates into possibility; and some are open. There was something about this woman's timing in conversation that gave me the feeling she had been expecting me, or someone like me, for a long while, and now that I had showed up she was almost relieved.

She said "un-hunh" instead of "yes." She explained, in tones a good teacher would use to handle a tired child, the steps I must take to smooth the process.

One, get the death certificate from the hospital. Remember, she warned, do *not* fill it out.

Two, take it to the cemetery or crematory concerned and obtain a letter of intent, stating that their staff would take charge of the remains. What cemetery would I be using?

Mount Auburn, I replied, remembering Van Dusen's words, thinking that if they had allowed this once, they likely would do so again.

Photographs by Bjorn Keller (left), Jorg Hejkal (right) / Photonica

Three, bring the certificate and the letter to the permits section between nine and five on weekdays, and she would issue a burial permit for my boy. It would cost ten dollars. I could pay by check or cash. The address was 1010 Massachusetts Avenue. If I came in this week, she said, I could ask for her. Her name, she added, was Jennifer.

I drove to Boston two days later. Liz did not come with me. Ever since Olivier's operations she resolutely had withdrawn into an emotional cloister, which was her determination to remember our boy in his first two days of life, when he was healthy, when Liz was the happiest I have ever known her to be. Although many in our circle were concerned that she might look back one day and feel remorse at not having physically spent more time with him in the hospital, I understood her perfectly. Because if people are the stories we make up about them—if we are stories we make up about ourselves—then this was the one she had chosen to craft about our son. Just as my tale of Olivier was a male version of a fighter dealing with spatial relationships and the practicalities of battle, hers was a female fable of a baby who when he was healthy possessed a shining curiosity, an almost solid lust for the attention and milk that made life good, as well as a seriously bad attitude when he could not obtain them. For her story, I think, the climax came the second day, when she was trying to breast-feed. It was hard—even then he may have been suffering from shortness of breath due to the increasingly serious malfunctioning of his cardiovascular system—but through all that frustration and discomfort, he looked up at Liz's face and smiled. Babies that age don't really smile, everyone knows that. Yet I also know that in his infant holism he sensed what comfort came from his mother; felt, on some level, the flood of love and contentment pouring out of the woman holding him.

So I ran options by her. We both, for example, decided against burial in the family plot in Cotuit; but otherwise she left the nuts and bolts to me. And I preferred it that way. My trips to Boston had become identified with my relationship with Olivier, and I had found over his month of life that I was reluctant to share this relationship, even with his mother.

Part of my reluctance stemmed from our discovery during the first operation and its surgical aftermath, which lasted from eleven A.M. to three A.M. the next morning, that when Liz and I shared our anguish we used each other's emotions as a power source, creating a charge that was greater than the sum of its component parts. This excess of energy, while cathartic and curiously strengthening of the bond between us, on the whole made the tough decisions I had to tackle—because Liz did not feel up to addressing them—even harder.

Also, as more and more of my life got bound up in the urgency and vector of the cardiac intensive care unit, I began to feel the way I used to feel on sea voyages, as if Children's Hospital were a ship and I had embarked on a trip. Such voyages have the peculiarity of binding one by shared deprivation and excitement, by long hours spent together on night watches, to strangers whom one might not choose to be with ordinarily. In the context of travel, these strangers become closer than lovers and friends left behind, while lovers and friends begin to feel distant in that they do not share that depth of experience.

With all that distance, however, I never doubted the depth of Liz's love for our child, nor her capacity for enduring pain to support him when it came to the crunch, as it did during both his operations, when he came very close to dying under the knife. I sensed a gender difference here, in that a baby who was part of a woman for almost ten months would affect her, quite literally, in visceral fashion, and she had to be careful to maintain a different separation between herself and events such as these in order to preserve her own sanity and health. The agony of that dilemma was clearest when we had hope, because if the baby survived the hospital, he was going to need breast milk, and knowing Olivier, he would need lots of it. That meant Liz had to express milk, suck it out of herself with an electric pump, pour it into cellophane bags, and freeze it. The physical difficulty of pumping every four to eight hours, added to the emotional stamina it took to

EVER SINCE OLIVIER'S OPERATIONS, MY WIFE, LIZ, HAD RESOLUTELY WITHDRAWN INTO AN EMOTIONAL CLOISTER, WHICH WAS HER DETERMINATION TO REMEMBER OUR BOY IN HIS FIRST DAYS OF LIFE

express milk knowing that her baby was being fed by drips and ventilated by machines and might never live to taste the milk she was producing at such cost, was something I could only look on as a spectator—awed by, and perhaps slightly jealous of, the forces at work here.

Finally, I believe a monstrous egotism underlay the solitude of my contentment while at Children's, in that I was pathetically proud to be taking care of my son in this dramatic fashion, boastfully if silently joyous that I had forged a relationship with him no one else could match, glad that I could take credit alone. Although I suspected at the time, as I know all too well now, that everything I did then was largely inefficient, insufficient, uninformed, and, by all practical standards, pointless.

So I did not feel or expect to feel lonely as I turned into Blackfan Street and glimpsed Children's. I did expect sorrow, and it came on cue, harder and more hysterical than ever. But within a few minutes, as I walked among the familiar, directed bustle through the hospital, it diminished. And I knew exactly why. It was because I was back in the process. Once more, I was dealing with Olivier.

I called Sarah Lualdi from the front desk. We walked together to Admitting. The administration had been a little nervous about the legality of what I was doing, Sarah said, but they called John Van Dusen, and he'd had a calming effect. The officials at Admitting wanted to see a picture ID but otherwise were, if not exactly thrilled, at least cooperative. I went to the sixth floor of the Pavilion Building after I picked up the death certificate, and walking through those double doors of the cardiac intensive care unit was horrible in a way, given what had happened, and in a way it felt like coming home, to my real home, the place where I felt good. Kim was on duty and so was Nancy Braudis, another of Olivier's nurses. After the first ritual questions, we talked and even joked as easily as we always had done. What had happened was relatively common and, anyway, less tragic for the professionals, but I remain convinced that our ease together stemmed from the continued presence among us of Olivier's struggle—in the melodrama of CICU's tubes and intercoms, in the similar discipline supporting the life of every other sick child in the unit, in the frantic, instinctual quality of the emotions uniting their cases and mine.

I did not want to leave Children's after Kim and Nancy went back to work, and to put off my departure I filled out my section of the death certificate in neat block letters with whose clarity no bureaucrat possibly could find fault. Then I drove to Mount Auburn.

Things were getting easier. I was charged once again with the hospital high and, though I knew in the pit of my stomach how artificial it was, and how absolutely doomed to fail, like a junkie spiking himself with uncut smack, I turned my gaze from caution and went along with the flow, driving well, even cheerfully—watching, with a kind of abstract enjoyment, the girls sunbathing on strips of parkland next to the Charles River.

Mount Auburn Cemetery's offices are in a brick Edwardian building that is the opposite of the fake Currier and Ives, the piped Vivaldi, the discreet Kleenex of every other funeral institution I had ever seen. Here oil paintings of men who had run the cemetery in the late nineteenth century presided over real fireplaces and cool tall rooms. The crematory manager had agreed over the phone to provide a statement of intent. Now he told me exactly what I would need when I brought Olivier to Mount Auburn: A burial permit, a check for $105 made out to the cemetery, and another check for $50 for the state medical examiner, who by law had to inspect the remains before cremation. The M.E. came early, he added. If I brought Olivier after nine A.M., the cremation could not occur until the following morning. I blinked at that; I felt a stress crack appear in my resolve; I had been hoping to get the whole business over with in one day. Through the office windows the cemetery—shady and hilly, cool and sparsely populated—looked alien to the hot sprawl of west Cambridge. I got back in the car and drove to the Boston Department of Health.

1010 Massachusetts Avenue turned out to be on the other side of Boston from Mount Auburn, socially as well as geographically; a grim strip where the city's rust-belt warehouses embraced the black slums of Roxbury. In the burial-permits section, three black ladies looked at me with a certain calm wisdom when I explained who I was and what I wanted. Again I got the feeling that they'd been wondering for months when I was going to show up. "You have the death certificate?" the one on the left asked. She was calm, fiftyish, good-looking, and wore a slight, permanent smile by way of protection against clients. I handed her the document. "Un-hunh. You have the letter from the cemetery?" She took that and repeated, "Un-hunh." I figured this was Jennifer.

"Un-hunh," she said again, then added, holding up the death certificate, "You filled it out already?" "Un-hunh," I replied, and she shook her head. "But you can't do this."

It almost felt good to hear her utter those words. Here was the mirror image of the relief I'd felt after Olivier died, because I had been fearing an obstacle for a long time, and now that it had shown up, I no longer had to wait for it.

"You're kidding!" I blurted out. "You said all

you needed was the death certificate, and the letter, and you could—"

"You can't do this," she repeated, pointing at the certificate. "You filled out the numbers numerically."

I resisted a strong urge to ask her how else I was supposed to write numbers.

"That's why I told you not to fill it out," she continued. "You have to write this out—April, May. See, you used four and five instead. The state won't allow it."

"She told you not to fill it out when you called," one of the other women chimed in. "I heard her."

To give them their due, Jennifer and the other two Cerberuses of the permits department were polite and even humane in their intransigence. When I demanded the name of the person in the state cemeteries office responsible for this moronic rule, Jennifer put through the call herself. The woman in charge was named Phyllis Rotman. The voice on the other end said she would be "in the field" until tomorrow. I wondered vaguely what "in the field" meant for a supervisor of the cemetery department. Was she inspecting gravestones for durability, tapping coffins with a hammer to check construction? The voice said it had no authority to waive the dates rule. Nor could she allow me, or Jennifer, to simply write out the name of the month after the offending numeral. And erasure, on an official document, was out of the question.

"See, I can't do it," Jennifer said as she replaced the phone. "The state would have my head."

I would have to go back to Children's and obtain another death certificate and make it out, properly this time.

It was, by then, three P.M. At three-thirty on weekdays, traffic starts to clog the sclerotic roads of Boston. But Children's Hospital was the first large organization I ever had been involved with that seemed exempt from the scorched-earth pathologies of bureaucratic behavior. I called the cardiology department, and the secretary assured me that a new death certificate would be waiting within fifty minutes. I was back at 1010 Massachusetts Avenue inside an hour. Jennifer loaned me her personal Selectric and spelled out every word as it was supposed to appear on the form. I paid her the ten bucks, and without fuss or ceremony she handed me my burial permit, accepting my thanks as graciously as she had fielded my incredulity and anger earlier. The older lady in the burial office accompanied me to the elevator. "I know what you're going through," she said. "Two of my own children died."

"You're kidding," I exclaimed, for the second time that afternoon.

IN THE BURIAL-PERMITS SECTION, THREE BLACK LADIES LOOKED AT ME WITH A CERTAIN CALM WISDOM WHEN I EXPLAINED WHO I WAS AND WHAT I WANTED

"Un-hunh," she replied. Maybe they all said that in her office. "When my children died, my aunt told me it would get better. I didn't believe her then, the way you don't believe me now. But it does, it does."

Over the weekend I built a box in which to burn my son.

A Mount Auburn Cemetery brochure entitled "About Cremation" stated only that the box should be flammable, of suitable dimensions, and watertight, for health reasons, which I supposed meant that they did not want blood or other nasty fluids to drip as they were handling it, for which one could hardly blame them. I had thought about this phase ever since making the first decision, and, without forming specific plans, I found I knew exactly what I wanted and how to go about getting it. On the whole, I followed those plans, and they felt right during and after, and even now, when I have to live with the fact of not being involved with planning anymore.

So this is how you build a coffin for your people, or one of them anyway, if he is a month old and big for his age but all you can really remember is the stretch of forearm and effort of biceps it took to hold him to your chest.

First, because you don't own a saw that can rip wood in a straight line without leaving splinters along one side of the cut, you find a friend who does. Peter Field helped us in other ways through the previous five weeks. He called regularly but only to check in and never imposing his conceptions of how we might deal with this; he kept himself available when Liz needed a

ride to Boston before the first operation, with the result that he was one of the few people not connected by profession or family to have met Olivier. Peter is a builder. He has a shiny table saw that cuts easily and cleanly.

Next, you need wood. I was going to use a sheet of birch plywood I had saved in the garage, but Peter says, "You can't use *plywood*." What he means is, You don't use mass-produced industrial shortcuts—alternatives to milled planks and the painstaking attention of hands—for work that means a great deal to you. Peter has a 12 x 1 board of seasoned spruce long enough for the job. It is stashed in the garage of the ex-wife of a friend of mine. The spruce is lovely, almost clean of knots, the color of an August tan, slightly bowed across its width, but that will make no difference.

We strap the board atop Peter's truck and drive to the village I live in now. Peter is renovating a house that belongs to Karen, the daughter of another friend, Eddie, who died some twenty years ago. Eddie's father, Chester, took my uncle out on his red-painted tugboat when my grandfather died, and they scattered his ashes on Nantucket Sound. From inside Karen's house, while we set up saw and stand, comes the clinking of piano music as a friend of my mother's practices for a concert she is to perform in my grandfather's house this weekend. These connections might sound irrelevant and trivial, but in the obsessive loneliness of the task I am undertaking they crowd around me almost visibly. Every detail of the web they represent supports me as I work in the abstract sun of June.

Peter measures the spruce. I know Olivier was twenty-one inches long at birth so the length is easy, but I have no clear idea of width. I have to hold my arms the way I held him last. Maybe eleven inches, Peter guesses, with spare room? I say, "That sounds right." We add a couple of inches to be sure. The box will be shaped like a box: I never understood the need for the classic coffin-shape, built widest around the shoulders and tight around feet and head, in a country so rich in lumber as America. Peter cuts, and I sand the pieces and round the edges. The box is wider than the board, so we will need twelve sections of board, plus four lengths of 2 x 2 pine for corner supports.

Now Peter hooks up his pneumatic nail gun. This appears to contradict the carpenter's Luddism he espoused earlier, and I find myself wishing we could use an ordinary hammer—I like the clean feel of sinking a nail into seasoned wood, the heft of steel in one hand, the sugary pine smell rising to flatter your nostrils. I want good things like this, I want all good things somehow to be associated with the box I am making for this boy. On the other hand, manual hammering takes longer, and this uses up time Peter is taking from paid work; I have no right to hold him up for some vague and marginal aesthetic. I nail a short sidepiece to a long sidepiece, then fasten the corner supports. The gun pops loudly, the nails sink in without fuss. We repeat the procedure, then, using the manual hammer this time, fasten bottom and top, leaving the nails half-out so that the top can be removed easily.

Thinking back later, I realize I am still working off the adolescent fantasy that I can always nail together some cool box, some Rube Goldberg gizmo that will do the trick. The fact that this notion was recently proven to be a lie does not stop me from enjoying the illusion, partly because the fantasy of fixing is powerful enough to give me pleasure, even by association, even now; and partly because the tactile joy that comes from building is something that Olivier's death cannot entirely subtract from me.

WHEN WE ARE FINISHED WE HAVE A PINE BOX THAT TO MY EYES IS STRONG AND WORKMANLIKE, ELEGANT IN COLOR AND SIMPLICITY, A BOX GOOD ENOUGH TO CARRY OLIVIER

When we are finished we have a box that to my eyes is strong and workmanlike and at the same time elegant in color and simplicity. This is a box good enough to carry Olivier on his final trip, but I have reservations. The cheap Yankee in me wishes such a fine box did not have to be burned tomorrow. The father in me wishes our boy could see and use it, because for no good reason my daughter this morning asked if I could build a box for her toys, and the process of wishing this could be a toy-box for her brother leaves me in the contradictory position of standing firm in the sun while inside my gut goes as soft and bad as Olivier's must be by now.

The box also fits neatly in the cramped trunk of our Corolla.

That is almost the end of the job.

So you take the box home and hide it in the garage, because you are aware that the boy's mother does not wish to know too much about this part





of the journey either. But you think about the box a lot, you are not sure why—perhaps because, in the sly laziness of your nature, you always reflect proudly on a good job done with your own hands. Or maybe because your own father, who barely knows which end of a hammer strikes the nail, left you unsupported in carpentry and the arts and crafts of boyhood, and you long for someone to whom you could teach these skills, along with the satisfaction to be found in using them.

You go to bed, still thinking about the box. And change your mind. Because, after all, it is not quite good enough for Olivier. Not while there is time to improve it. Nowhere on the wood, for example, have you written his name or made it clear this is his, Olivier's, box.

Just before midnight you go down to the garage and dig out paints and brushes. Using scrap from Peter's board that you tossed into the trunk just in case, you paint a rough, red-colored tugboat on a cerulean sea, with the boy's initials—ONF—on its stack, and nail it to one end of the box. The next morning you will caulk the cracks with silicon to make it watertight. Also you will do what you were planning all along: fetch white sand and moon shells from the beach, and white-pine needles and beach rose from the garden, and make a bed of Cape smells and textures for a boy conceived and born on this threatened peninsula. You will soften the bed with an old beach towel, add a stuffed lamb and even—harking back to a half-conscious atavism—a bottle of Enfamil formula for the journey he is undertaking.

But that will occur tomorrow, when the last stage of the process is under way. For tonight you finally believe you have done enough, and you turn off the light in the garage, leaving the box in the oil-smelling dark, and return to bed. And as your wife sleeps beside you, and the sea wind tongues the Venetian blinds, you feel the yellow eyes of a beast blink open in the darkness inside your brain. And the beast whispers to you the facts of nightmare, which are that now, quite literally, you are putting the nail in the coffin of this process. When Olivier is burned you will have no further clemency—it will be flat-out impossible for you to do anything more to take care of him. And then you will know, finally and absolutely, that you have lost the little boy with the delicately curved eyebrows and the interested gaze and the Brando snarl to his lips.

But worst of all is the beast itself. And the beast is, quite simply, missing him, knowing he will not be with you ever again except in the makeshift and unworthy stories you tell. And you groan, so loudly that Liz wakes up and does not ask you what the problem is.

The next morning was clear and already hot. The radio predicted a high in the mid-nineties for Boston. I could not help wondering what effect it might have on

Photographs by Björn Keller (left); Gunnar Smoliansky (right) / Photonica

Olivier's body to be driven in the trunk of a Corolla in ninety-degree weather. I filled a hip flask with rum. It was the kind of thing British adventurers in the flush of empire did when faced with similar situations, and this melodrama of grief and bodies was starting to feel distinctly Victorian.

When I left, Liz held me hard enough to crack my rib cartilage. She did not want to see the box.

I pulled off the highway in Braintree and called my brother-in-law from a pay phone to make sure he was awake. Two days ago I had arranged for him to accompany me and Olivier. I had no doubts or qualms about wanting Tim to come, and this contradicted my usual selfish solitude, my secret gloat over the power of our connection while the boy was alive in Children's.

Also, I tended to be aware of why I was doing things, at least on the short-term level. But in this case I really had not analyzed my reluctance to ferry Olivier's body from Boston to Cambridge on my own. Already I had performed harder tasks: I had held him in my arms in an empty room while he died. Yet this was how I had felt from the moment it seemed I might be allowed to transport him myself. Moreover, I had zero interest in finding out why I felt the way I did.

After talking to Tim, I called a friend of mine who had fetched up in Boston for the day. The son of Carol's ex-lover had just stabbed himself to death in Oregon, and she wanted to talk. I had agreed to this over the phone forty-eight hours before, but today I wasn't sure I would have the stamina to converse in any kind of intelligible fashion. Anyway, she wasn't in.

I picked Tim up in the North End, and together we drove to the hospital. Following Sarah Lualdi's directions, I parked the car in a cul-de-sac off Shadduck Street and picked up a phone marked "For Funeral Directors' Use Only." The call was routed to the pathology lab. The man who answered knew who I was. He met us in the alley. Tim carried my file of paperwork, and I picked up Olivier's box. The pathology man walked us through a warren of gray corridors. We waited for Sarah in a long air-conditioned room, lined with benches and microscopes and shelves of medical books, while a white-coated intern barged in and out looking for missing bone samples. Tim and I talked about nothing much while the noise of waiting, which I was so used to in this hospital, buzzed louder than ever in my head.

And then Sarah arrived, and events all at once began to move too quickly.

The pathology man walked us down a hall to a corner, where four stainless-steel doors, like those in an industrial freezer, were set in a blank wall. I had expected something very different—a steel door, sure, but leading to a complex place presided over by Jack Klugman; an administrative situation I could exploit by simply handing over the box and waiting while, in the sterile zinc recesses of the morgue, they put my son inside and nailed him down and wheeled him back to the door. Here was the first falter: in my mind I pulled back from confronting the reality of him almost ten days into decay and rotting.

I LEANED OVER AND KISSED HIM ONE LAST TIME. THEN I COVERED THE BOX, TOOK OUT THE SMALL HAMMER I HAD BROUGHT, AND TAPPED IN THE NAILS

The pathology man unlocked one of the doors. He picked up exactly the same shape I had last seen peeking over Jane's shoulder on his way down here. He even had the same baby blanket draped over his head, only now it was tied with a string.

"Do you want to put him in?" the pathology man asked uncertainly. Everyone was looking at me, anxious to help but absolutely clueless as to what I wanted in the specific—clueless also as to what I hoped to achieve in general by this preference for Do It Yourself.

Earlier I had assumed that I would not touch him, but now that I had the option I found I was navigating by heart. All I could remember was a code of conduct for which I could barely recall the rationale but which summarized itself in these words: taking care of Olivier. It was a mantra that had ruled every waking moment of my life since he took ill. It seemed inconsistent, in a pride-of-workmanship way, to pull back from it now that we were so near the end.

So I took the bundle from the pathology man's arms. Suddenly the lessons I had learned and the logic I believed in fell away. The disconnection I felt when he died, the certainty I'd had that what was left here was not him any-

more, disappeared. For this was still Olivier. My arms recognized his weight and his shape; through the blanket my lips knew the firm consistency of his head. Even the grim chill in his body was not enough to counter the momentum of familiarity, and I hugged him hard and hugged him again, turning away from Tim and Sarah and the pathology man. I kissed him and hugged him once more, and then—because I was so close to crossing the boundaries of rational behavior, and I could see myself refusing to let go of him for the last time, and I did not want anyone to intervene here, take him from me because I was acting cuckoo (so *this* was why I'd wanted Tim along for the ride!)—I laid him gently in the box I had built, on the beach towel and pine needles and sand, with the stuffed lamb by his head.

I leaned over and kissed him one further time. I covered the box with the two halves of the top, took out the small hammer I had brought, and tapped the nails in. I hugged Sarah and shook the pathology man's hand and picked up my boy in his box with the tugboat on one end. The combined weight of Olivier and the wood, though not great, seemed to require quite a bit of effort on my part, and I was glad I had to work at this, for all his life I had desired only to be able to work at something that would carry him away from the crisis and intrusion that dominated his time here.

And I walked him the wrong way. I led Tim and Sarah down the halls to a dead end. Someone steered us toward the exit, to the broiling alley, where I put Olivier and his box in the car trunk and switched on the engine and left Children's Hospital, for the second time in my life, without stopping to look back.

The roads of Boston and Cambridge were a soup of exhaust fumes. Superheated air shimmered off the sidewalks, but the wind of our passage kept us cool. Olivier had been well chilled anyway, so I was not worried now about the heat.

When we pulled into the front gate of Mount Auburn, the steam and noise of the streets were turned off as if by a flicked switch. I remembered the cool and green of this place, but as I drove up the hill—the crematorium was at Bigelow Chapel, well inside the cemetery—I stopped talking, touched by an unexpected awe and even happiness. For this was nothing like cemeteries on the Cape, which were planted and pleasant but still crammed enough with markers that you could not escape the reality of critical density, of too many sandblasted slabs or shoddily chiseled stones wedged in tightly by town landscaping and indifference. On Cape Cod, even the dead had to put up with tourists, with people lining up for a seaside spot.

But Mount Auburn, or the old section of it anyway, was different. This cemetery did not feel like a cemetery but rather like a park, with hillocks and winding paths, flowering ash and yellowwood and Japanese snowbell cutting out patterns of growth that seemed rare and new. The cemetery had been founded in 1831 by the Massachusetts Horticultural Society as a garden, at the height of European Romanticism. It had been the first "garden cemetery" in the United States. Looking back, I realize it was the horticultural aspect of the place that soothed me, because it reminded me of the Cape, and by now the association with Olivier was so automatic that any similar environment triggered his story in my head.

Also, the tombs in Mount Auburn were generously spaced and old, mostly. Many of them were fantastic in the original sense: great granite sculptures of winged death, or sphinxes; rococo castles, dramatically distressed temples, graceful Mycenean vases, dancing virgins, soaring raptors. The overall impression was not of sterile rite but of the inspired fancy of those who had dreamed up these sculptures. I was very aware that part of the difference here was one of class—this was a place where the old rich were buried, and in a place as wealthy in confidence and education as Cambridge, the rich had the taste to get buried with good zoning—but I was not about to question the economics of relief. For the chill grace of Mount Auburn felt like icewater on a second-degree burn.

"When I die," Tim said, pointing at a fifteen-foot-high sphinx, "I want to be buried under that."

It took us almost a quarter of an hour to locate the chapel. In that time the feeling of grace dwindled inside me, because I had yet to accomplish the task I came here to do, but it never disappeared entirely.

Bigelow Chapel turned out to be hidden behind the sphinx Tim had pointed out earlier. In keeping with the rest of Mount Auburn, it was built on a cliff, with flying buttresses so high-Gothic that it seemed less a place of mourning than an acknowledgment and a shared appreciation of the clichés of Romanticism, a translation in granite of "Annabel Lee." Inside, the crematorium sported no trappings. Normally, only hearse drivers and morticians came to this place. I proceeded clumsily, sweating, through the paperwork. I had all the forms, I signed all the checks. The state and the cemetery were satisfied.

I went back to the Corolla, opened the trunk, and picked up Olivier in his box. The cremato-

ry official walked us behind the office to a room with six beautifully polished brass doors set into a plaster wall. On the other side stood a rack with six sets of rollers. Two of the top sets were occupied, one by a pair of boxes marked "medical waste," another by a coffin of the traditional lozenge shape but smaller than Olivier's and made, like a Kmart cooler, of white styrofoam. A label glued to the foam read only "Baby Boy," with the family name attached.

I put Olivier on the rollers next to "Baby Boy," the tugboat facing out. "You've got a friend with you, Ollie," I muttered, "but you got a nicer box." The fact of coming to the point where I would never physically be able to touch or see my boy again was surging in my head like one of the acrylic waves Olivier's tug was breasting. Along with it rose another flavor of fear, because it was almost ten days now since Olivier had died. In that time I had sprinted headlong down the path I had chosen, of taking care of Olivier—knowing a bit more clearly with every passing day that I was dependent on this process, that in a deep sense I was not just engaged, not just interested, but *happy* in it—knowing, yet ignoring the knowledge, that when the process finally ended, when my son was finally burned, the unexorcised shadow of missing him must fold me in its immense, batlike wings and take me down much harder than if I'd never started down the trail. And I was less sure than I had been before if I could survive such an embrace intact.

I put my arms around Olivier's box and leaned my cheek against the top. I picked him up and held him as long as I could. Every time I put him down, because the box felt heavy and awkward, I remembered that if I did not pick him up again this would be the last time I ever could hold him.

In the end I resorted to superstition, for the point of superstition is to limit dread. And I needed to set limits here.

I promised myself I would pick him up seven times, because I believed seven to be a lucky number in China. A friend of mine who lives in New Mexico told Liz later that the Pueblo believe you must not wipe away tears shed for someone you love. Seven times more I picked him up and held him for as long as I had the strength. With both arms engaged I could not wipe the tears away. When finally I left, a patch of moisture the size of a dessert plate marred the clean spruce top of Olivier's box.

There is little else to tell about burning Olivier. I drove Tim back to the North End. After lunch I called Carol again. This time she answered. We arranged to meet. I would still have preferred to hang out alone or else stick with Tim, since knowing Tim also was thinking about Olivier in some way enhanced my own memories of him, but it seemed selfish to privilege my grief.

When I picked up Carol in Harvard Square, I told her I did not want to go to a café but that I knew a place that was pleasant, green, and cool, and I took her to Mount Auburn Cemetery. We drove among the glens and hilltops and found a jade-colored valley shaded by hawthorn leading to a granite "dungeon."

We passed the rum flask back and forth in the shade, passed back and forth also our own versions of loss, Carol talking a little about Skip, me excessively about Olivier. As I talked I looked toward Bigelow Chapel. I was still torn between the calm of being near him and the blackness of knowing that tomorrow morning he would not be around in the same form.

"Are you going to write about it?" Carol asked.

"I'm not sure I can," I told her.

I understood by now that in writing, I would only be shifting to another level the process of engagement I had started by taking care of Olivier when he was in the hospital and continued by taking care of him after he was dead.

In the gentle shade under that strange tower, I also recalled the thought I'd had the morning after he died—that Olivier gave me, and also Liz, the most fully realized living we had ever done—as dense in hope and yearning as it was soaked in fear and pain.

In some manner, I thought, the greater harm would lie not in forgetting but in not continuing the process.

"I'm going to try," I told Carol a few minutes later.

We stayed in Mount Auburn till it got close to rush hour. I drove Carol to Harvard Square and reached the expressway by four. Heavy volume slowed me through the outskirts of Milton, but I got back to Cape Cod by dinnertime.

Olivier Nicholas Foy was cremated around nine A.M. on Wednesday, June 11, 1997, at Mount Auburn Crematory in Cambridge, Massachusetts. On June 26 I picked up his ashes and brought them to Cape Cod. At four-thirty P.M. on June 28, Liz took the last bags of her breast milk, defrosted now, and poured them into the hole we had dug in the garden of my grandfather's house. Then we buried our son under a young cypress, in the midst of blue myrtle and dogwood and white pine, within sight of Nantucket Sound. ■

THE GUNFIRE DIALOGUES

Notes on the reality of virtuality

By Thomas de Zengotita

The incident at Columbine High School on April 20 arrested our attention not only because fifteen people were killed but because it consolidated our sense that school shootings say Something Important about Society. As a media event, it is related somehow to O.J. and Di and Monica, but practical preoccupation with causal "factors" distracted us, and the possibility of general synthesis was sacrificed to the need to Do Something. The essentials emerged within days of the event but flattened into cliché as the buzz of commentary echoed across our virtual polis. Still, they can be recovered.

The boy appeared in a local-folks-react piece on one of the morning shows just days after the shootings. He was white-ethnicky, pudgy and pimply, with purple streaks in his dreadlocked hair and a couple of studs in his face. He spoke with a defiant whine. He didn't condone the shootings, and he wasn't into Hitler, but he had been harassed by jocks all his life, and those kids in Colorado "at least . . . took a stand." He thought a lot of other kids like him would kind of idolize the Trench-coat Mafia.

He was right. Saturday's *New York Times* covered online discussions of the Littleton massacre. The tone was set by psychologists and Web-site executives hyping virtual communities, but quotes from the kids told the tale: "I would never personally do anything like that, but it did take guts" and " Even though I would never take someone else's life, maybe it will make people think before they open their mouths next time. . . ." The cruelty of prep and jock "culture" toward those who didn't fit in was the underlying issue for these kids. Cokie Roberts made it official that Sunday morning, and *Rolling Stone* columnist Jon Katz's Web site became a polling resource for the mainstream. The floodgates opened and commentators everywhere were publicly recalling their high school days. Cliques joined Kosovo on the national agenda.

Sally Satel, a Yale psychiatrist, had an op-ed piece about the busloads of "grief counselors" who are as much a feature of such scenes as are SWAT teams and flower shrines. She focused on the "commodification of grief," the "unholy therapeutic alliance" between the talk-through-your-feelings-and-get-to-closure counselor and the empathic servants of the twenty-four-hour

Thomas de Zengotita teaches at The Dalton School and The Draper Program at New York University.

IS THE INFLUENCE OF TODAY'S MEDIA QUALITATIVELY DIFFERENT FROM YESTERDAY'S? THE ANSWER IS OBVIOUSLY YES

news cycle. And can anyone doubt that stricken mourners, no matter how authentic their feelings, respond at some level to implicit expectations when the cameras roll? Especially since they have seen this show on TV before; now, suddenly, they are in it.

For it is very much a show, and not only in the trivial sense that anything covered by the media becomes a show. "Senseless school shooting" is now a genre with resonance across the country because it unites universality and specificity so compellingly. There is a set: the open space of parking lots and sports fields around the one- or two-level brick-and-concrete sprawl of buildings, the school name and colors and logo—all pretty much interchangeable across the exurban landscape. There is a cast: kids made for yearbook pictures, local law-enforcement and school officials rising, or not rising, to the occasion, local volunteers in emergency services likewise, and local religious and political leaders, too. An indefinable quality of localness pervades the scene. It's the hair and mustaches, the jackets, hats and eyewear, the cars and trucks—you can feel the nearby malls and the traffic on the interstate at the edge of town. It isn't New York and it isn't L.A. It's the heartland, and everyone knows this plot: reconstructing the lives of the killers, tracking down accomplices, the community outpouring of support, the coming together, the healing process—and the rifts and recriminations as well. Likewise the spectators; we distinguish immediately between this genre and natural-disaster or horrors-of-war "shows." We know how to respond as an audience as surely as we would know how to play our roles if, God forbid, we suddenly landed a part.

"Shows" belongs in quotes because, like all things postmodern, this is a reflexive entity, and that reflexivity testifies, in its practical futility, to the power of the total phenomenon. No amount of media self-criticism makes a dent. For "*coverage* of senseless school shootings" is also a genre. The correspondents are in moved-to-the-breaking-point-but-professional mode. The anchors are in grave-demeanor-reserved-for-inexplicable-evil mode. The expert guests and other commentators are also grave, but inexplicability is not their provenance, and I-told-you-so and now-maybe-you'll-listen drives their spin toward gun control or family values or psychological-intervention programs.

The point here is not exploitation of personal pain for commercial or political gain. We are not at that familiar level of criticism. Indeed, many in the media have been moved to even more reflexive contortions because of just such concerns: correspondents asking interviewees about their grief now also ask how they feel about being interviewed about their grief. No, the point is to call attention to an emergent level of culture that transcends issue-oriented efforts to solve a social problem.

The key to the success of the show is the way everyone can identify so specifically with the set, the characters, and the plot; that is why the outpouring spreads, and innumerable other local responses are organized, or erupt, under the sign of "could it happen here?" It is like a myth played out in "real time," embracing millions of people. That is how the personal becomes the political. That is why ideologies no longer cohere and issues fragment; they can't compete with such narratives.

We come closest to addressing the situation as a whole when asking how violence in the media influences behavior. Cultural conservatives focus on permissive standards related to content, and surely that content goes way beyond anything imaginable thirty years ago. People who commit these acts always show evidence of its influence. The Littleton shooters spent a lot of time with *Natural Born Killers* and goth CDs and hate Web sites, but libertarians point out that Charlie Starkweather was inspired by comics and rock and roll, and argue that agency must be attributed to the person, not the muse. So the debate resolves itself into this question: Is the influence of today's media qualitatively different from yesterday's?

The answer is obviously yes. What is shown makes a difference. Satura-

tion and production values matter, too. Interactivity from the killer's point of view in a graphic video game goes right to the sensorimotor brain centers. High school cliques have always been with us and jocks have always bullied geeks; the geeks now have something besides the chess club to retreat to—they have games like Doom, entire environments of testosterone-stimulating violence in which they compensate virtually for physical inequities. And compulsions of mimesis among the psychotically inclined have thresholds. This can be denied only by pointing to the fact that overall violence among teenagers, in school or out, is dramatically lower than it used to be. But that just confirms that, in an age when the organized and ritualized Fifties fistfight seems quaint, conflict-resolution programs collaborate unwittingly with computer games to nudge violence into virtuality. It also tells us that healthier kids, who never act out, cope differently with the same stimulations. What it does not tell us is that those stimulations might have powerful effects on them, perhaps just as corrosive in subtler ways.

THE BOYS REHEARSED THE EVENT THEY WOULD ONE DAY—ENACT? PERFORM? A WORD LIKE THAT IS NEEDED



The sheer amount of media absorbed by kids who commit such acts, the variety and intensity of its modalities, and the recurrence of specific items on their personal-favorites list tell us that something comparable in force to the oral culture Plato attacked in *The Republic* has emerged among us. Comparable in force, but very different in context and functionality. The performative Homeric narrative of pre-literate Greece provided irresistible paradigms of behavior and evaluation in an essentially tribal society. To counter the momentum of so enveloping a tradition, Plato recommended the detachments of a rational philosophy. The post-literate fusion of fact and fiction in multimedia narratives of our day are similarly enveloping, but we resist through detachments of knowingness and irony. Or most of us do. But, resistant or not, we all know what counts: being on the show.

The really decisive piece of media in the Columbine case was the tape the shooters and their friends made for a video-production course in their school. In the tape, the boys rehearsed the event they would one day—but what is the verb here? Enact? Perform? A word like that is needed. The model of plan followed by action will not apply. That model belongs to an age when events in the real world and accounts of those events in the media were es-

Illustration by Brad Yeo

NEITHER THOSE IN THE MAINSTREAM NOR THOSE ON THE LEFT GRASP THE IDEA THAT VIRTUAL REALITY IS *REAL*

sentially separate. That difference no longer exists. For the shooters knew what coverage they could expect in their second production of "school shootings." They were already and always "on"—just like the people in Hollywood and New York, pitching angles on this story to one another before the bodies were out of Columbine's library.

So we are faced with a new space for public culture somewhere between reality and simulation, between action and acting—and this holds not just for latent psychotics but for the rest of us as well. Saying, "Well, millions of kids listen to Marilyn Manson and never harm anyone" misses the point. *Those* kids are just as influenced in a *different* way by the totality that is this virtual space. They go ironic rather than psychotic. They are the "apathetic" ones, for whom politics is, at best, a field of self-expression in which certain people identify with certain issues and "promote awareness" of them—a politics in which issues have fans.

Think of it all as do followers of Nietzsche among French intellectuals. The brain and its structures, the body and its desires, meet culture directly. Inclinations and threshold are built into our neurochemistry, and stimulating content and forms of behavior are imposed by technologies of communication and the administration of daily life in routines of work and play. The more enveloping and penetrating the stimulations and routines, the more uniform and centerless the settings of our lives—and what else should we expect but occasional psychotic eruptions on a vast plain of disengagement sustained by an economy devoted to simulations?

Traditional opinion leaders don't want to see this phenomenon whole. Those in the mainstream have a piece of the action—their material interests are increasingly vested in the immaterial economy. They must see the new technologies as a force at least *potentially* for good. People on the left don't want to see it either, but, ironically, this is because the media seem to them not material enough! They cling to old bread-and-circuses, opiate-of-the-people critiques. They learned nothing from O.J. and Di and Monica. They can't believe that virtual reality is *real*. But the folks who are creating virtuality have a deeper understanding. From *The Truman Show* to *The Matrix*, a slew of recent movies is exposing the project built into these technologies. The wonder is that we don't let this surreptitious confession sink in. After all, don't these technologies have as their explicit purpose making representations more and more realistic (think computer graphics and animations) and making reality more and more representational (think Times Square and sanctioned graffiti)?

A few years ago, Benjamin Barber wrote a book that characterized posteverything culture as *Jihad v. McWorld*. He had principally in mind developments that preoccupy political thinkers—global corporate media vis-à-vis retribalization after the Cold War: Hutu killers in Nike paraphernalia and so on. Columbine showed that the phenomenon Barber described is not essentially residual, that a hybrid entity with a structuring life of its own has emerged on the planet, a life in which Serbian three-fingered salutes echo homey gangsta signs and Hitler's birthday and high school movies converge seamlessly with Trench-coat Mafia and twenty-four-hour coverage of "Terror in the Rockies." To Muslims and Christians add Hilfiger and piercing.

Half-convinced, perhaps, you ask, "What is to be done?" And the answer must be, "Don't ask *that* question so fast." For if, as a gigantic matter of historical fact, our world is becoming so intensely reflexive that distinctions between action and performance and reality and representation are eroding at every level of our lives, then that question, asked immediately, represses the realization that we are at an utter loss. And that realization might spur us to take up a challenge to our understanding, which we cannot afford to leave to prophetic digerati and deconstructing academics. Because this much can be said for certain: we are all in the show, and the show must go on. ■

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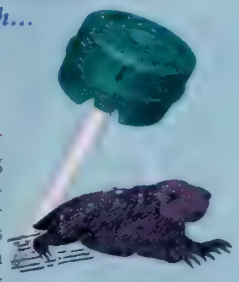


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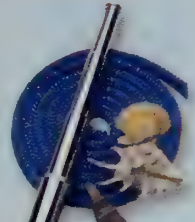


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AT WAR WITH OURSELVES

In Kosovo, America confronts its own ideals

By Michael Hirsh

By the middle of May, despite two months of bombing that had destroyed every bridge across the Danube and plunged Belgrade into darkness, it should have been obvious to even the dullest observer that, no matter what the strategic outcome, America had lost the war in Kosovo. Thousands of Kosovars had died on the ground while NATO jets zoomed 15,000 feet overhead, too high to prevent Serbian forces from carrying out Slobodan Milosevic's final solution to his Kosovar problem, the expulsion of a million Albanians into refugee camps in neighboring Albania and Macedonia. Stripped of their papers and their possessions, many will probably never return no matter what NATO does. And those who do return face what? Occupation by NATO? Decades of counting their dead?

There was another casualty, less obvious yet perhaps more ominous. If much of the Yugoslav republic is in ruins, so too is America's reputation as the Gentle Hegemon, the enlightened victor of the Cold War, spreading the gospel throughout a world needy for its advice. Instead, a month into the campaign, here was the mighty NATO alliance forced to seek the diplomatic advice of its erstwhile enemy, Moscow, and obliged to apologize to the Chinese for accidentally destroying their embassy. In Beijing, tens of thousands of Chinese students marched in the biggest demonstration since Tiananmen Square, but this time they shouted not for democracy but "Down with the American imperialists." The terrible irony of Kosovo is that the genuine humanitarian impulse that led Bill Clinton to intervene has almost certainly made things worse. Clinton, who once talked fulsomely of building bridges to the twenty-first century, was now blowing them apart.

Just what is going on here? How could a squabble over an obscure province in central Europe have ended up causing so much—pardon the term—"collateral damage"? One is tempted, of course, to dismiss what happened in Kosovo as unique to the Balkans, a product of ancient enmities in a strange vortex of history bypassed by the twentieth century. But the real problem for U.S. policymakers is more far-reaching and systemic. Call it the Lament of the Last Superpower—it's not a complaint really, more a kind of psychic white noise, an incipient Zeitgeist pinging through the corridors of Washington as the American Century counts down its final months. Articulated, it would sound like this: We won the damn Cold War. We've got the biggest, most vibrant economy on earth. So why, for God's sake, does it count for so little? Why is it so hard for American diplomacy to get a clean outcome these days? Why couldn't American might carry the day?

The reason, I suggest, is "blowback." That's an old spook term for U.S. policies abroad that backfire on Americans at home; the word is sometimes applied to such putative CIA creations as Osama bin Laden, who, along with his Taliban hosts in Afghanistan, was allegedly trained by the United States in the mid-1980s to fight the Soviets, only to mutate into an Islamic terrorist after the U.S.S.R.'s collapse. But a far more serious kind of blowback bedevils Washington today: ideological blowback. American ideas, having triumphed and then saturated the globe every bit as much as McDonald's hamburgers and Disney cartoons, have run amuck. They are

Michael [illegible] diplomatic correspondent [illegible] international economics [illegible]

returning to haunt U.S. policymakers, often in twisted or misbegotten form. And the worst culprits have been two of the nation's most powerful conceptual exports: Wilsonian idealism (democracy, international law, self-determination) and Friedmanian economics (open markets), ideas that are like bookends marking the beginning and end of the American Century. These ideals triumphed in the hot wars, won the Cold War, and then in the 1990s, Washington pushed them on everyone else in the world. Yet after defeating fascism and communism, America is still practicing containment in places like Kosovo and in the jittery new markets of the world, where —often without realizing or acknowledging it—we are containing the damage caused by our own gospel.



When Woodrow Wilson made self-determination an inalienable right for disenfranchised peoples around the world, he was intent on dismantling the nineteenth-century empires that led Europe into World War I and eager to signal America's debut as a great power and moral force in the world. In this, the idealistic twenty-eighth president succeeded too well, even as he failed at Versailles to draw a new, stable map of Europe (Yugoslavia's borders were among those he set) and, later, to get the League of Nations approved in the Senate. His vision was realized in the 1945 creation of the United Nations (whose charter enshrines "self-determination of peoples"), and it has been a burr in the side of U.S. diplomacy ever since.

Washington's power elite have never worn Woodrow Wilson's noble principles comfortably, of course, or applied them faithfully. During the Cold War, Wilsonianism was flouted regularly: in 1956, the Eisenhower Administration failed to support the Hungarian rebellion, probably sealing the fate of the Iron Curtain countries for thirty years; in Latin America, Washington often secretly propped up anti-communist strongmen such as Manuel Noriega and Augusto Pinochet over more democratic, but more pinkish, alternatives. Those Realpolitik choices over Wilsonian principle, however, were usually viewed as necessary evils, compromises to be corrected in the hour of victory. And the public rhetoric of presidents was always Wilsonian, most memorably Kennedy's 1961 vow to "pay any price, bear any burden" for liberty and Reagan's 1987 challenge, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall."

It wasn't until the wall came down that U.S. officials began to panic over just how unstoppable the forces of self-determination really were. (Perhaps they remembered the warnings of Wilson's own secretary of state, Robert Lansing, who lamented that the term "self-determination" is "simply loaded with dynamite. It will raise hopes which can never be realized. It will, I fear, cost thousands of lives.") Since then, in less than a decade, Wilson's message of hope and principle has metastasized beyond Washington's control and helps explain why discontented ethnic and religious groups around the world, from the Kosovars to the Kurds, yearn quixotically for their own statehood. And why none of them, much to Washington's consternation, will give up the fight.

The problem is even stickier than that, actually. For while Wilson raised self-determination to "an imperative principle of action" he also demanded respect for the integrity of borders under international law. That's a circle no one has been able to square. In Kosovo, for example, the right of self-determination lay on the Kosovar side and the sanctity of borders on the Serb regime's; we ended up withholding the first principle and violating the second. One has merely to scan the headlines to see the same problem elsewhere: some of America's knottiest foreign policy problems involve, as in Kosovo, the threat of "a state too far"—the unilateral declaration of independence in places such as Taiwan, Tibet, the Palestinian territories, Bosnia, and among the Kurds in Turkey and Iraq. In each of these cases, Washington wishes to prevent instability and therefore actively seeks to avert a declaration of independence (Kosovo,

Illustrations by Brian Cronin

Tibet, the Kurds), looks the other way as an independence movement is crushed (Chechnya), or covertly blocks the attempt to make autonomy happen anytime soon (Palestine). Today, U.S. diplomats have banished the term "self-determination" from their lexicon. But it's too late. Most of the rest of the world is insisting on fulfilling Wilson's dream, and that has become our nightmare.

This depressing reality became clear to me in Rambouillet, the sleepy French village thirty miles south of Paris where, in February, the Europeans and Americans held talks intended to persuade the Serbs and Kosovar guerrillas to sign on to a plan giving the province autonomy. As part of the traveling press, I arrived with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright early February 20, after a red-eye flight from Washington aboard her new Boeing 757. Albright, wearing her black "cowboy hat," as the Europeans snidely called it behind her back, strode up the steps of the medieval Bourbon chateau at Rambouillet. The secretary, who favors jaunty Stetsons and brooches the size of small weapons, thought she could easily coax negotiators for the Kosovo Liberation Army to sign the plan. And Albright needed that signature to round out her January ultimatum to Slobodan Milosevic: stop killing Kosovars and accept NATO peacekeepers in your back yard, or be bombed by the mightiest alliance in history. Only with a KLA sign-off would the more wary NATO allies back air strikes. Albright's strategy all along had been to make the Serb dictator an offer he couldn't refuse: all sixteen NATO nations are allied against you, she wanted to say. You are cornered.

But Albright's biggest headache at Rambouillet, it turned out, wasn't Milosevic. It was the Kosovars. For months her diplomats had sweated over an autonomy plan, eighty pages of American promises that read like the minutes of a constitutional convention but without the key phrase: independence. The plan provided for a Kosovar president. A legislature. A judiciary. Schools. All of it was keyed to minutely timed Serb troop withdrawals. This was to be full-fledged autonomy, backed by the full faith and credit of NATO, including 4,000 American troops on indefinite loan. It was an impressive plan. But it wasn't enough for the Kosovars. The KLA guerrillas were, the Americans came to think, living in la-la land. They wanted what Julia Roberts, playing the beautiful streetwalker in *Pretty Woman*, had demanded of handsome tycoon Richard Gere: "the fairy tale." They wanted statehood, a U.N. seat, world recognition—the Hollywood ending, geopolitically speaking. Once satisfied with autonomy under Serb rule—they had enjoyed a limited version before Milosevic canceled it in 1989—the Kosovars now demanded the full Wilson. After all, over the course of this century, "everybody else in the Balkans was getting it," says foreign-policy maven Morton Abramowitz, who has advised the Kosovars.

Yet Albright could not let them have it. Never mind that Milosevic was widely considered a war criminal for having fomented the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. The Clinton Administration, along with its NATO allies, feared that the KLA independence movement would upset Bosnian integration and embroil Albanians in Macedonia, Greece, and Albania—possibly even inciting the Kurds in nearby Turkey who want to slice off a portion of that NATO ally for themselves. Independence, what the Kosovars wanted most, was what the United States and its strategic partner (in a sense), Slobodan Milosevic, could not give them. Washington desperately wanted to keep national borders intact, and Milosevic, as monstrous as he might be, was the man with control over those borders—he was, as Albright herself often said, through gritted teeth, "the address in Belgrade."



For Albright, the emblematic moment of Rambouillet, the moment that will enshrine it in the Hall of Ignominy of foreign-policy botches, came when she made a call to Adem Demaci, a squat, sixty-three-year-old former novelist with Coke-bottle glasses who then was the chief political figure in the shadowy KLA. All she wanted was for Demaci, who had refused to attend the talks, to agree not to stand in the way of the NATO-backed autonomy

agreement. But Demaci refused to discuss it, telling Albright that a phone call couldn't solve such a "bloody and serious" problem. "Basically, he stiffed her," said one stunned U.S. official close to Albright. "Here is the greatest nation on earth pleading with some nothing-balls to do something entirely in their own interest—which is to say yes to an interim agreement—and they defy us the whole way." Albright had to settle for a vague pledge that the KLA might sign.

Milosevic, as we now know, was equally unmoved. Although the plan promised him a disarmed KLA, he insisted on his right to sovereignty—so much so that he closed off all possibility of intercourse with the West forever.

The Americans' problem was that elements of international law existed on the sides of both Milosevic and the KLA. And both sides spent two weeks asserting those rights. The Kosovars hired top Western legal advisers such as Abramowitz and Paul Williams, a former State Department lawyer, who told me he advised the Kosovars that "under customary international law, if you act as a reasonable political entity, you will earn the right of self-determination." Milosevic, for his part, made the Wilsonian counterclaim. In an interview with a Houston TV station, even while repeating his wild contention that he had not ordered the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo, he ran down the list of the various separatist movements that haunt many of his NATO antagonists. "If that became practice," he said in his broken English, "no one country will be safe."

The upshot is that Clinton and Albright took America to war in pursuit of one noble Wilsonian goal—rooting out tyranny—only to run headlong into other elements of Wilsonianism. We fought a "war" that we didn't dare call a war (because we wanted only to "persuade" Milosevic to treat his own people better) over an entity, Kosovo, that we didn't dare define. All to avert a humanitarian catastrophe that happened anyway. NATO's insipid little campaign has probably created centuries' more ethnic hatred in a region that produces, as Churchill once said, "more history than it can consume." Serb prejudice against Albanians, which initially brought Milosevic to power in 1989, has been reawakened for generations to come. Just as bad, the KLA guerrillas have now become implacably opposed to any Serb rule; some 20,000 of them sit seething across the border in Albania, threatening to turn it into their Lebanon. They will push, with considerably more moral justice than they had before the war, for independence from the Butcher of Belgrade. The Clinton Administration wants that independence no more now than it did then, but in going to war against Milosevic it robbed this argument of much of its legitimacy. Nonetheless, NATO could now find its peacekeeping force arrayed against the KLA and protecting Serbs in Kosovo. If you're wondering how long NATO will have to stay in Kosovo to separate the antagonists, think South Korea, where 37,000 U.S. troops monitor a bitter peace a half-century after another misbegotten war. In mid-April, at an administrative briefing of senators, national security adviser Sandy Berger was asked about the worst-case scenario for Kosovo. Before he had a chance to answer, Senator Fritz Hollings—one of only three Democrats to oppose the Senate resolution authorizing the use of force in Kosovo—quipped: "Winning. Winning's the worst thing. We're going to be there for fifty years."

> AMERICAN IDEALS, HAVING SATURATED THE GLOBE, ARE COMING HOME TO ROOST

The post-Cold War NATO is in some senses the realization of Wilson's core dream of a global community of democracies, but as the alliance's democratic dithering over Kosovo showed, conducting foreign policy today is like trying to run a quiet session of the Israeli Knesset. Gone are the days when Henry Kissinger could go to China and hatch a brilliant strategic shift, then announce it, full-born, to the world. Most policy shifts must start in public and undergo a messy international debate. NATO may have been far more united against Milosevic than the dictator expected, but to stay united the alliance needed to fight essentially an antiseptic war: no pilot casualties, as few Serb civilians killed as possible, no ground war. That approach, called "immaculate destruction" by Pentagon cynics, led NATO to betray its central casus belli: the prevention of humanitarian disaster in Kosovo. These constraints are not going to go away post-Kosovo. Indeed, the difficulties that NATO had in bringing Milosevic to heel—and the grim endgame that is left now—may have raised the threshold for action so high that this consensus-driven alliance will be loath to take action again for anything less than World War III. It's a sad irony for Albright. After eagerly pushing for NATO expansion, she may find that her most enduring legacy is NATO's virtual irrelevance, a tender timidity about picking its fights.

Republicans on Capitol Hill, of course, are quick to blame the Kosovo debacle on Bill Clinton, surely one of the more wishy-washy and scandal-distracted presidents of the twentieth century. But the fact is that no president, no matter how decisive and character-endowed, could have been prepared for the bizarre, accidental way Kosovo cropped up. The passions between the Serbs and Kosovars may be ancient, but the current crisis began as a perfect storm of post–Cold War elements, of economic and political blowback. In January of 1997, a vast series of pyramid schemes in next-door Albania collapsed. Albania, once one of the most closed societies on earth (its leader, Enver Hoxha, thought the Iron Curtain too porous), had tried to digest American-style free markets in a single gulp. Unprepared for capital-

[illegible] hundreds of thousands of Albanians invested heavily in crooked investment vehicles. They lost their life savings, riots broke out across the country, and some 1,500 people were killed. The government of would-be reformer Sali Berisha was deposed, and demonstrators busted into arms depots all over Albania. Suddenly, Kalashnikovs were being sold for $10 apiece across the border to ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, which had been gradually stripped of autonomy by Milosevic during the Nineties. Albanian money and manpower followed. The flow of aid led, several months later, to the appearance of the KLA, until then a fairly powerless group.

The emergence of a powerful KLA, in turn, vastly complicated the policy choices for Clinton and Albright. The GOP policy elite criticize the President for backing off George Bush's 1992 "Christmas warning" that repression of the Kosovars would entail a U.S. military response, thus encouraging Milosevic's worst excesses. But, in fact, Clinton faced a far more complex landscape than Bush did. In 1998, as the KLA grew stronger, a Serb defeat and a Kosovar declaration of independence became real possibilities. The Clintonites felt forced to soften the threat of intervention so as not to encourage the KLA. "We are not going to become the air force for the KLA," declared Defense Secretary William Cohen. These Wilsonian conflicts expressed themselves too in the way the war was finally fought. The United States was never willing to fight a ground war, yet it was also unwilling to arm the one group that could, the KLA. Because of blowback, a clear policy of taking sides was suddenly no longer an option.

Madeleine Albright, of course, didn't see things this way. America's top diplomat brought a stark, old-world view to this murky new world. Albright is, heart and soul, a Wilsonian moralist. She believes in not just the reality but the use of American power—in the leverage of what she likes to call the "indispensable nation." It's become a part of Washington lore that the Czech-born Albright was quite literally a child of Munich. As a toddler she was ethnically cleansed when her family fled Czechoslovakia shortly after Chamberlain handed half of it to Hitler in 1938. The young Madlenka later watched as her adored father, Josef Korbel, a Czech diplomat, was forced out again by the Communists and fled to America. Albright lived a refugee childhood at his side in London, Belgrade, and Denver, and was weaned on the lessons of power and freedom-fighting fortitude. For her, Milosevic was not just a tin-pot annoyance; he was the last real dictator left in Mitteleuropa. She had as much psychic cause to loathe him as to loathe Hitler and Stalin.

ALBRIGHT BOXED IN BOTH MILOSEVIC AND THE UNITED STATES, AND THE ONLY WAY OUT WAS WAR

That wasn't the only psychological baggage that Albright brought with her to Rambouillet. Her reputation was on the line as well. Celebrated in 1996 as America's first female secretary of state, she had had a lovely honeymoon with the public—often drawing standing ovations in restaurants—but a rough marriage with her boss. Two years on, the secretary was still pining for a foreign-policy triumph she could call her own. Questions about her substance as a strategic thinker, there since her days as a self-effacing congressional liaison for Jimmy Carter's national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, had lingered. Albright had won the secretary's job with her savvy political skills and hawkish sound bites—especially her "This is not eggnog, this is cowardice" slap at Castro—not to mention her gender. But she had since created credibility problems for the administration by getting out ahead of Clinton on rhetoric. Close associates say that Albright's MO is often to shove policy along in her direction by laying out aggressive markers for the endlessly equivocating Clinton to follow.

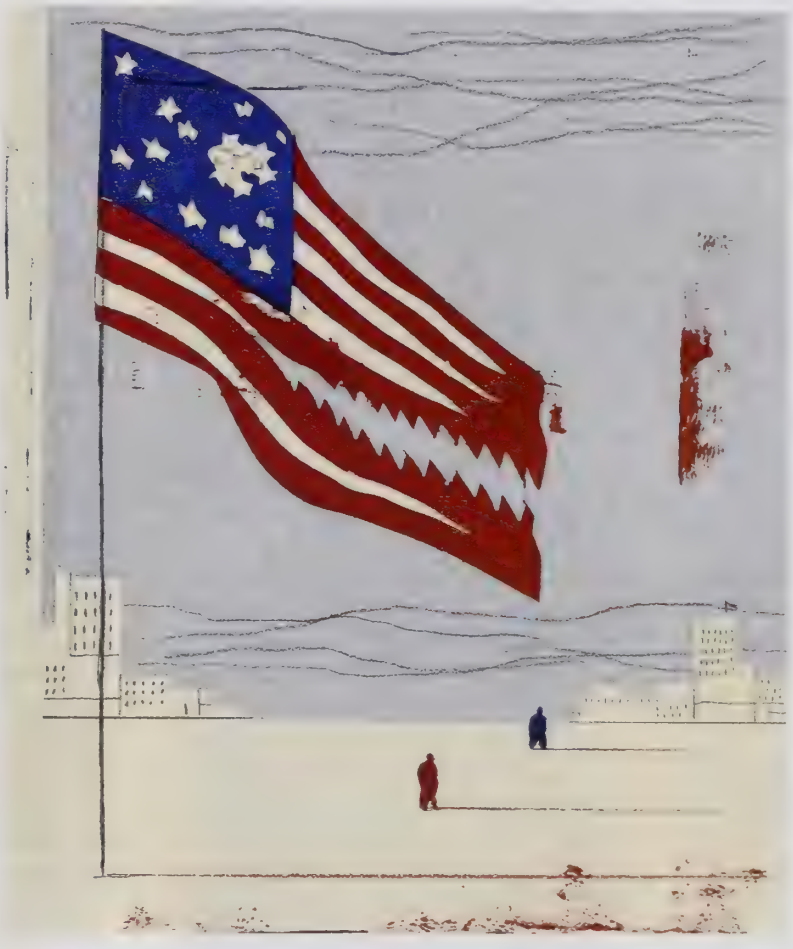
Her mission, Albright once suggested to her most intimate biographer, the *Washington Post*'s Michael Dobbs, is to rescue U.S. military might from the clutches of the Powell Doctrine. In 1992, Colin Powell, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, gave his generation's answer to the "Vietnam syndrome." Powell decided that the United States should apply only overwhelming force and only in situations where victory was near-certain and the exit strategy was clear, such as the Gulf War. He defined up America's superpowerhood, in essence, so as to make it virtually beyond reach to policymakers. Albright thought this was appalling, and in 1993, as the United States dithered over intervention in Bosnia, she famously upbraided Powell. "What's the point of having this superb military you're always talking about if we can't use it?" she said. (The words earned her lasting enmity at the Pentagon, but as she later pointed out, she was probably right about Bosnia; bombing helped bring about the 1995 Dayton Accord.) Surely, Albright reasoned, there must be some interventionist middle course between the slippery slope of Vietnam and the insurmountable wall of Powellism. And she kept coming up with ways to define it: in the early Nineties it was "assertive multilateralism"; now, in Kosovo, it was "diplomacy backed by the threat of force." Such rhetoric gave her a reputation for bellicosity abroad that goes back to her Munichean view of the world: "Madame War," Russian Communist Party chief Gennady Zyuganov likes to call her. As Albright explained to me just days before NATO began bombing, "You have to understand: for me, Americans liberated Europe. When Americans weren't in the action, that's when bad things happened. That is my political philosophy."

But Kosovo, as we know, never quite fit the Munich template. At the most basic level, of course, the KLA guerrillas were hardly the hap-

less victims of Prague betrayed by Chamberlain. A mix of socialist ideologues and nationalist, possibly fascistic, weekend warriors (in the beginning they used a closed-fist salute reminiscent of their World War II predecessors, the Skanderbeg volunteer SS), the KLA never really won the hearts of most Kosovars, much less NATO's support for their goal of statehood. The second problem was Milosevic's dual status as villain and anti-separatist ally. Historians may one day rank Kosovo with the Bay of Pigs as a diplomatic and military miscalculation. Yet in some ways Kosovo is a more baffling error of judgment. At least in 1961 there was an ideological gulf between Castro and Kennedy. Similarly in Vietnam, there was a prevailing theory"—something about dominoes—that seemed to justify large-scale strategic action. Not here. No doubt, Milosevic is a conscienceless, self-aggrandizing tyrant, and terrible pictures were appearing on CNN. But humanitarian impulses, by themselves, have never been a cause for war in U.S. strategic thinking.

Nor are they likely to be now. In April, when Clinton's close ally British PM Tony Blair began to grope toward a new standard of intervention within sovereign borders, saying genocide "can never be a purely internal matter," Clinton stayed mute—perhaps because he knew that embracing such a rule would expose the United States to international pressure from Rwanda to East Timor.* The point is that some tyrants, like Hitler, must be destroyed because they grossly violate national interests. But most—like Stalin, Suharto, and Saddam—you contain and wait for mortality to take its course. Milosevic wasn't, and never had been, Hitler. He had no designs on Europe. He was a small-time monster, like Saddam, who inhabited the margins of U.S. national interests.

And until Rambouillet, Milosevic had been fairly containable—when



threatened with the right measure of force and diddled with the right kind of diplomacy. Just four years before, Clinton and the Serb dictator made peace at Dayton, later smoking cigars in Paris with French president Jacques Chirac. U.S. officials now argue that Milosevic had much more motivation to deal then: Bosnia was not an integral part of Serbia, as is Kosovo. Yet as recently as last October, Richard Holbrooke, the U.N. ambassador-designate who was the architect of the Dayton Accord, got Milosevic to agree, under threat of what were then more or less pinprick strikes, to submit Kosovo to international peacekeeping and withdraw his forces while talks over Kosovar autonomy continued.

The real question for historians is why Milosevic proved so intractable this time. It's impossible to say for sure, but one distinct possibility is that Albright's hard-line approach radicalized him. No doubt, she had an axe to grind: no one in the administration had listened to her in 1993 when she urged early intervention in Bosnia. And now, Albright decided, eight years of shadow-boxing with the real instigator behind the Balkan wars was enough. She wanted a decisive confrontation that would target the root of his power, the Serbian nationalism that he had re-ignited in a notorious 1989 speech before a million people on the infamous Field of Blackbirds in Kosovo, where in 1389 the Ottoman Turks had humiliated the Serb Prince Lazar. At the same time, the secretary was eager to find a new role for NATO; at a ceremony she organized in March at the Truman Library, she brought the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary into the alliance in a joyous closing of the circle of her life story. She was frustrated by the credibility crisis Clinton had already created with a year of passed deadlines as well as by the flaccid four-day U.S. strikes on Iraq in December (from which Milosevic no doubt took heart, probably thinking he'd get the same thing).

And so, in a fight in which the United States clearly had an interest in remaining an arm's-length mediator, Albright slowly but inexorably began to identify with the Kosovars, especially after the massacre of forty-five Kosovar villagers at Racak in

The other argument that Clinton made to the nation, that Milosevic jeopardized stability in Europe, was specious; eight years of ethnic cleansing in Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia had upset Europe's historic march to greater economic unity not a whit.

January. Although the KLA had broken the cease-fire first by killing several Serb policemen, Albright began arguing hard for air strikes.

To win the Kosovars over, the secretary, a workhorse with legendary lobbying skills, gave them a full embrace. She invited the guerrillas to Washington and dispatched Bob Dole to tell them that America sympathized with their cause. By March 12, the KLA was ready to sign the pact. It was a small victory at a huge price: the United States had effectively gotten into bed with guerrillas whom only a year before Albright's Balkan envoy, Robert Gelbard, had declared to be "a terrorist group."

But while she placated the Kosovars, Albright did little more than issue ultimatums from afar to Belgrade; she was quoted more than once as saying Milosevic understands "only the language of force"—quite probably true, but an insulting thing to hear. "It doesn't help to personalize this," one senior official conceded to me later. "She's not interested in being regarded as a peacemaker. She wants to be remembered as a tough person."

Albright's approach was pure poison to Milosevic. Western intelligence indicated before Rambouillet that he might have accepted armed peacekeepers as long as his sovereignty was assured. But the autonomy pact that Albright insisted he sign would have been virtually impossible for any leader to accept. A little-noticed codicil in "Appendix B," for instance, offered NATO peacekeepers "unimpeded access throughout" Yugoslavia, not just Kosovo. Milosevic's entire political career was bound up in making Kosovo Serbian; if his people suspected he had agreed to a pact that effectively handed Kosovo away in three years (the duration of the U.S. plan, after which the province's fate was unclear), he wouldn't last long. Even liberal and educated Serbs can be paranoiac and potted about the Albanians. Warren Zimmermann, the last U.S. ambassador to Belgrade, recalls in his 1996 book, *Origins of a Catastrophe*, meeting a Serbian art historian in New York. "After a wide-ranging and fascinating conversation on a variety of subjects, I asked her how she would deal with the Kosovo problem. 'Simple,' she said. 'Just line all the Albanians up against a wall and shoot them.'"

Albright had boxed in both Milosevic and the United States, and the only way out was war. That became apparent the day after the Kosovars agreed to sign on to the plan. Albright, Cohen, Berger, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Hugh Shelton, and other officials were in the wood-paneled situation room in the White House basement. Many around the table still believed that Milosevic would cave—at the very least, after a few days of heavy strikes. Then, over the secure conference line came the scratchy voice of Christopher Hill, the ambassador to Macedonia who'd been the main contact with Milosevic for over a year. What were the chances of a deal? "Zero point zero percent," Hill's voice crackled. Milosevic was saying that he'd never accept NATO peacekeeping troops on his soil. "There was," recalls one participant, "a stunned silence in the room."

Would a defter brand of diplomacy have changed the outcome? It's impossible to say for sure. Certainly Albright was forced to thread a very narrow needle between Kosovar and Serb demands. Her defenders insist that she bent over backward to give Milosevic a chance to deal. Part of the Rambouillet package, for example, was a plan to disarm the KLA. The autonomy scheme also would have given minority Serbs in the province the option of having their problems adjudicated at a federal level. And the chief reason for the Kosovars' initial defiance at Rambouillet was that Albright had refused to include a referendum on independence—which, in a province 90 percent Albanian, would have been foreordained—in the plan.

To be fair, every diplomat except Holbrooke—a tough, nimble negotiator whom someone once likened to "Ollie North with brains"—has found Milosevic intractable on the subject of Kosovo. Although there is increasingly much finger pointing at the secretary, many inside the Administration still argue that Milosevic's "Operation Horseshoe," designed to clean out Kosovo, had been planned well before Rambouillet. Even so, it wasn't until Rambouillet failed that Milosevic massed the last of his 40,000 troops on the Kosovo border and began ordering attacks.

In any case, no one in the Administration seems to have fully understood what a Wilsonian soup they were all swimming in. Albright wanted a firm resolution to an issue that is inherently irresolvable. In the end Albright was willing to go to war on a high-stakes bet: that Milosevic would back down over an issue crucial to his political survival, or that for the first time in history air power alone would prevail. Both were long-odds gambles, and yet, almost unbelievably, the Administration had no backup plan (it didn't even put a humanitarian peacekeeping force in place on the Yugoslav borders). The sad, nearly indigestible conclusion here is that something very much like a Munich—a compromise scheme such as a partition plan—was needed in Kosovo. And yet Albright, because of her history, was probably the last person to forge such a compromise with the likes of Slobodan Milosevic. Even the seemingly worst solution, simply leaving the shattered October cease-fire in place, would have been better than what we got. For it was only when the last peace "verifiers," many of them retired U.S. military men, left Kosovo on the eve of the war that the last control rods were pulled out; that's when the influence of civilization, once again, ceased to exist in the Balkans, and the killings and rapes could begin.

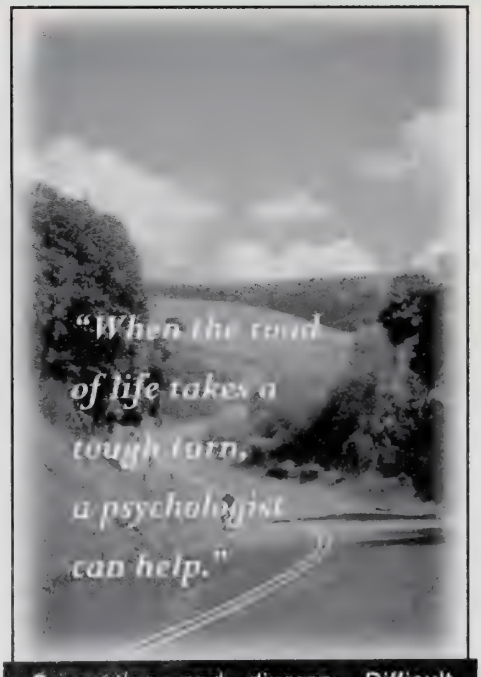
Milosevic, of course, bears the brunt of the responsibility for Yugoslavia's decade of death and destruction. But America was present at the creation of the Kosovo problem in 1918, when Wilson drew the borders of modern Yugoslavia. ("He's the guy who gave us this mess," Holbrooke told me in a frank moment. "In the name of self-determination he created boundaries in south-central Europe

that violated reason.") Indeed, the Kosovo autonomy plan co-authored by Jim O'Brien, a bright Yale Law School graduate who was Albright's senior adviser, is the natural heir to the work of "the Inquiry," the group of eager young reformers, including Walter Lippmann, who secretly met in New York in December 1917 and drew up the Fourteen Points. We know what happened to Wilson's Fourteen Points at Versailles; the allies greedily sought territory, and many parties, including the Albanians, were aggrieved. (Lippmann later bitterly regretted his part in it, remembering the advice of his friend, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, who told him, "You young men seem to think that if you sit on the world long enough you will hatch something out. But you're wrong.") Wilson, the abstract idealist, ended his career as a peacemaker by getting down on his hands and knees over a world map with his fellow power brokers to decide—like vaudevillians at Mt. Olympus—which ethnic groups were fit to determine their future. "But, darling, it is appalling," Harold Nicolson, a British delegate at Versailles, wrote at the time to his wife. "Those three ignorant and irresponsible men [Wilson, Lloyd George, and Clemenceau] cutting Asia Minor to bits as if they were dividing a cake."

Yet Americans, it seems, can never get away from building new world orders. It is an impulse rooted deeply in American Exceptionalism ("We have it in our power to begin the world over again," Thomas Paine wrote in *Common Sense* in 1776). The same fitful crusading spirit that yielded Woodrow Wilson also led Washington, in a fever of Cold War triumphalism, to preach free-market absolutism around the world in the 1990s.

Although Clinton remained nominally a "New Democrat"—or centrist—at home he, along with Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan and Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, began preaching like a baby-boomer Milton Friedman abroad, promoting open markets and free-flowing capital. Under pressure from Washington and the tutelage of young free





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...makers like Harvard's Jeffrey ...sachs, too many nations (many with ...ppallingly corrupt economies) ...shed too quickly to embrace the Friedmanian purist dream. They threw billions of dollars up for privatization and ditched old practices and systems without a thought as to what might replace them.

We know the result: blowback, the Asian Contagion, Russia's descent into "grabitization." Where much of the emerging world once viewed free-flowing capital as an elixir, it now sees it as poison. Japan's "Big Bang" reforms are all but forgotten. In London, Paris, and Bonn, there is "increasing disgust," says commentator Stephan-Goetz Richter, with the "quasi-imperialist dominance of the United States in all matters financial." And although no one in the U.S. Treasury will come out and say this flatly, it's plain to see: the heroes of the Asia crisis are countries like China, which resisted rapid financial liberalization; the goats are Thailand and Indonesia, which opened up too quickly. Greenspan, Rubin, and Co., though they've all privately expressed doubts about free-sloshing capital, dare not betray, in public, the open-market ideology they so vociferously pressed on the world in the Nineties. Why? Because the markets these apostles nurtured are now in control of events—and the markets wouldn't like it one bit.

Free-market absolutism contributed to the worst case of blowback we've seen, and the one Washington wanted most to avoid: Russia. Having seen their empire decimated by self-determination and bankrupted by a clumsy and corrupt attempt to embrace capitalism, many Russians imagine the conspiratorial hand of Washington behind everything now, and the Duma calls reform "a deadly policy under the thumb of the West." So much for one of the last great myths of the post–Cold War order—that the U.S.-Soviet rivalry has been transformed into a strategic partnership. Today, Russia may be retreating into a quasi-Soviet socialism, or, more ominously, it may be disintegrating into a fascistic gangster state with Weimar overtones (and a lot of nuclear weapons). But one direction Moscow does not seem to be headed in is Washington's.

Moscow, instead, is increasingly looking to China. In a scary reversal of Nixon's strategic overtures to Beijing in 1972, special Russian envoy Viktor Chernomyrdin traveled to China after the Belgrade embassy bombing, and the two nations formed a joint front against NATO. If it holds, this could be the ultimate blowback: Russia, devastated economically, has weapons to sell; a newly nationalistic China, which is backward militarily (hence all the espionage) but wealthier economically, may now want to buy a lot more of them. Like Moscow, Beijing is also worried about the precedent that NATO set in intervening in Serbia's separatist troubles.

Which brings us to perhaps the most potentially dangerous of the Wilsonian traps that await U.S. policymakers: Taiwan. For three decades, Washington has kept a lid on Beijing's claims to Taiwan by maintaining a policy of studied ambiguity over whether it would intervene or not. But since 1996, when Taiwan conducted the first free presidential election in its history, separatist sentiments have grown ever stronger: before Bill Clinton's trip to Beijing in June 1998, pro-independence groups in Taiwan addressed an open letter to the President, reminding him pointedly, "The right of self-determination by the people, proclaimed by [Wilson], has taken deep root." U.S. officials, worried about having to repeat the standoff of 1996, when Clinton sent a carrier to the Taiwan Straits after Beijing fired off missiles prior to the Taiwan election, decided on a bold move. In a remarkable statement that marked yet another wished-for end to the era of self-determination, Clinton became the first U.S. president to declare openly that Washington would not support independence for Taiwan. Clinton, the same man who once berated George Bush for kowtowing to Beijing, sent a clear message to Taipei (and, by the way, to Tibet): don't stir the waters. We may still make noises about human rights, but ultimately, for strategic interests, we've decided to cast our lot with Jiang Zemin, not Woodrow Wilson. The Chinese are steadily upgrading their military, and there's no doubt that "a lot of the military technologies they are developing are directly linked to solving the problem of the U.S. Navy and an attack on Taiwan," says one U.S. government source. The Taiwanese government, meanwhile, is buying high-tech U.S. weapons and clamoring to become part of Washington's theater missile defense. The very real danger is that as the younger, Taiwan-bred generation emerges into power, they will force a crisis over statehood. Washington will no longer have the luxury of ambiguity. It may have to make a choice: stand aside while Beijing absorbs one of Asia's new democracies with much bloodshed—a devastating blow to U.S. credibility—or fight the emerging power of the twenty-first century. Either way, U.S. interests are at great peril.

Still, let's not overstate the severity of the blowback phenomenon, nor ignore the success of American ideas before it became serious. Democracy, market economics, and self-determination remain the central organizing principles for societies around the world. In some places, like South Korea, truly inspirational transitions to greater democracy are occurring with U.S. encouragement. Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic have also completed remarkable transitions to free-market stability. Albright, when I asked her about the blowback problem, retorted that she'd rather be fighting our own ideas than fascism and tyranny.

Yet it's also clear that few policymakers in Europe, or Moscow, or the developing world, are looking to America for answers anymore. Other aspects of Wilsonian international law are increasingly sources of embarrassing blowback in Washington. America may have fought a humanitarian war to save the Kosovars, but for years now the

United States has been the laggard government in approving any number of U.N.-sponsored human-rights conventions and has restrained NATO from prosecuting Bosnian war criminals. The United States wants to impose nuclear non-proliferation on countries like India and Pakistan but exclude its own arsenal. Last year, fearing a compromise of its sovereignty, Washington was virtually alone in opposing the international criminal court it originally championed, and which was later endorsed by 120 nations. Similarly, Spain's extradition case against former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet is regarded with trepidation by the Clinton White House. Principles that sounded good when you were an emerging power don't work as well when you are the world's only superpower and must play a reluctant globocop who needs to occasionally knock some heads.

Wilsonian legalism also tends to pressure America into a multilateralism—collective security—that it is no longer so eager to implement, having seen it fail in Bosnia, Iraq, and now Kosovo. Hence the growing tension between the Clinton Administration and the U.N. Security Council over Saddam Hussein's maddening persistence. The problem came up again during the Kosovo war. Washington discovered it needed, more and more, the imprimatur of a U.N. Security Council resolution to negotiate a peace. Yet as the U.N. came to the fore, it began making trouble for NATO. Mary Robinson, the fomer Irish president who is now the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, suggested in late April that the NATO attack was illegal under international law, and China stood up for Milosevic, threatening to block any U.N. resolution without a cessation of the bombing.

Tangled up in blowback, the United States has become a nation of, by, and for the status quo. Washington simply does not want more devolution into statehood, and it wishes the idea of self-determination, as a motivating force, would quietly go away. The reason is obvious: There are some 5,000 ethnic groups in the world, and only 185 members of the U.N.; if all these groups went the way of the Kosovo Liberation Army, the wars would never stop. But in opposing such movements, we leave an odor of hypocrisy in our wake. All of which helps explain why it has proved so difficult to construct a coherent post–Cold War "vision," and why U.S. foreign policy today lacks the clarity and grandeur of Wilson's Fourteen Points, or Roosevelt's Four Freedoms, or Truman's Marshall Plan.

One is tempted to conclude that it may be time for America the crusader state—historian Walter McDougall's term—to hang up its lance. It's become far too dangerous out there. American ideology, so transformative in this century, has done its job—and more. But there is no obvious way to eradicate blowback. Just as markets have grown so large and ungovernable they threaten to overwhelm their American progenitors, Wilsonian principles will endure of their own momentum, continuing to act as a last train out of obscurity for the world's insulted and injured, even as they are quietly shunted aside in Washington. And Wilsonianism as an overarching statement of American principle can't just be tabled; America's very raison d'être is an Idea—the principles of freedom and democracy that Wilson distilled from the founding documents. As Henry Kissinger notes grudgingly (for he is no fan of Wilson's either) in his magisterial *Diplomacy*, "[W]henever America has faced the task of constructing a new world order, it has returned in one way or another to Woodrow Wilson's precepts." Return it no doubt will, at the hands of the politicians, and the idealists like Albright. But as long as it remains the only superpower, America will more and more find itself ensnared in these precepts. Washington will, most times, wiggle out. The globalized economy, and new experiments such as the European Monetary Union, which will cause a partial devolution of nation-states into industrial zones, may take the edge off yearnings for statehood, for example. Meanwhile the Taiwanese, the Palestinians—and most certainly the Kosovars—will have to settle for a neither-fish-nor-fowl existence as quasi-protectorates of Washington. It all seems a muddle, but the lesson for future generations of policymakers is clear: be careful what you crusade for—you just may get it. ■

July Index Sources

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What Hitler Wants

By Leon Trotsky

Hitler has been widely regarded as a demagogue, a hysterical person, and a comedian. Such opinions are the reflections of a diplomacy incapable of vision or understanding save in the most ordinary routine matters. To attempt to appraise the present German political revolution with the rule-of-thumb methods of diplomacy is not only ludicrous; it is fraught with peril. It takes more than hysteria to seize power, and method there must be in the Nazi madness. Woe to those who do not awaken to this fact in time! The leaders of German labor refused to take Hitler seriously, they dismissed his program as an impossible blend of reaction and utopia. To-day, as a result of their ghastly mistake, their organizations have been shattered to bits. What will happen if this mistake is repeated in the field of world politics?

On May 17th Hitler replied to Roosevelt and the powers in his peace speech to the Reichstag. Up to that time many thought that Hitler would violently attack the Versailles Treaty, attempting to deal with Europe as he had done with the Reichstag building, Marxian literature, and the Jewish department stores. Nobody really knew where the lightning would come from and where it would strike. Would anyone have predicted twenty-four hours in advance the crushing of the trade unions according to all the rules of a gangster assault upon a bank? What was to be expected now? Then, of a sudden, the cooing of a dove.

Hitler's speech in the Reichstag staggered everybody with its unexpected pacifism, and so attained its most immediate aim. It is always advantageous to take an opponent by surprise. Hitler there developed his first success and fairly embarrassed his adversaries. Highly experienced diplomats allowed themselves to be at least halfway assuaged by a few well-calculated pacific sentences, . . . and the entire press declared that the whole atmosphere had suddenly become less tense. At the same time they analyzed and explained these unexpected soft accents in something like these terms: the shrewd diplomat Mussolini had brought Hitler to reason, the pressure from Washington had doubtlessly not been without influence, and consequently the chances of the disarmament policy have manifestly improved. What a flagrant blunder! The psychological secret of the hubbub is simple: whoever expects to meet a madman brandishing an axe and encounters instead a man with a Browning hidden in his hip pocket cannot fail to experience a feeling of relief. But that does not prevent the Browning from being more dangerous than the axe. . . .

It would be just as false to take Hitler's pacifism at its word as it would be to dismiss the declaration of a "demagogue" without penetrating into its sense. The political problem consists in establishing the inner relationships between Hitler's declaration and his real plans, that is, to try to understand by what ways Fascist Germany hopes to attain those ends which it cannot and will not name. The past must already have adequately shown that if there is fantasy and delirium in the policy of National-Socialism, this does not mean that Hitler is incapable of weighing realities: *his fantasy and delirium are in expedient conformity with his real political aims*. That is our point of departure in the appraisal of

Leon Trotsky (1879–1940) wrote this essay from exile for the September 1933 issue of Harper's Magazine. *Ellipses indicate omitted material.*

he internal as well as the foreign olicy of National-Socialism.

The guiding philosophical and istorical ideas in Hitler's disarma- ent speech are truly pitiful in their retentious mediocrity. The idea roclaimed by Hitler of the necessity f re-adapting the state frontiers of urope to the frontiers of its races is ne of those reactionary utopias with hich the National-Socialist pro- ram is stuffed. Present-day Europe is ecomposing economically and cul- rally not because its national fron- iers are imperfect but because the ld continent is cut up in every di- ection by custom's prison walls, sep- rated by the disorder of inflated onetary systems, and crushed by he militarism which Europe requires o insure its dismemberment and its ecadence. A shifting of the internal rontiers by a few dozens or hundreds f miles in one direction or another ould, without changing much of nything, involve a number of hu- an victims exceeding the popula- ion of the disputed zone.

The assurances given by the Na- ional-Socialists that they renounce Germanization" do not signify that hey renounce conquests, for one of he central and most persistent ideas in heir program is the occupation of vast erritories in "the East" so that a strong erman peasantry may be established here. It is not by accident that the acifist declaration, having suddenly nd unexpectedly left the ground of he "ideal" separation of the races, arns in a half-threatening tone that he source of future conflicts may arise ut of the "over-population of western urope." Hitler indicates only one way ut of the over-population of Europe, rimarily of Germany, and that is the ast. When, lamenting the injustice f the German-Polish frontier, he de- lared that one could without difficul- find "in the East" the solution capa- le of satisfying alike the "claims of oland" and the "legitimate rights of ermany" he simply had in mind the nnexation of Soviet territories. The re- unciation of Germanization signifies, this connection, the principle of the rivileged position of the Germanic race" as the seignioral caste in the oc- cupied territories. The Nazis are against assimilation but not against annexation. They prefer the extermination of the conquered "inferior" peoples to their Germanization. For the time being, fortunately, this is only a matter of hypothetical conquests.



When Hitler asserts with indignation that the great German people has been transformed into a second-class nation, and that this conflicts with the interests of international solidarity and the principle of equal rights for all peoples he is simply talking for effect. The whole historical philosophy of National-Socialism proceeds from the supposedly fundamental inequality of nations and the right of the "superior" races to trample upon and to extirpate the "inferior" races. Needless to say, the Germans occupy a preëminent place among these superior peoples. Taken as a whole, the Hitler program for the reconstruction of Europe is a reactionary-utopian medley of racial mysticism and national cannibalism. It is not hard to submit it to an annihilating criticism. However, the realization of this program is not the first aim of the Fascist dictatorship, but rather the *reëstablishment of the military power of Germany*. Without this it is impossible to talk of any program whatsoever. It is only from this standpoint that Hitler's disarmament speech offers any interest whatever.

Hitler's program is the program of German capitalism, aggressive but bound hand and foot by Versailles and the results of the World War. This

s lebe Deutschland," poster by K. Stauber, 1930s / Photo AKG London

combination of potential strength and actual weakness accounts for the exceedingly explosive character of the aims of National-Socialism and explains the extreme prudence of the most immediate steps towards the attainment of these aims. Hitler may speak to-day of loosening and gradually untying the knots, but not of cutting them asunder.

Any revision of the treaties, especially of the system of armaments, would signify a change in the present relationship of forces: Germany would have to grow stronger, France weaker. Outside of this, the very question of revision has no meaning for Germany. On the other hand, it is quite clear that the rulers of France will accept no changes that would weaken its position to the benefit of Germany. That is why the Nazis regard as illusory and fantastic any policy calculated upon an improvement of the international position of Germany through agreement with France. It is from this conviction which, as will be seen farther on, runs through all the political activity of Hitler, that flows the inevitability of a new conflict between Germany and France. But not to-day, nor yet to-morrow. It is precisely this "correction" with regard to time that Hitler makes in his declaration and, in this sense, it is not a mere "deception." When Goering set fire to the Reichstag he risked nothing but the heads of his agents. The premeditated firing of Europe is a more ticklish enterprise. In its present state Germany cannot make war. It is disarmed. This is no phrase; it is a fact. Bespectacled students and unemployed wearing a swastika band are no substitute for the Hohenzollern army. To be sure, here and there Hitler can partially violate the obligations dealing with armaments. But he will not resolve upon any open measure on a large scale which would involve him in a direct and flagrant conflict with the proscriptions of Versailles. Only some "fortunate" circumstances, in the form of complications between the heavily armed states of Europe, could permit National-Socialism to take drastic steps in foreign policy in the near future. In their absence, Hitler will be forced to confine himself to grand diplomatic combinations abroad and to petty military contraband at home. . . .

Hitler is counting upon the support of Italy and, within certain limits, this is assured him, not so much because their internal governments are similar—the purely German Third Reich is, as is known, a frankly Latin plagiarism—as because of the parallelism in many of their foreign aspirations. But with the Italian crutch alone, German imperialism will not rise to its feet. Only under the condition of support from England can Fascist Germany gain the necessary freedom of movement. Therefore, no adventures, no declarations which smack of adventure! Hitler understands that every blow against the West (a blow against Poland would rebound against the West) would promptly bring closer together England and France and would oblige Italy to show great caution. Every imprudent, premature, risky act of revenge politics would lead automatically to the isolation of Germany and—given its military impotence—to a new humiliating capitulation. . . . Hitler's pacifism is not a fortuitous diplomatic improvisation, but a vital part of a grand maneuver which is to change radically the relationship of forces in favor of Germany and to lay the bases for the European and the world offensive of German imperialism.

However, this is but one part of Hitler's program and only the negative part. . . . The declaration of May 17th contains a clear indication on the other, the positive, side of the Nazi program: the struggle against Bolshevism. This does not concern the dissolution of the German proletarian organizations but rather means war against the Soviet Union. In close connection with the program of the drive towards the East Hitler takes upon himself the protection of European civilization, of the Christian religion, of the British colonies, and other moral and material values, against Bolshevik barbarism. By assuming this crusade he hopes to obtain for Germany *the right to arm itself*. Hitler is convinced that on the scales of Great Britain the danger of German Fascism to western Europe weighs less than the danger of the Bolshevik Soviets in the East. This evaluation constitutes the most important key to the whole foreign policy of Hitler.

The most important, but not the only one. The National-Socialist dictatorship will not only play upon the contradiction between the West and the East, but also upon all the antagonisms of western Europe and there is no lack of them. In opposition to the resurrection of Austro-Hungary, Hitler pledges the special attention of Germany to the "young national states of Europe." He seeks auxiliary levers to reëstablish the European equilibrium, proposing to the small and feeble states to rally around the vanquished and not the victor. Just as in its domestic policy National-Socialism has assembled under its banner the ruined and the desperate in order all the more surely to subject them to the interests of monopoly capital, so in his foreign policy Hitler will strive to create a united front of the vanquished and the injured in order all the more pitilessly to crush them in the future under the weight of German imperialism.

If Hitler has so eagerly accepted the English plan for armaments reduction, it is only because he counted in advance and with full certainty upon its failure. He did not need to take upon himself the odious role of the grave digger of pacifist proposals; he prefers to leave that function to others. For the same reason Hitler is not niggardly with his "warm thanks" to the American President for his declaration in favor of armaments reduction. The more broadly and extensively the program of disarmament is presented before the whole world, and the more inevitably it ends in a collapse, the more incontestable will be Germany's right to rearmament. No, Hitler is not preparing to overthrow Versailles by violence—for violence one must have power! But he is counting firmly upon the prospect

that, after the failure of the British program which he "supports," England, together with Italy, will support with all their might the right of Germany to strengthen its defense against the East. . . .

The struggle for the arming of Germany on sea and on land must be based upon a definite political idea. Hitler calls it by its name: the need of "strengthening the defense *against the latent dangers of the East* is comparatively easy to motivate." Sympathy for such a program is guaranteed in advance on the part of "clear-visioned persons" in the West—obviously not in France. It is only from the standpoint of "the defense necessary for us in the East," with regard to the Baltic Sea, that England can be persuaded to accept "corrections" also in the naval paragraphs of the Versailles Treaty. For it must not be forgotten that "at the present time it is important for the future of Germany to have an attitude full of confidence towards England."

The German national movement can and should demand armament, but the German government must in no case expound this demand. To-day it must insist only and exclusively upon the disarmament of the victors. Hitler considered it self-evident that the Disarmament Conference is condemned to failure. "There would be no need at all," he wrote three months before his advent to power, "for the German delegation to participate interminably in the Geneva Disarmament comedy. It would suffice to expose clearly before the whole world the wish of France not to disarm for us thereupon to quit the Conference, stating that the peace of Versailles has been violated by the signatory powers themselves and that Germany must reserve for itself under these circumstances the drawing of the corresponding conclusions." . . .

Hitler is preparing for war. His policy in the domain of economics is dictated primarily by concern over the maximum economic independence of Germany in case of war. To the aims of military preparation must also be subordinated the service of obligatory labor. But the very character of these measures indicates that it is not a question of to-morrow. An attack upon the West in the more or less immediate future could be carried out only on condition of a military alliance between Fascist Germany and the Soviets. But it is only the most turbulent sections of the White Guard emigration that can believe in the possibility of such an absurdity or can seek to make a threat out of it. The attack against the East can take place only on condition of the support of one or several powerful states of the West. This variant is, at all events, the more likely one. But here too the preparatory period will not be measured by weeks or by months. . . .

Hitler is prepared for the next ten years not to undertake any military actions against either France or Poland. In the declaration he fixed five years as the term during which genuine equality of rights for Germany in the matter of armed forces must be accomplished. These terms need not, of course, be invested with a sacred significance. But they outline the bounds in point of time within which the leading circles of Fascism confine their plans of revenge. . . .

Europe needs a new organization. But woe betide it if this work falls into the hands of Fascism. The historian of the twenty-first century will, in that case, inevitably have to write: The epoch of the decay of Europe began with the war of 1914. Called the "war of democracy," it soon led to the domination of Fascism which became the instrument concentrating all the forces of the European nations towards the aim of "the war for liberation" from the results of the preceding war. Thus, Fascism, as the expression of the historic blind alley of Europe, was at the same time the instrument of the destruction of its economic and cultural acquisitions. Let us hope, however, that this old continent still has sufficient vital strength left to open up to itself a different historical road. ■

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BRAND YOU

Better selling through anthropology

By Thomas Frank

Advertising is a means of contributing meaning and values that are necessary and useful to people in structuring their lives, their social relationships and their rituals.

—from a British pamphlet introducing Account Planning

It is an easy thing, I admit, even in this high noon of the bull market, to scoff at the dot coms, the hedge funds, the silicon millionaires, the day traders, and all the other ephemera of prosperity. But beneath all the prodigious bubbling, counsel the wise, stands an institution as solid and reliable as U.S. Steel: the Brand. But the Brand is a complex thing, not easily understood by the earthbound and the pessimistic. Its power is not a matter of simple force, of the workery brawn celebrated in WPA murals; nor does our faith in the Brand resemble the naive patriotism of the early Cold War. The brand, correctly understood, is a relationship, a thing of nuance and complexity, of irony and coy evasiveness. We are at once skeptical of consumer culture and more ravenous consumers than ever, easily seeing through the clumsy sales pitches that convinced our parents and grandparents, and yet continuing to hum the Lite-Brite jingle to ourselves more than fifteen years after it ceased appearing on TV. Brands are special things to us Americans, interactive myths that earn our loyalty through endless repetition and constant adjustment by people of learning and subtlety.

I have spent some time in the company of those people, the individuals charged with overseeing the brand relationship. They call themselves "Account Planners," and although their field is a relatively new addition to the organizational flowcharts of Madison Avenue, Account Planning has already captured the imagination of "New Economy" enthusiasts everywhere. Its Stalinist-sounding name notwithstanding, Planning is insurrectionary stuff. Not only is it identified with the sort of places where future-envisioning "change agents" are always making heroic revolution on the old rules but its every advance hastens the achievement of full consumer democracy, that imagined free-market utopia wherein each empowered customer can make his or her voice heard in the great public agoras of shopping mall or Internet.

One of the first things I learned after arriving last July at Boston's Westin Hotel was that one did not come to gatherings of Account Planners dressed in a gray flannel suit. I had hoped to make myself inconspicuous by wearing the stereotypical adman's costume of the 1950s; I accomplished exactly the opposite. Not only were a majority of the Planners female and a good number of them British, but I appeared to be the lone square in an auditorium full of high-budget hipsters. They ha arrived at the Westin in white syr thetic T-shirts stretched tightly ove black brassieres, in those oblong spec tacles favored by European intellectu als, in hair that had been bleache bobbed, and barretted after the Ric Grrl style. The men, for their par wore four- and five-button leisure sui and sported corporate goatees an pierced noses. One group of Planne periodically donned bright red fezze another set wandered around in can ouflage. The sight of so much visibl extremeness did what it no doubt w intended to do: it threw me, in my ol solete garb, into instant and compoun self-doubt.

There were fully 750 people at th Account Planning Conference, a num ber that seemed to startle everyon The previous year's gathering was sa to have been more "radical" but dre only around 500; a year before that was an intimate affair of only 300. Pla ning has about it the air of a youth sub culture that is on the cusp of goi mainstream: It began in Britain in t corporate-revolutionary days of t 1960s and until quite recently had a tracted only a handful of America initiates. But now, as talk of revol tion once again blazes through the n tion's office blocks, even the less tune in agencies are setting up Plannir Departments, a fact that seemed vagu ly to annoy several of the younger Pla ners I spoke to. One of these actual warned me against "Fake Planners agency opportunists who know no mo about the mystery and the mission

Thomas Frank is the editor of The Baffler *and the author of* The Conquest of Cool *and the forthcoming* Businessman's Republic. *His essay "Variations on a Descending Theme" appeared in the March 1998 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

Planning than they do about Altaic verb conjugation. No one actually came right out and complained that Planning's newfound popularity in the American hinterland meant that it had lost its edge or sold out to The Man, but the feeling was difficult to miss.

What has permitted Planning to infiltrate the world of American business with so little notice, I suspect, is its name. The term "Account Planning" seems almost designed to disguise the profession as just another unremarkable component of the "Fordist" order (a term that was actually used in one Planner's presentation). But we live in an age of public skepticism and heightened sensitivity to every subtle shading of the advertising form, and it is not enough simply to dream up a pleasant-sounding jingle and a sleek-looking logo back at corporate headquarters. In a time when markets are routinely understood as the ultimate democratic form, as an almost perfectly transparent medium connecting The People with their corporations, Planners function, or believe they function, as interpreters of and advocates for the popular will. Planning thus turns out to be virtually the opposite of what its name implies. I would hear again and again over the course of the weekend how advertising people must change their ways to acknowledge the fact of market democracy, how they must abandon their various fixed ideas, how they must "talk to consumers" and initiate an "agenda-free discussion" and "let consumers direct your plan." And to assist them in uncovering the rational and emotional components of a product's Brand Essence," as one Planner's job description read (yes, with caps in the original), Planners enlist any number of audience-research techniques. I would hear about getting at the Essence of the Brand with the help of techniques such as "beeper studies," "fixed-camera analysis," "shadowing," "visual stories," brainstorming sessions with celebrities, and, of course, focus groups, which some Planners seem to invest with an almost holy significance.

Account Planning is postmodern cultural democracy come home to Madison Avenue complete with all its usual militancy against master narratives and hierarchical authority, its cheerleading for the marginalized, its breathless reverence for the wisdom of everyday people, and its claim to hear the revolutionary voice of the subaltern behind virtually any bit of mass-cultural detritus. Only one thing seems to be wrong: these enthusiastic, self-proclaimed vicars of the vox populi are also, almost to a person, paid agents of the Fortune 500.



The Planners were addressed on the first day of their conference by Gerry Laybourne, the former head of Nickelodeon and occupant of the no. 20 spot in *Fortune*'s list of the "Fifty Most Powerful Women in American Business," who was introduced as someone "known for creating incredibly profitable media brands by always putting the consumer first." A woman who confessed to having "epiphanies" during focus-group sessions and who referred to target demographics as "constituents" for whom she aimed to "make life better," Laybourne embodied Account Planning's combination of corporate power and effusive, hyper-democratic populism. Perched on a tall stool and gently prompted by the solicitous questions of a Planner associate, she described for us the bleak world of TV programming before the dawn of Laybourne, a time when her former employer "believed you should shout down a pipe" to reach your audience. At this the audience murmured scornfully: they knew it was all about listening, respect, dialogue, interactivity—and they knew what was coming next. Laybourne described the Nickelodeon focus group in which the revelation had come:

> [W]e asked kids a very innocuous question: "What do you like about being kids?" And in four different rooms, with these kids who were ten years old, we got a barrage of stuff back. "We're afraid of teenage suicide, we've heard about teenage drunk driving, we've heard about teenage pregnancy, we're terrified about growing up, our parents have us programmed, we're being hurried, we don't have a childhood."
>
> So I stopped the research and I said, "Just go in and ask them what Nickelodeon can do for them." And in all four groups: "Just give us back our childhood." . . . And that became our battle cry. That became our platform.

Now, with childhood back in the hands of its rightful owners, with access to *Rugrats* and *Bewitched* assured in perpetuity, the demographic battle lines had been drawn and fortified.

"We were clearly on the side of kids," Laybourne continued, "clearly their advocate, and we were never going to turn our backs on them."

But the work of empowerment-through-listening went on. There were other demographics to liberate, and Laybourne told the Planners how she and her new organization, Oxygen Media, were preparing to launch a new

Illustration by Christoph Niemann

"entertainment brand" for women, a segment of the population that sounded just as lovable in Laybourne's telling—as misunderstood, as monolithic, and as desperate for accurate media representation—as the kids themselves. Although the exact nature of the programming to which Laybourne's new brand was to be affixed remained mysterious throughout her talk, she did let drop that the ideal medium for it would be the Internet, which she described as a living embodiment of her notion of democracy through dialogue. Growing audibly indignant, Laybourne switched into protest mode, railing against the arrogance of those who

> think that they can put a structure on this thing. But the Internet is an organism, and they are trying to put mechanisms on top of an organism. *It won't work.* It's too powerful. Once people taste freedom—this is the United States of America, we've got that in our blood. This is a revolution that will be led by kids . . . and I hope women as well.

No revolution is complete without reactionaries, real or imagined, and so Laybourne let us know where she and her new brand drew the line, stopped listening, and started excluding—namely at Southern Baptism, which had recently made the subjection of women an official element of its credo. "I don't think that our brand is going to appeal to those Southern Baptist men," she remarked tartly. The ad execs erupted in laughter and applause.

But in the revolution against institutional hierarchy that continues to embroil the republic of business, Laybourne was a moderate and slow-moving Girondin compared with the Jacobins of the British St. Luke's agency, which had dispatched Planner Phil Teer to inspire his American comrades with tales of upheaval and progress at "the agency of the future." St. Luke's was nothing less than a syndicalist agency, its ownership shared uniformly by each employee. Teer was said to have come to advertising only after working as a critic of the tobacco industry, which bestowed upon him a credibility that not even Laybourne's focus-group epiphanies could match. His irreverent, self-effacing way of talking won the instant enthusiasm of the audience. He showed us slides that contained the word "fuckin'." He spoke in a working-class Scottish accent, which, he acknowledged, made him difficult for Americans to understand but which also demonstrated the progress of the revolution: "It used to be, a year ago, we always sent nice, middle-class, Oxford-educated, public school boys to talk at conferences for St. Luke's." Surely this was the real thing at last.

Teer did not disappoint. He passed the next hour alternately extolling the artistic idealism that burned at his agency and tersely proclaiming the slogans of the business revolution. "If we stop exploring, we'll die," he said. "Work is leisure," read one of his slides. "Transform people," insisted another, flashing on the screen while Teer told of the liberation of the admen: the story of the security guard who now "dances to jazz funk as he does his rounds," the former suit-wearing executive who is now "a shaven-headed DJ." Not only had St. Luke's freed its employees to participate in the subculture of their choice but it had also invented such boons to productivity as "hot desking," a system in which people worked wherever they wanted in the company's unstructured office. "Abolish private space, and you abolish ego," Teer proclaimed. Even agency performance reviews had been revolutionized (the chairman was reviewed by a receptionist), apparently along the lines of the criticism/self-criticism sessions once fashionable on the Maoist left. But the people of St. Luke's were less interested in smashing the state than in "killing cynicism."

Not surprisingly, the ads produced by syndicalist admen turned out to imagine the brands in question as the contested terrain of social conflict. For Ikea, St. Luke's had imagined a cultural revolution in which the women of England rise up against chintz, a symbol of the old order as loathsome as cold desks or middle-class public school boys. "Chuck out that chintz. Come on, do it today," ran the jingle, sung to acoustic guitar accompaniment. The Planners boisterously endorsed the call for People's War on chintz with waves of enthusiastic cheering.

After the Planners had talked enough chaos and revolution for one day, they descended on gleaming, polished escalators past the Palm steak restaurant, the elite pen shop, and the indoor waterfall, and were ferried by buses disguised as trolleys to the Massachusetts State House, where they were welcomed by a platoon of men dressed in Revolutionary War uniforms and ushered up to one of four or five open bars dispensing microbrews and Maker's Mark.

"*Anyone* can make an identical product," one adman told me as we relaxed in a gallery of patriotic artifacts from Boston's heroic period. "*Why* do we choose one over another?" I listened to assorted rumors about Red Spider, the mysterious Scottish Planning consultancy whose representatives had conducted an extremely exclusive all-day training session at the conference. I was told by one Planner that your company's check must clear the bank before Red Spider will even leave Scotland; by another, that Red Spider never distributes anything that has been written down; by a third, that their instruction is done in a mystical master-to-acolyte approach; by a fourth, that their instruction takes a simple fiction-writing-seminar approach; and by a fifth that in fact Red Spider *will* distribute things that are written down, it's just that the guy who was supposed to bring the written materials got sick.

Many Planners are former graduate students from the social sciences, a woman from a Chicago-area agency told me. It's "Margaret Mead meets the Marlboro Man." A man in two-tone glasses from one of the more creative New York agencies informed me that Planners are outsiders in a Peytor Place industry, both ethnically and institutionally.

"That's the *mystique* of the Swiss Army Knife," came an earnest voice from a nearby table. "Now, when you put that on a sweatshirt . . ."

For me, the most telling fact about Account Planning is that its practitioners do not speak of it as a job or a workaday division of agency labor. Planners refer to what they do—and almost universally, it seems—as "the discipline." The academic pretensions that the word carries are intentional: even casual talk at the conference, although not academic jargon per se, was often phrased so as to imply familiarity with acade

mia, with other "disciplines," with realms of learning and expertise that lay far beyond the usual narrow purviews of Madison Avenue.

A number of senior Planners, I was told, hold advanced degrees in various very sophisticated fields. One Planner related to me how "my insight on the meaning of [a brand] came from evolutionary psychology." Another compared the goings-on at his agency to the intellectual freedom and self-questioning that takes place at universities. Gerry Laybourne had told us that "this whole planning process" she was undertaking prior to launching Oxygen made her "feel like I've been in graduate school." And again and again I came across the word "ethnography," used sometimes to describe what is normally called "market research" and on other occasions as a handy, compact definition of the discipline itself.

The only bona fide Ph.D. I came across at the conference, however, was Rick Robinson, a social psychologist whose speech had introduced the Planners to E-Lab, the Chicago-based consultancy he headed. Robinson littered his talk promiscuously with juicy bits of academese. He repeatedly reminded the assembled admen of his postgraduate credentials, implied that he spoke both German and ancient Greek, read a quote from anthropologist Clifford Geertz (in which Geertz himself quotes Max Weber), and asked us not to confuse a book he wrote with a similarly titled one by Aldous Huxley. He told us about "theories of narrative behavior" and prefaced one story by remarking, "If this is Perception 101, I apologize."

In some hotel ballroom in some distant city, perhaps, Babbittesque businessmen were still inspiring one another with exhortations to think positively and with crude pep talks evolved only slightly from the half-time originals. Maybe they were still cursing the "tenured radicals" who had distracted our youth from their rightful concerns with leaders and forward passes. Here, though, the arcana of cultural studies and anthropology were exactly what the Planners had come to absorb. It was helpful to think of the brand as a myth, Robinson said, a primal tale of hero and archetype. Unfortunately, though, most brands were related to consumers haphazardly: "disparate" and "distributed" were the terms Robinson actually used, meaning that a company's 30-second commercials didn't always dovetail with consumers' actual experiences of the product in question. And so Planners, whose job it was to transform these bits and pieces into what Robinson called "a mythic whole," were sometimes forced to call in the heavy intellect to put things right.

Enter E-Lab, which, as its promotional literature puts it, "specializes in providing a deep understanding of everyday experience through a variety of innovative, ethnographic methods." Robinson described some of them for us: questioning people about products while they're actually using them, mounting cameras in stores or homes so that the ethnographers can observe exactly how we go about buying coffee or watching TV. As Robinson showed us slides from the latter operation, distorted and grainy like surveillance-camera views of convenience-store holdups, his language of benign academic understanding morphed into a language of imperial control. A brand's myth is everyday experience for consumers, he noted, and "if you can understand experience, you can *own* it."

This rather startling remark was the closest anyone at the conference would come to the sort of sales-through-domination language that was once such a standard part of advertising-industry discourse. It had now been fully forty years since Vance Packard used a bookful of such manipulative talk to send the industry into the public-relations tailspin from which it has never really recovered. In those days, advertising executives were in the habit of comparing themselves to scientists: they were "engineers of consent," as one famous title had it, masters of applied psychology who were as certain of which sales pitches worked and which didn't as the lab-coated Authorities who peopled their works. In the Sixties, and partially in response to the tidal wave of doubt whipped up by Packard's accusations, admen changed their minds: now they were artists, temperamental geniuses whose intolerance for order and hierarchy was shared by the insurgent consumers they imagined clamoring to purchase all those cars, cigarettes, and air condi-

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tioners. These days, with the media world grown as fragmented as the American demographic map, the sales fantasy du jour is anthropology.

It is important to distinguish this professional fiction of the Planners from more standard corporate anthropology: all those practical efforts to increase productivity by studying shop-floor behavior, or to avoid "insensitivity" when building a new factory in some distant clime. Those varieties of corporate anthropology require real anthropologists, formally trained scholars who, the literature on the subject warns, tend to bring all sorts of troublesome "values" to the job with them. The admen here were as much anthropologists as their forebears were scientists when they donned white lab coats and sat for the cameras before a bookcase full of Encyclopaedia Britannicas. What they had taken from anthropology was attitude alone.

And for good reason. Anthropology allows advertising to do what it does in the democratic language of sensitivity and empowerment. To understand production and consumption as "rituals" is to remove them entirely from the great sweep of history and enlightenment, to place them beyond criticism. To understand demographic groups as "tribes," and admen as sympathetic observers, is both to celebrate the relationship and to ensure that any resulting exchange takes place in a rigorously circumscribed context. The business writer Tom Peters coined the phrase "the brand called you" to describe techniques for career building; applied to advertising, the phrase acquires a much creepier significance. What the Planners are planning is, quite literally, you.

"Chaos" had been last year's planning buzzword, and this year it seemed to boast two discrete schools of elaboration. Adepts of a happy chaos foresaw opportunity everywhere, whereas those theorizing a pessimistic chaos believed that extinction lurked around every corner. Either way, Account Planning was being touted as a crucial navigating tool, a compass without which clients would either fail to profit from chaos or fail to avoid chaos's pitfalls.

Ted Nelson of the Mullen agency cleaved to the happy chaos camp. With a series of slides depicting fractals, the growth of musical genres, and a tangled landscape of strip-mall signs, he impressed upon a small audience in a hotel conference room the notion that "life is getting complicated." Clearly brands "based on consistency" were, like the master narratives invented by all those dead white males, in for some pretty rough debunkings; meanwhile, brands that dared to acknowledge and accept chaos could prosper. As Nelson got carried away with his subject, "chaos" began to sound less like an unavoidable state of affairs and more like a rosy and ultra-democratic utopia that Planners needed to work desperately to bring about. Until the day that Planning was practiced as he had counseled, Nelson warned, "the existing paradigm will not be subverted."

Others understood "chaos" differently, as something closer to "evasion" or, simply, the "cynicism" denounced by so many of the conference's dominant paradigm subverters. And confronting that evasiveness, that cynicism, that towering doubt was, ultimately, what Planners were charged with doing.

No brand had enjoyed more success over the years than Nike, with its ubiquitous swoosh and its creepy soft-totalitarian NikeTown shops in the big cities. At the same time, no brand had suffered as much for its accomplishments. In the wake of revelations about its labor practices and its unpleasant encounters with Michael Moore and *Doonesbury*, Nike had gone from signifying athletic excellence to symbolizing everything that was wrong with global capitalism: multi-millionaire athletes and starvation wages in Indonesia. So it was inevitable, perhaps, that as the Account Planning Conference drew to a close, we should all have been brought together into one room to hear two dramatic accounts of Nike's recent travails and of the heroic work of the Planners to whom the company had turned.

One day, Nike had decided to sell special shoes to skateboarders. But there was a problem. Not the obvious problem of whether or not skateboarders actually required special shoes but the problem of skater resistance. As Kell Evans-Pfeifer of the Goodby, Silver stein agency spun the tale, the problem when Nike "decided to get into th skateboarding market" was that "skate boarders did not want them there. Skateboarding, it turned out, was "a alternative culture" populated with dif ficult people who "don't really like th attention they're getting from main stream companies." The cultural tas the Planners faced was not to decid whether this hostility was deserved warranted but to liquidate it:

> [T]he objective for the advertising wa not to reach a certain sales goal bu rather it had a more basic, grass-roo task, which was that it needed to begi to start a relationship between Nike an skateboarders, and make skateboarde think that it wasn't such a bad thin that Nike was going to get involved.

Nike had wanted the agency to ru commercials featuring superstar skate doing tricks at skating arenas, but th Planners at Goodby saw through tha in an instant: the thing to do was t talk to "real" skaters, who do thei tricks on the outdoor walkways planters, and banisters of corporat America. And what the Planner found was that skaters believe tha they are the victims of a culture war a their own, that they are persecute unjustly by intolerant cops and subu ban city councils. The key to bringin skaters into the brand's fold, then, wa to transform Nike from an enemy in to a sympathizer, "to acknowledge an harness all those feelings of persecu tion." The ads that resulted asked amusingly, what it would look like other athletes were harassed and fine the way skaters so routinely are. In fo cus groups done to test the comme cials, Evans-Pfeifer told us, skate "came in completely hostile to Nik 'Nike's the man, they don't know any thing.'" But, post-viewing, "they saic 'God, man, that's totally coming fro a skater's view. That's awesome tha that's going to be out there.'" This wa a campaign with "grass-roots objec tives," she reminded us, and it ga nered "grass-roots results." The Nik 800 number, ordinarily a conduit f complaints, she said, began to receiv a shower of congratulations: skate asked for a copy of the commercia

to show during their court dates. Then she displayed the cover of the May 1998 issue of *Big Brother*, a skateboarding magazine, and proudly related to us the campaign's crowning victory: in an issue denouncing "corporate infiltration" of the subculture, the publication had singled Nike out for praise.

Pamela Scott and Diana Kapp, another team of Planners from the same agency, began their presentation by reminding us how "Nike has been stewing in a bit of negativity for the last couple of years." "We realized that there was a distance and certainly a disconnect that [young people] were experiencing with the brand," the Planners told us. Again that dread cynicism was tearing people and their brands apart! The Planners rolled up their sleeves and prepared to "address this negativity by re-injecting authenticity and credibility back into the brand." To make their advertisements effective, Scott and Kapp needed to find a sport as distant as possible from Nike's traditional advertising approach, discredited now with its excesses of money and celebrity. So they set about studying high school girls' basketball and packaging it into an elaborate pitch for the Nike brand. The two ad women told us how they embarked on an ethnographic fact-finding tour throughout the South, "inner-city Philly," and other regions where authenticity can be mined cheaply and plentifully. They narrated with the enthusiasm of a post-vacation slide show how they had encountered all manner of curious "rituals" among the girl athletes they found and how they had come across "the most unselfconscious laughter you've ever heard"; they played a recording of an exotic-sounding high school cheer and showed us black-and-white photos of serious-looking teenagers staring past the camera like Dust Bowl farmers in a Dorothea Lange picture. And then they told us how they went about putting that authenticity to work for Nike.

NCAA rules forbade the agency to film an actual high school team, so the agency invented a replica team to reenact the unsullied love of sport that the Planners had witnessed on their tour. A group of high school–age girls was duly recruited and dispatched to basketball camp, where they were assigned to "build their own relationship, their own sisterhood, that we could reflect with great authenticity on film." The squad was dubbed the Charlestown Cougars and made the subject of intentionally low-budget-looking commercials that document the team's arduous, unsung road to a fictitious state championship. The commercials stretched to push all of our authenticity buttons: the timeless black-and-white imagery, the heroic slow motion at crucial points, the unpolished voice-overs, the women's voices humming church spirituals in the background. Consumers, the duo assured us, found the authenticity convincing. We heard of Web-site hits and plaintive messages from real-life high school girls. But the campaign wasn't to be judged in terms of Nike sales alone, the adwomen insisted, for the ads were about "raising consciousness" as well. They worked not merely commercially but "to build role models for young girls." The audience of Planners erupted once more.

When I was in graduate school, it was a pedagogical given that the turn from studying the makers of culture to examining the way culture was received and experienced was a liberating development. Liberating not merely in the sense of scholarly opportunity, in that it was now permissible to study subjects that had formerly been considered unworthy; this stuff was *politically* liberating as well. Certainly the new pedagogies had all the right enemies: Southern Baptists, undersecretaries from the Reagan Administration infuriated by textbooks' failure to pay homage to national heroes, newspaper columnists angered to derangement by the parade of sin at the MLA. As the culture wars got loudly under way, what was less frequently remarked upon were the sundry ways in which the rhetoric of cultural studies mirrored the new language of market research.

Today, though, it is impossible to overlook. What we are wandering into at this *fin de siècle* is not "culture war" but a strange cultural consensus between business and its putative opponents, a consensus in which both sides agree on the obsolescence of social class and heavy industry and in which both sides shamelessly abuse the language of popular consent. It is a consensus in which even the most stridently radical of disciplines feed ever more directly into the culture industry, in which it no longer surprises anyone when Ogilvy & Mather trawl for anthropology Ph.Ds who have "no ideological or moral objections to consumption/materialism." As is the way with all such things, it is a consensus that seems impossible to resist.

Prizes distributed, conference adjourned, and several hours still before my plane back to the Midwest, I walked out of the Westin Hotel and down Newbury Street. It was eighty degrees and sunny, a great day for being seen in a public place with a Penguin Classic. I wandered past the Boston Public Library and on into the magic landscape of sunglass boutiques, Au Bon Pains, record stores and vegetarian restaurants, and the slow churn of Lexuses and BMWs. Before me lay that gorgeous parade of commerce where anthropology grad students mingled comfortably and understandingly with less enlightened shoppers, where the old conflicts were as meaningless as the heavy, oxidizing statues of abolitionists on the next avenue over.

Even the Tufts-educated barman smiled. In fact, he was ecstatic at my presence. Next year he would be moving on to the State Department, maybe, or Morgan Stanley. But this year was good enough for him. He complimented my choice of Famous Grouse over Dewar's. He meant to see to it that my Scotch-drinking experience was a peak one. Three times did the goateed counter guy at the Burger King (Boston University) inquire whether I had been provided sufficient salt. I floated down the street in my new green tie, past the Armani Exchange where the Planners in fezzes were dining at a sidewalk café, giggling and gesturing, rocking backward and upward in crescendoing paroxysms. I could feel my journalistic cynicism fall from me like the unsubtle enthusiasms of my youth, and we were all of us as one under the empowering gaze of Ronaldo, exotic of the moment, who looked hopefully down on us from the windows of NikeTown. ■

THE BRIDEGROOM

By Ha Jin

Before Beina's father died, I promised him that I'd take care of his daughter. He and I had been close friends for twenty years. He left his only child with me because my wife and I had no children of our own. It was easy to keep my word when Beina was still a teenager. As she grew older, it became more difficult, not because she was willful or troublesome but because no man was interested in her, a short, homely girl. When she turned twenty-three and still had no boyfriend, I began to worry. Where could I find her a husband? Timid and quiet, she didn't know how to get close to a man. I was afraid she'd become an old maid.

Then out of the blue Baowen Huang proposed to her. I found myself at a loss, because they'd hardly known each other. How could he be serious about his offer? I feared he might make a fool of Beina, so I insisted they get engaged if he meant business. He came to my home with two trussed-up capons, four cartons of Ginseng cigarettes, two bottles of Five Grains' Sap, and one tall tin of oolong tea. I was pleased, though not very impressed by his gifts.

Two months later they got married. My colleagues congratulated me, saying, "That was fast, Old Cheng."

What a relief to me. But to many young women in our sewing-machine factory, Beina's marriage was a slap in the face. They'd say, "A hen cooped up a peacock." Or, "A fool always lands in the arms of fortune." True, Baowen had been one of the most handsome unmarried men in the factory, and nobody had expected that Beina, stocky and stout, would win him. What's more, Baowen was good-natured and well educated—a middle-school graduate—and he didn't smoke or drink or gamble. He had fine manners and often smiled politely, showing his bright, straight teeth. In a way he resembled a woman, delicate, clear-skinned, and soft-spoken; he even could knit things out of wool. But no men dared bully him because he was skilled at martial arts. Three times in a row he had won the first prize for kung fu at our factory's annual sports meet. He was very good at the long sword and freestyle boxing. When he was in middle school, bigger boys had often picked on him, so his stepfather had sent him to the martial arts school in their hometown. A year later nobody would ever bug him again.

Sometimes I couldn't help wondering why Baowen had chosen Beina. What in her had caught his heart? Did he really like her fleshy face, which often reminded me of a globefish? Although we had our doubts, my wife and I couldn't say anything negative about the marriage. Our only concern was that Baowen might be too good for our nominal daughter. Whenever I heard that somebody had divorced, I'd feel a sudden flutter of panic.

As the head of the Security Section in the factory, I had some pull and did what I could to help the young couple. Soon after their wedding I secured them a brand-new two-bedroom apartment, which angered some people waiting in line for housing. I wasn't daunted by their criticism. I'd do almost anything to make Beina's marriage stable, because I believed that if it survived the first two years, it might last decades—once Baowen became a father, it would be difficult for him to break loose.

But after they'd been married for eight months, Beina still wasn't pregnant. I was afraid that Baowen would soon grow tired of her and run after another woman, since many young women in the factory were still attracted to him. A brazen one even declared that she'd leave her door open for him all night long. Some of them frequently offered him movie tickets and meat coupons. It seemed that they were determined to wreck Beina's marriage. I hated them, and just the thought of them would give me an earache or a sour stomach. Fortunately, Baowen hadn't yet done anything outside the bounds of a decent husband.

One morning in early November, Beina stepped into my office. "Uncle," she said in a tearful voice, "Baowen didn't come home last night."

I tried to remain calm, though my head began to swim. "Do you know where he's been?" I asked.

"I don't know. I looked for him everywhere." She licked her cracked lips and took off her green work cap, her hair in a huge bun.

"When did you see him last?"

"At dinner yesterday evening. He said he was going to see somebody. He has lots of buddies in town."

"Is that so?" I didn't know he had many friends. "Don't worry. Go back to your workshop and don't tell anybody about this. I'll call around and find him."

Ha Jin, author of two story collections and one novel, teaches at Emory University. A new novel, "Waiting," will be published by Pantheon in October.

She dragged herself out of my office. She must have gained at least a dozen pounds since the wedding. Her blue dungarees had become so tight that they seemed about to burst. Viewed from behind, she looked like a giant turnip.

I called the Rainbow Movie Theater, Victory Park, and a few restaurants in town. They all said they had not seen anyone matching Baowen's description. Before I could phone the City Library, where Baowen sometimes spent his weekends, a call came in. It was from the city's Public Security Bureau. The man on the phone said they'd detained a worker of ours named Baowen Huang. He wouldn't tell me what had happened. He just said, "Indecent activity. Come as soon as you can."

It was a cold day. As I cycled toward downtown, the shrill north wind kept flipping up the front ends of my overcoat. My knees were sore, and I couldn't help shivering. Soon my asthma tightened my throat and I began moaning. I couldn't stop cursing Baowen. "I knew it. I just knew it," I said to myself. I had sensed that sooner or later he'd seek pleasure with another woman. Now he was in the police's hands, and the whole factory would talk about him. How could Beina take this blow?

At the Public Security Bureau I was surprised to see that about a dozen officials from other factories, schools, and companies were already there. I knew most of them, who were in charge of security affairs at their workplaces. A policewoman conducted us into a conference room upstairs, where green silk curtains hung in the windows. We sat down around a long mahogany table and waited to be briefed about the case. The glass tabletop was brand new, its edge still sharp. I saw worry and confusion on the other men's faces. I figured Baowen must have been involved in an organized crime—either an orgy or a gang rape. On second thought I felt he couldn't have been a rapist; by nature he was kindhearted, very gentle. I hoped this was not a political case, which would be absolutely unpardonable. Six or seven years ago a half-wit and a high school graduate had started an association in our city, named the China Liberation Party, which had later recruited nine members. Although the sparrow is small it has a complete set of organs—their party elected a chairman, a secretary, and even a prime minister. But before they could print their manifesto, which expressed their intention to overthrow the government, the police rounded them up. Two of the top leaders were executed, and the rest of the members were jailed.

As I was wondering about the nature of Baowen's crime, a middle-aged man came in. He had a solemn face, and his eyes were half-closed. He took off his dark-blue tunic, hung it on the back of a chair, and sat down at the end of the table. I recognized him; he was Chief Miao of the Investigation Department. Wearing a sheepskin jerkin, he somehow reminded me of Genghis Khan, thick-boned and round-faced. His hooded eyes were shrewd, though they looked sleepy. Without any opening remarks he declared that we had a case of homosexuality on our hands. At that, the room turned noisy. We'd heard of the term but didn't know what it meant exactly. Seeing many of us puzzled, Chief Miao explained, "It's a social disease, like gambling, or prostitution, or syphilis." He kept on squirming as if itchy with hemorrhoids.

A young man from the city's Fifth Middle School raised his hand. He asked, "What do homosexuals do?"

Miao smiled and his eyes almost disappeared. He said, "People of the same sex have a sexual relationship."

"Sodomy!" cried someone.

The room turned quiet for at least ten seconds. Then somebody asked what kind of crime this was.

Chief Miao explained, "Homosexuality originated from Western capitalism and bourgeois lifestyle. According to our law it's dealt with as a kind of hooliganism. Therefore every one of the men we arrested will serve a sentence, from six months to five years, depending on the severity of his crime and his attitude toward it."

A truck blew its horn on the street and made my heart twinge. If Baowen went to prison, Beina would live like a widow, unless she divorced him. Why had he married her to begin with? Why did he ruin her this way?

What had happened was that a group of men, mostly clerks, artists, and schoolteachers, had formed a club called Men's World, a salon of sorts. Every Thursday evening they'd met in a large room on the third floor of the office building of the Forestry Institute. Since the club admitted only men, the police suspected that it might be a secret association with a leaning



DON COLE

Fluttering, 1985. Painting by Zhou Tianming, embroidered by Shen Xiaoping and others, lent by the Suzhou Embroidery Research Institute. From the exhibit "Threads of Light: Chinese Embroidery from Suzhou and the Photography of Robert Glenn Ketchum," on view at the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History through September 5.

toward violence, so they assigned two detectives to mix with the group. True, some of the men appeared to be intimate with each other in the club, but most of the time they talked about movies, books, and current events. Occasionally music was played, and they danced together. According to the detectives' account, it was a bizarre, emotional scene. A few men appeared in pairs, unashamed of necking and cuddling in the presence of others, and some would say with tears, "At last we men have a place for ourselves." A middle-aged painter wearing earrings exclaimed, "Now I feel alive! Only in here can I stop living in hypocrisy." Every week two or three new faces would show up. When the club grew close to the size of thirty men, the police took action and arrested them all.

After Chief Miao's briefing, we were allowed to meet with the criminals for fifteen minutes. A policeman led me into a small room in the basement and let me read Baowen's confession while he went to fetch him. I glanced through the four pages of interrogation notes, which stated that Baowen had been new to the club and that he'd joined them only twice, mainly because he was interested in their talks. Yet he didn't deny that he was a homosexual.

The room smelled of urine, since it was next to a bathroom. The policeman took Baowen in and ordered him to sit opposite me at the table. Baowen, in handcuffs, avoided looking at me. His face was bloated, covered with bruises. A broad welt left by a baton, about four inches long, slanted across his forehead. The collar of his jacket was torn open. Yet he didn't appear frightened. His calm manner angered me, though I felt sorry for him.

I kept a hard face and said, "Baowen, do you know you committed a crime?"

"I didn't do anything. I just went there to listen to them talk."

"You mean you didn't do that thing with any man?" I wanted to make sure so that I could help him.

He looked at me, then lowered his eyes, saying, "I might've done something, to be honest, but I didn't."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"I—I liked a man in the club, a lot. If he'd asked me, I might've agreed." His lips curled upward as if he prided himself on what he had said.

"You're sick!" I struck the table with my knuckles.

To my surprise, he said, "So? I'm a sick man. You think I don't know that?"

I was bewildered. He went on, "Years ago I tried everything to cure myself. I took a lot of herbs and boluses, and even ate baked scorpions, lizards, and toads. Nothing helped me. Still I'm fond of men. I don't know why I'm not interested in women. Whenever I'm with a woman my heart is as calm as a stone."

Outraged by his confession, I asked, "Then why did you marry my Beina? To make fun of her, eh? To throw mud in my face?"

"How could I be that mean? Before we got married, I told her I didn't like women and might not give her a baby."

"She believed you?"

"Yes. She said she wouldn't mind. She just wanted a husband."

"She's an idiot!" I unfolded my hanky and blew my clogged nose into it, then asked, "Why did you choose her if you had no feelings for her at all?"

"What was the difference? For me she was similar to other women."

"You're a scoundrel!"

"If I didn't marry her, who would? The marriage helped us both, covering me and saving face for her. Besides, we could have a good apartment—a home. You see, I tried living like a normal man. I've never been mean to Beina."

"But the marriage is a fake! You lied to your mother too, didn't you?"

"She wanted me to marry."

The policeman signaled that our meeting was over. In spite of my anger, I told Baowen that I'd see what I could do, and that he'd better cooperate with the police and show a sincere attitude.

What should I do? I was sick of him, but he belonged to my family, at least in name, and I was obligated to help him.

On the way home I pedaled slowly, my mind heavy with thoughts. Gradually I realized that I might be able to do something to prevent him from going to jail. There were two steps I could take: first, I would maintain that he had done nothing in the club, so as to isolate him from those real criminals; second, I would present him as a sick man, so that he might receive medical treatment instead of a prison term. Once he became a criminal, he'd b marked forever as an enemy of society no longer redeemable. Even his chil dren might suffer. I ough to save him.

Fortunately both the Party secre tary and the director of our factor were willing to accept Baowen as sick man, particularly Secretary Zhu who liked Baowen's kung-fu style an had once let him teach his younge son how to use a three-section cudge Zhu suggested we make an effort t rescue Baowen from the police. H said to me in the men's room inside ou office building, "Old Cheng, we mus not let Baowen end up in prison." was grateful for his words.

All of a sudden homosexuality be came a popular topic in the factory. A few old workers said that some actors o the Beijing opera had slept together a lovers in the old days, because no wom en were allowed to perform in an troupe and the actors could spend tim with men only. Secretary Zhu, wh was well read, said that some emperor in the Han Dynasty had owned mal lovers in addition to their large harem Director Liu had heard that the las emperor, Puyi, had often ordered his eu nuchs to suck his penis and caress h testicles. Someone even claimed tha homosexuality was an upper-class thing not something for ordinary people. A the talk sickened me. I felt ashame of my nominal son-in-law. I wouldn join them in talking and just listened pretending I wasn't bothered.

As I expected, rumors went wild i the factory, especially in the foundr shop. Some people said Baowen wa impotent. Some believed he was a he maphrodite, otherwise his wif would've been pregnant long ago.

To console Beina, I went to see h one evening. She had a pleasant hom in which everything was in order. Tw bookcases, filled with industrial man uals, biographies, novels, and medic books, stood against the whitewashe wall, on either side of the window. I one corner of the living room was coat tree on which hung the red feath er parka Baowen had bought her befo their wedding, and in another corn sat a floor lamp. At the opposite end the room two pots of blooming flowe one of cyclamens and the other of Be

gal roses, were placed on a pair of low stools kept at an equal distance from each other and from the walls on both sides. Near the inner wall, beside a yellow enamel spittoon, was a large sofa upholstered in orange imitation leather. A black-and-white TV perched on an oak chest against the outer wall.

I was impressed, especially by the floor inlaid with bricks and coated with bright red paint. Even my wife couldn't keep a home so neat. No doubt it was Baowen's work, because Beina couldn't be so tidy. Already the room showed the trace of her sloppy habits—in a corner were scattered an empty flour sack and a pile of soiled laundry. Sipping the tea she had poured me, I said, "Beina, I'm sorry about Baowen. I didn't know he was so bad."

"No, he's a good man." Her round eyes looked at me with a steady light.

"Why do you say that?"

"He's been good to me."

"But he can't be a good husband, can he?"

"What do you mean?"

I said bluntly, "He didn't go to bed with you very often, did he?"

"Oh, he can't do that because he practices kung fu. He said if he slept with a woman, all his many years' work would be gone. From the very beginning his master told him to avoid women."

"So you don't mind?" I was puzzled, saying to myself, What a stupid girl.

"Not really."

"But you two must've shared the bed a couple of times, haven't you?"

"No, we haven't."

"Really? Not even once?"

"No." She blushed a little and looked away, twisting her earlobe with her fingertips.

My head was reeling. After eight months' marriage she was still a virgin! And she didn't mind! I lifted the cup and took a large gulp of the jasmine tea.

A lull settled in. We both turned to watch the evening news; my numb mind couldn't take in what the anchorwoman said about a border skirmish between Vietnamese and Chinese troops.

A moment later I told Beina, "I'm sorry he has such a problem. If only we had known."

"Don't feel so bad, Uncle. In fact he's better than a normal man."

Getting to No

Here at The Baffler literary magazine we've grown a little weary of this age of ringing, singing affirmation of Mammon worship and consensus unquestionable. Baffler readers aren't excited to hear another encomium to the "new economy" or to read yet another installment in the gospel according to NASDAQ.

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NOTES FOR "THE 1 ACROSS":

The unclued Across entries are colleges in the IVY LEAGUE *(the letters in the circles); the unclued Down entries are their respective newspapers:* YALE DAILY NEWS, BROWN HERALD, CORNELL SUN, HARVARD CRIMSON, PENN PENNSYLVANIAN, COLUMBIA SPECTATOR, PRINCETON PRINCETONIAN. *Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).*

ACROSS: 8. f(urbys)-ad-s(eason); 12. re-aper; 14. *; 18. no(rev.)-ons; 20. can-go-c.(rev.); 24. T-wiggy; 25. eras-Ed (EdTV); 29. tene(men)t; 30. re(b.)el; 31. *; 34. two mngs.; 37. C-r.-one; 38. idea-lists; 44. i-din (rev.); 45. *; 47. homonym; 48. *; 49. two mngs.; 51. en-try.

DOWN: 2. Pan(or)ama; 3. E.-suer (rev.); 4. (Mimi)cry; 5. homonym; 7. *; 8. f(vigor*)e; 9. hidden; 10. rev.; 15. (s)poor; 19. lo(rev.)-den; 21. a-gree(n); 23. thereto(rt.); 27. *; 28. sp(out)ed; 29. two mngs.; 30. two mngs. (pun); 35. we-eds; 39. two mngs. (pun); 40. pun; 41. homonym, Jean; 42. two mngs. (pun); 43. homonym; 46. hidden.

[illegible]o?"

Most men can't stay away from pretty women, but Baowen just likes to have a few buddies. What's wrong with that? It's better this way, 'cause I don't have to worry about those shameless bitches in our factory. He won't bother to give them a look. He'll never have a lifestyle problem."

I almost laughed, wondering how I should explain to her that he could have a sexual relationship with a man and that he'd been detained precisely because of a lifestyle problem. On second thought I realized it might be better for her to continue to think that way. She didn't need more stress at the moment.

Then we talked about how to help Baowen. I told her to write a report, emphasizing what a good, considerate husband he'd been. Of course she must not mention his celibacy in their marriage. Also, from now on, however vicious her fellow workers' remarks were, she should ignore them and never talk back, as if she'd heard nothing.

That night when I told my wife about Beina's silly notions, she smiled, saying, "Compared with most men, Baowen isn't too bad. Beina's not a fool."

I begged Chief Miao and a high-ranking officer to treat Baowen leniently and even gave each of them two bottles of brandy and a coupon for a Butterfly sewing machine. They seemed willing to help but wouldn't promise me anything. For days I was so anxious that my wife was afraid my ulcer might recur.

One morning the Public Security Bureau called, saying they had accepted our factory's proposal and would have Baowen transferred to the mental hospital in a western suburb, provided our factory agreed to pay for his hospitalization. I accepted the offer readily, feeling relieved. Later, I learned that there wasn't enough space in the city's prison for twenty-seven gay men, who couldn't be mixed with other inmates and had to be put in solitary cells. So only four of them were jailed; the rest were either hospitalized (if their work units agreed to pay for the medical expenses) or sent to some labor farms to be reformed. The two Party members among them didn't go to jail, though they were expelled from the Party, a very severe punishment that ended their political lives.

The moment I put down the phone, I hurried to the assembly shop and found Beina. She broke into tears at the good news. She ran back home and filled a duffel bag with Baowen's clothes. We met at my office, then together set out for the Public Security Bureau. I rode my bicycle while she sat behind me, embracing the duffel as if it were a baby. With a strong tailwind, the cycling was easy and fast, so we arrived before Baowen left for the hospital. He was waiting for a van in front of the Police Station, accompanied by two policemen.

The bruises on his face had healed, so he looked handsome again. He smiled at us and said rather secretively, "I want to ask you a favor." He rolled his eyes as the dark-green van rounded the street corner, coming toward us.

"What?" I said.

"Don't let my mother know the truth. She's too old to take it. Don't tell her, please!"

"What should we say to her then?" I asked.

"Just say I have a temporary mental disorder."

Beina couldn't hold back her tears anymore, saying loudly, "Don't worry. We won't let her know. Take care of yourself and come back soon." She handed him the duffel, which he took without a word.

I nodded to assure him that I wouldn't reveal the truth. He smiled at her, then at me. For some reason his face turned rather sweet—charming and enticing, as though it were a mysterious female face. I blinked my eyes and wondered if he was really a man. It flashed through my mind that if he were a woman he could've been a beauty—tall, slim, muscular, and slightly languid.

My thoughts were cut short by a metallic screech as the van stopped in front of us. Baowen climbed into it; so did the policemen. I walked around the van, and shook his hand, saying that I'd visit him the next week and that meanwhile, if he needed anything, just to give me a ring.

We waved good-bye as the van drew away, its tire chains clattering and flinging up bits of snow. After a blasting toot, it turned left and disappeared from the icy street. I got on my bicycle as a gust of wind blew up and almost threw me down. Beina followed me for about twenty yards, then leaped on the carrier, and together we headed home. She was so heavy. Thank heaven, I was riding a Great Golden Deer, one of the sturdiest makes.

During the following week I heard from Baowen once. He said on the phone that he felt better now and less agitated. Indeed his voice sounded calm and smooth. He asked me to bring him a few books when I came, specifically his *Dictionary of Universal Knowledge*, which was a hefty, rare book translated from the Russian in the late Fifties. I had no idea how he had come by it.

I went to see him on Thursday morning. The hospital was on a mountain, six miles southwest of Muji City. As I was cycling on the asphalt road, a few tall smokestacks fumed lazily beyond the larch woods in the west. To my right the power lines along the roadside curved, heavy with fluffy snow, which would drop in little chunks whenever the wind blew across them. Now and then I overtook a horse cart loaded with earless sheaves of wheat, followed by one or two foals. After I pedaled across a stone bridge and turned into the mouth of a valley, a group of brick buildings emerged on a gentle slope, connected with one another by straight cement paths. Farther up the hill, past the buildings, there was a cow pen, in which about two dozen milk cows were grazing on dry grass while a few others huddled together to keep warm.

It was so peaceful here that if you hadn't known this was a mental hospital, you might have imagined it was a sanatorium for ranking officials. Entering Building 9, I was stopped by a guard, who then took me to Baowen's room on the ground floor. It happened that the doctor on duty, a tall fortyish man with tapering fingers, was making the morning rounds and examining Baowen. He shook hands with me and said that my son-in-law was doing fine. His surname was Mai; his whiskered face looked very intelligent. When he turned to give a male nurse instructions about Baowen's treatment, I noticed an enormous wart in his ear al-

most blocking the ear hole like a hearing aid. In a way he looked like a foreigner. I wondered if he had some Mongolian or Tibetan blood.

"We give him the electric bath," Doctor Mai said to me a moment later.

"What?" I asked, wincing.

"We treat him with the electric bath."

I turned to Baowen. "How is it?"

"It's good, really soothing." He smiled, but there was a churlish look in his eyes, and his mouth tightened.

The nurse was ready to take him for the treatment. Never having heard of such a bath, I asked Doctor Mai, "Can I see how it works?"

"All right, you may go with them."

Together we climbed the stairs to the second floor. There was another reason for me to join them. I wanted to find out whether Baowen was a normal man. The rumors in our factory had gotten on my nerves, particularly the one that said he had no penis—that was why he had always avoided bathing in the workers' bathhouse.

After taking off our shoes and putting on plastic slippers, we entered a small room that had pea-green walls and a parquet floor. At its center lay a porcelain bathtub, as ghastly as an apparatus of torture. Affixed along the interior wall of the tub were rectangles of black perforated metal. Three thick rubber cords connected them to a tall machine standing by the wall. A control board full of buttons, gauges, and switches slanted atop the machine. The young nurse, burly and square-faced, turned on the faucet; steaming water began to tumble into the tub. Then he went over to operate the machine. He seemed good-natured; his name was Fuhai Dong. He said he came from the countryside, apparently of peasant stock, and had graduated from Jilin Nursing School.

Baowen smiled at me while unbuttoning his zebra-striped hospital robe. He looked fine now—all the bruises had disappeared from his face, which had become pinkish and smooth. I was scared by the tub. It seemed suitable for electrocuting a criminal. However sick I was, I wouldn't lie in it with my back resting against that metal groove. What if there was an electricity leak?

"Does it hurt?" I asked Baowen.

You deserve a factual look at...

"The Arabs of Israel"

Are they a "persecuted minority?"

The world is much focused on the developments in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza Strip, in which, for the most part, Israel has relinquished sovereignty and authority to the Palestinian Authority (P.A.). Ninety-eight percent of the Arabs in these territories live now under the rule of the P.A. There is some question whether or not they are better off than before. But many believe that Arabs in Israel itself are a "persecuted minority."

What are the facts?

Israel is a Democratic Country. Israel is an open, pluralistic, and egalitarian society. Different religions, cultures, and social traditions coexist. Protection of such diversity is embedded in Israel's traditions and confirmed by the government. About 20% of the population (over one million people) are non-Jews, most of them Arabs, and some Druze. Like all other Israeli citizens, they have full rights to vote and to hold elective office. Both Arabs and Druze hold seats the Knesset, the Israeli parliament. Every Knesset, since the founding of the State in 1948, has had Arab and Druze members. All transactions in the Knesset are simultaneously translated into Arabic, and Arab members may address the Knesset in Arabic.

"Contrary to propaganda...the Arabs in Israel enjoy every civil right and have the same status under law as Jewish Israelis."

It is official policy of the Israeli government to foster the language, culture, and traditions of the Arab minority, in the educational system and in daily life. Arabic is an official language in Israel, together with Hebrew. Israel's Arabic press is the most vibrant and independent of any country in the region. There are more than 20 Arabic periodicals. They publish what they please, subject only to the same military censorship as Jewish publications. There are daily TV and radio programs in Arabic. Arabic is taught in Jewish secondary schools. Israeli universities are renowned centers of learning in the history and literature of the Arab Middle East.

Education and literacy of the Arab population in Israel is as high as and probably higher than in any Arab country. The literacy rate among Israeli Arabs is 95%, virtually the same as for Israeli Jews. there are close to 1,000 Arab educational institutions in Israel, with about 300,000 students—just about 25 times as many as in 1948, when the State of Israel was created. Ninety percent of Arab children attend school, probably the highest ratio of any Arab population anywhere. Israeli universities and technical institutions are freely available to the Arabs. About 5,000 Arab students attend such schools.

Israeli Arabs Enjoy Full Equality in Law and in Fact. All religious communities in Israel enjoy the full protection of the State. Israeli Arabs—Moslems, as well as many Christian denominations—are free to exercise their faiths, to observe their own weekly day of rest and holidays, and to administer their own internal affairs. Each community has its own religious councils and courts, and has full jurisdiction over religious affairs, including matters of personal status, such as marriage and divorce. The holy sites of all religions are administered by their own authorities and protected by the government. In contrast to the non-Israeli Arab world, Arab women in Israel enjoy the same status as men. Israeli law grants women equal rights, including the right to vote and to be elected to public office, prohibits polygamy, child marriage, and the barbarity of female sexual mutilation. It has thus vastly changed the status of women, to far above that of any country in the region. Israeli health standards are by far the highest in the Middle East. Israeli health institutions are freely open to all Arabs, on the same basis as they are to Jews.

There is, however, one difference between the "rights" of Arabs and Jews in Israel. Israeli and Druze men are required to do three years of military service and then serve one month every year until they are 50. Arabs are exempted from military duty and are not required to perform any compensating civilian service. Since the surrounding Arab states, with the exceptions of Egypt and recently of Jordan, are the avowed enemies of Israel and are dedicated to its destruction, this exemption is granted by the Israeli government to its Arab citizens, so as to spare them conflicts of loyalty and conscience.

Contrary to propaganda and to what many believe, the Arabs in Israel are full-fledged citizens, enjoy every civil right, and have the same status in law as Jewish Israelis. In summary, they enjoy the highest standards of living and liberty of any Arabs in the Middle East. It is instructive and sobering to compare the condition of the approximately one million Arabs in Israel with that of the pitiful remnants of Jewry in Arab countries. Jews have been living in Arab countries for almost 2,000 years. Under Arab dominance, they were always third-class citizens and subject to harassment and persecution. There were about 900,000 Jews in Arab countries in 1946—now there are fewer than 25,000. But there are now over one million Arabs in Israel, as against 150,000 in 1948—an almost seven-fold increase. These figures alone would seem to prove that things can't be all that bad for Arabs in Israel.

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8b

He went behind a khaki screen in a corner and began taking off his clothes. When the water half filled the tub, the nurse took a small bag of white powder out of a drawer, cut it open with scissors, and poured the stuff into the water. It must have been salt. He tucked up his shirt sleeves and bent double to agitate the solution with both hands, which were large and sinewy.

To my dismay, Baowen came out in a clean pair of shorts. Without hesitation he got into the tub and lay down, just as one would enter a lukewarm bathing pool. I was amazed. "Have you given him electricity yet?" I asked Nurse Dong.

"Yes, a little. I'll increase it by and by." He turned to the machine and adjusted a few buttons.

"You know," he said to me, "your son-in-law is a very good patient, always cooperative."

"He should be."

"That's why we give him the bath. Other patients get electric cuffs around their limbs or electric rods on their bodies. Some of them scream like animals every time. We have to tie them up."

"When will he be cured?"

"I'm not sure."

Baowen was noiseless in the electrified water, with his eyes shut and his head resting on a black rubber pad at the end of the tub. He looked fine, rather relaxed.

I drew up a chair and sat down. Baowen seemed reluctant to talk, concentrating on the treatment, so I remained silent, observing him. His body was wiry, his legs hairless, and the front of his shorts bulged quite a bit. He looked all right physically. Once in a while he breathed a feeble sigh.

As the nurse increased the electric current, Baowen began to squirm in the tub as if smarting from something. "Are you all right?" I asked and dared not touch him.

"Yeah."

He kept his eyes shut. Glistening beads of sweat gathered on his forehead. He looked pale, his lips curling now and again as though he were thirsty.

Then the nurse gave him more electricity. Baowen began writhing and moaning a little. Obviously he was suffering. This bath couldn't be as soothing as he'd claimed. With a white towel Nurse Dong wiped the sweat off Baowen's face and whispered, "I'll turn it down in a few minutes."

"No, give me more!" Baowen said resolutely without opening his eyes, his face twisted.

I felt as though he was ashamed of himself. Perhaps my presence made this section of the treatment more uncomfortable to him. His hands gripped the rim of the tub, the arched wrists trembling. For a good three minutes nobody said a word; the room was so quiet that its walls seemed to be ringing.

As the nurse gradually reduced the electricity, Baowen calmed down. His toes stopped wiggling.

Not wanting to bother him further with my presence, I went out to look for Doctor Mai, to thank him and find out when Baowen could be cured. The doctor was not in his office, so I walked out of the building for a breath of air. The sun was high and the snow blazingly white. Once outside, I had to close my eyes for a minute to adjust them. I then sat down on a bench and lit a cigarette. A young woman in an ermine hat and army mittens passed by, holding an empty milk pail and humming the song "Comrade, Please Have a Cup of Tea." She looked handsome, and her crisp voice pleased me. I gazed at the pair of thick braids behind her, which swayed a little in the wind.

My heart was full of pity for Baowen. He was such a fine young man that he ought to be able to love a woman, have a family, and enjoy a normal life.

Twenty minutes later I rejoined him in his room. He looked tired, still shivering a little. He told me that as the electric currents increased, his skin had begun prickling as though stung by hundreds of mosquitoes. That was why he couldn't stay in the tub for longer than half an hour.

I felt for him and said, "I'll tell our leaders how sincere your attitude is and how cooperative you are."

"Oh sure." He tilted his damp head. "Thanks for bringing the books."

"Do you need something else?"

"No." He sounded sad.

"Baowen, I hope you can come home before the New Year. Beina needs you."

"I know. I don't want to be locked up here forever."

I told him that Beina had written to his mother, saying he'd been away on a business trip. Then the bell for lunch rang in the building, and outside the loudspeaker began broadcasting the fiery music of "March of the Volunteers." Nurse Dong walked in with a pair of chopsticks and a plate containing two corn buns. He said cheerily to Baowen, "I'll bring you the dish in a minute. We have tofu stewed with sauerkraut today, also bean sprout soup."

I stood up and took my leave.

When I reported Baowen's condition to the factory leaders, they seemed impressed. The term "electric bath" must have given their imagination free rein. Secretary Zhu kept shaking his head and said, "I'm sorry Baowen has to go through such a thing."

I didn't explain that the electric bath was a treatment less severe than the other kinds, nor did I describe what the bath was like. I just said, "They steep him in electrified water every day." Let the terror seize their brains, I thought, so that they might be more sympathetic to Baowen when he is discharged from the hospital.

It was mid-December, and Baowen had been in the hospital for a month already. For days Beina went on saying that she wanted to see how her husband was doing; she was eager to take him home before the New Year. Among her fellow workers rumors persisted. One said the electric bath had blistered Baowen; another claimed that his genitals had been shriveled up by the treatment; another added that he had become a vegetarian, nauseated at the mere sight of meat. The young woman who had once declared she'd leave her door open for him had just married and proudly told everybody she was pregnant. People began to be kind and considerate to Beina, treating her like an abused wife. The leaders of the assembly shop assigned her only the daytime shift. I was pleased that Finance still paid Baowen his wages as though he were on sick leave. Perhaps they did this because they didn't want to upset me.

On Saturday Beina and I went to the mental hospital. She couldn't pedal, and it was too far for me to carry her on my bicycle, so we took the bus. She had been there by herself two weeks ago to deliver some socks and a pair of woolen pajamas she'd knitted for Baowen.

We arrived at the hospital early in the afternoon. Baowen looked healthy, in good spirits. It seemed that the bath had helped him. He was happy to see Beina and even cuddled her in my presence. He gave her two toffees; knowing I disliked candies, he didn't give me one. He poured a large mug of malted milk for both of us, since there was only one mug in the room. I didn't touch the milk, unsure whether homosexuality was communicable. I was glad to see that he treated his wife well. He took a genuine interest in what she said about their comrades in our factory, and now and then laughed heartily. What a wonderful husband he could have been if he were not sick.

Having sat with the couple for a few minutes, I left so that they could be alone. I went to the Nurses' Office upstairs and found Fuhai Dong writing at a desk. The door was open, and I knocked on its frame. Startled, he closed his brown notebook and stood up.

"I didn't mean to scare you," I said.

"No, Uncle, I just didn't expect anyone to come up here."

I took a carton of Peony cigarettes out of my bag and put it on the desk, saying, "I won't take too much of your time, young man. Please keep this as a token of my regards." I didn't mean to bribe him. I was sincerely grateful to him for treating Baowen well.

"Oh, don't give me this please."

"You don't smoke?"

"I do. Tell you what, give it to Doctor Mai. He'll help Baowen more."

I was puzzled. Why didn't he want the top-quality cigarettes if he smoked? Seeing that I was confused, he went on, "I'll be nice to Baowen without any gift from you. He's a good man. It's the doctor's wheels that you should grease."

"I have another carton for him."

"One carton's nothing here. You should give him at least two."

I was moved by his words, thanked him, and said good-bye.

Doctor Mai happened to be in his office. When I walked in, he was reading the current issue of *Women's Life*, whose back cover carried a large photo of Madame Mao on trial—she wore black and stood, handcuffed, between two young policewomen. Doctor Mai put the magazine aside and asked me to sit down. In the room, tall shelves, loaded with books and files, lined the walls. A smell of rotten fruit hung in there. He seemed pleased to see me.

After we exchanged a few words, I took out both cartons of cigarettes and handed them to him. "This is just a small token of my gratitude, for the New Year," I said.

He took the cigarettes and put them away under his desk. "Thanks a lot," he whispered.

"Doctor Mai, do you think Baowen will be cured before the holiday?" I asked.

"What did you say? Cured?" He looked surprised.

"Yes."

He shook his head slowly, then turned to check that the door was shut. He motioned me to move closer. I pulled the chair forward a little and rested my forearms on the edge of his Bakelite desktop.

"To be honest, there's no cure," he said.

"What?"

"Homosexuality isn't an illness, so it has no cure. Don't tell anyone I said this."

"Then why torture Baowen like that?"

"The police sent him here and we couldn't refuse. Besides, we ought to make him feel better and hopeful."

"So it isn't a disease?"

"Unfortunately no. Let me say this again: there's no cure for your son-in-law, Old Cheng. It's not a disease. It's just a sexual preference; it may be congenital, like being left-handed. Got it?"

"Then why give him the electric bath?" Still I wasn't convinced.

"Electrotherapy is prescribed by the book—a standard treatment required by the Department of Public Health. I have no choice but to follow the regulations. That's why I didn't give him any of those harsher treatments. The bath is very mild by comparison. You see, I've done everything in my power to help him. Let me tell you another fact: according to the statistics, so far electrotherapy has cured only one out of a thousand homosexuals. I bet cod liver oil, or chocolate, or fried pork, anything, could produce a better result. All right, enough of this. I've talked too much."

At last his words sank in. For a good while I sat there motionless with a numb mind. A flock of sparrows were flitting about in the naked branches outside the window, chasing the one that held a tiny ear of millet in its bill. Another of them dragged a yellow string tied around its leg, unable to fly as nimbly as the others. I rose to my feet and thanked the doctor for his candid words. He stubbed out his cigarette in the ashtray on the windowsill and said, "I'll take special care of your son-in-law. Don't worry."

I rejoined Beina downstairs. Baowen looked quite cheerful, and it seemed they'd had a good time. He said to me, "If I can't come home soon, don't try too hard to get me out. They won't keep me here forever."

"I'll see what I can do."

In my heart I was exasperated, because if Doctor Mai's words were true, there'd be little I could do for Baowen. If homosexuality wasn't a disease, why had he felt sick and tried to have himself cured? Had he been shamming? It was unlikely.

Beina had been busy cleaning their home since her last visit to the hospital. She bought two young drakes and planned to make drunk duck, a dish she said Baowen liked best. My heart was heavy. On the one hand, I'd have loved to have him back for the holiday; on the other hand, I was unsure what would happen if his condition hadn't improved. I dared not reveal my thoughts to anybody, not even to my wife, who had a big mouth. Because of her, the whole factory knew that Beina was still a virgin, and some people called her the Virgin Bride.

For days I pondered what to do. I was confused. Everybody thought homosexuality was a disease except for Doctor Mai, whose opinion I dared not mention to others. The factory leaders would be mad at me if they knew there was no cure for homosexuality. We had already spent over three thousand yuan on Baowen. I kept questioning in my mind, If homosexuality

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is a natural thing, then why are there men and women? Why can't two men get married and make a baby? Why didn't nature give men another hole? I was beset by doubts. If only I could have seen a trustworthy doctor for a second opinion. If only there were a knowledgeable, honest friend I could have talked with.

I hadn't yet made up my mind about what to do when Chief Miao called from the Public Security Bureau five days before the holiday. He informed me that Baowen had repeated his crime, so the police had taken him out of the hospital and sent him to the prison in Tangyuan County. "This time he did it," said the chief.

"Impossible!" I cried.

"We have evidence and witnesses. He doesn't deny it himself."

"Oh." I didn't know how to continue.

"He has to be incarcerated now."

"Are you sure he's not a hermaphrodite?" I mentioned that as a last resort.

Miao chuckled drily. "No, he's not. We had him checked. Physically he's a man, healthy and normal. Obviously it's a mental, moral disease, like an addiction to opium."

Putting down the phone, I felt dizzy, cursing Baowen for having totally ruined himself. What had happened was that he and Fuhai Dong had developed a relationship secretly. The nurse often gave him a double amount of meat or fish at dinner. Baowen, in return, unraveled his woolen pajamas and knitted Dong a pullover with the wool. One evening when they were lying in each other's arms in the Nurses' Office, an old cleaner passed by in the corridor and coughed. Fuhai Dong was terrified and convinced that the man had seen what they had been doing. For days, however hard Baowen tried to talk him out of his conviction, Dong wouldn't change his mind, blaming Baowen for having misled him. He said that the old cleaner often smiled at him meaningfully and would definitely turn them in. Finally Fuhai Dong went to the hospital leaders and confessed everything. So unlike Baowen, who got three and a half years in jail, Nurse Dong was merely put on probation; if he worked harder and criticized himself well, he might keep his current job.

That evening I went to tell Beina about the new development. As I was talking, she sobbed continually. Although she'd been cleaning the apartment for several days, her home was in shambles, most of the flowers half-dead, and dishes and pots piled in the sink. Mopping her face with a pink towel, she asked me, "What should I tell my mother-in-law?"

"Tell her the truth."

She made no response. I said again, "You should consider a divorce."

"No!" Her sobbing turned into wailing. "He—he's my husband and I'm his wife. If I die my soul belongs to him. We've sworn never to leave each other. Let others say whatever they want, I know he's a good man."

"Then why did he go to bed with a guy?"

"He just wanted to have a good time. That was all. It's nothing like adultery or bigamy, is it?"

"But it's a crime that got him into jail," I said. Although in my heart I admitted that Baowen in every way was a good fellow except for his fondness for men, I had to be adamant about my position. I was in charge of security for our factory; if I had a criminal son-in-law, who would listen to me? Wouldn't I be removed from my office soon? If I lost my job, who could protect Beina? Sooner or later she would be laid off, since a criminal's wife was not supposed to have the same opportunities for employment as others. Beina remained silent; I asked again, "What are you going to do?"

"Wait for him."

I took a few spiced pumpkin seeds from a bowl, stood up, and went over to the window. Under the sill the radiator was hissing softly with a tiny steam leak. Outside, in the distance, firecrackers one after another scattered clusters of sparks into the indigo dusk. I turned around and said, "He's not worth waiting for. You must divorce him."

"No, I won't," she moaned.

"Well, it's impossible for me to have a criminal as my son-in-law. I've been humiliated enough. If you want to wait for him, don't come to see me again." I put the pumpkin seeds back into the bowl, picked up my fur hat, and dragged myself out the door. ■

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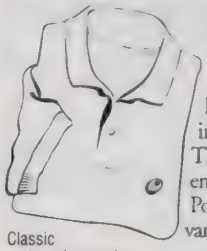
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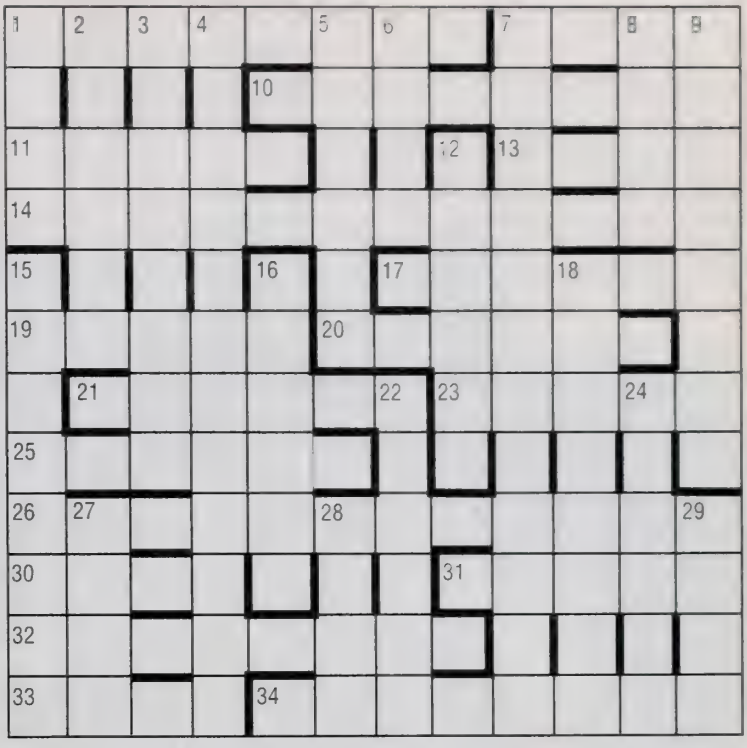
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Gremlins

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.



Gremlins in the editing room have made a typographical error of a single letter in each clue. Not to worry. As a check, the same typographical error also appears in the answer. In the clue, the typo always appears in the definition portion; in the diagram, the error always appears in a checked (crossed) square.

All the clue answers are common words; there are no proper names. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 83.

ACROSS

1. Spring oven cooking for pal, e.g. (8)
7. Article with initiation of philosophical holding to aver (4)
10. When perceptions are massed up, teamed in confusion (8)
11. A doctor I put in danger to rouse plant (5)
13. Net's sound, turns up and trains (4)
14. They made honey-oil slimier, an amalgam (12)
17. A fake. That's about right. A guru teaches these (6)
19. Ore becomes this at vast backing, hung up on Monday (5)
20. Send back note, one small portion of a tone (6)
21. "Dear Mr. Wences, About me . . ." (6)
23. Cake wrinkles about edge softly (5)
25. Make a line suitable for nine events (6)
26. Confused characters in den test conga drum (12)
30. Pollen-sufferers' extract—it makes your night better (4)
31. Tin and aluminum—part of what makes you heir (5)
32. Provides the same sanctions (8)
33. Hindu god without a criminal's yard steel (4)
34. Bathos tends toward error in author Lewis (8)

DOWN

1. Word describing lore: listen, it's underwear in Japan! (4)
2. It often comes with pressing type over a low spot (6)
3. Let the wind get to garbage can bag and plate (8)
4. Convert group converting him, or Chaplin (12)
5. Top brats in theater take in collars (6)
6. Do not attend no love-college for engineers (4)
7. Total reveling in national disorders, taking in greetings (12)
8. Part of a sea on a racing-car flag (4)
9. Many children mix them at meals (average little children) (8)
12. Dad's test for tact (6)
15. Turning moles, end slips out (8)
16. Bind area with a serving of caviar—yummy (6)
18. Liner traps rats—feel bad inside (8)
22. Round equipment, masks, or tees (6)
24. Christmas candy stores, in batch, for example (6)
27. Lex speaks of two letters from Fez (4)
28. Lie down after a thousand look up (4)
29. Weather indexes something in land (4)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Gremlins," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by July 12. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the September issue. Winners of the May puzzle, "'A' For Effort," are Barbara Edelstein, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Anne Elliott, Los Angeles, California; and Barbara Margossian, Saugus, Massachusetts.

In the ever-expanding global economy, Africa remains an anomaly. Despite persistent political instability and $320 billion in foreign debt, overseas investment in Africa, encouraged by the decline of state-run economies, has increased steadily since 1990. This influx of private capital, however, has done little to offset Africa's crippling debt burden. As of March 1999, a World Bank debt reduction program had dispensed relief funds to only one of 33 African countries potentially eligible for assistance. Even in the most robust African economies, debt payments drain resources away from such public services as health care and education. Meanwhile, opportunity created by rising investment has sparked new migration within and between countries. This increased mobility has hastened the spread of the HIV virus, pushing the adult infection rate in some countries as high as 25 percent. Thus does the very economic activity that might lift Africa out of debt and disorder complicate its predicament.



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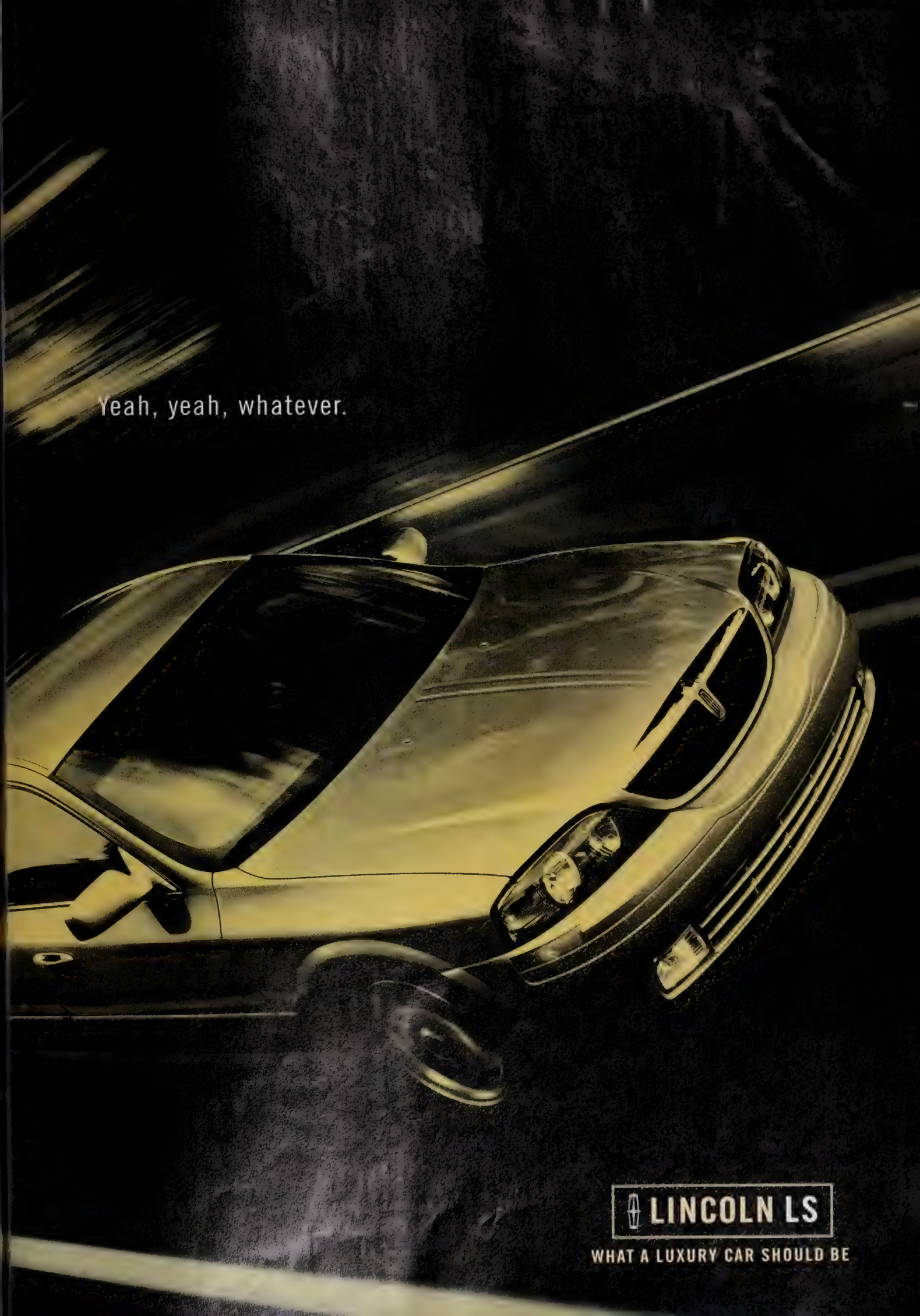
BUSTED FLUSH

A political letter from South Carolina by David Plo

Also: Cecelia Holland, Klaus Mann, Jennifer Egan

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LUSTRATION BY TULLIO PERICOLI

Cover photograph by A. Boccaccio / The Image Bank

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LETTERS

The War on (Some) Drugs

I applaud Joshua Wolf Shenk's report on the hypocrisies of America's attitudes about drugs ["America's Altered States," May]. "Just say no" proponents argue that the line that divides "good" and "bad" drugs should be drawn between drugs that return one to a normal state, whatever that is, and those that provide hedonistic pleasure. Following this logic, alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine should be outlawed, since they offer no medically therapeutic benefits.

Public reaction to the misguided and failed Prohibition movement of the earlier part of this century teaches us that humans will go to great lengths to alter their consciousness in spite of the law. For thousands of years, mankind has been ingesting, injecting, snorting, smoking, and drinking just about anything we can get our hands on, and that habit is not likely to change soon, however strong the desire of our lawmakers for it to be otherwise.

Doug Fawley
Chicago

Joshua Shenk seems to advocate the practice of medicating angst with pharmaceuticals and recreational drugs, neither of which work for thi all too human condition. The latte in fact, can be quite harmful.

As a small-town psychiatrist, I se folks every day whose marriage, jo education, or ability to parent i threatened if not destroyed by alco hol, methamphetamine, marijuana and the like. I have seen death, sui cide, homicide, rape, sexual an physical abuse of children, and live wasted as a result of these "recre ational" drugs. I have never seen on instance of Prozac causing this kin of devastation.

Regardless of the treatment the choose, most patients need only t talk, to clarify their understandin of themselves and their problems Anything else may be helpful bu shouldn't be confused with a cure.

Joel Rice
La Grande, Oreg.

Joshua Shenk correctly diagnose America's war on drugs as state sanctioned hypocrisy, a war on cer tain drugs only. Why? Because it' hard to manufacture Prozac wit dirt and water, whereas marijuan can be produced at home, virtuall for free, which explains why one cit izen can legally carry a briefcase ful of Percodan, Phentermine, and Val ium, while another can be arreste for carrying less than one cigarett worth of marijuana.

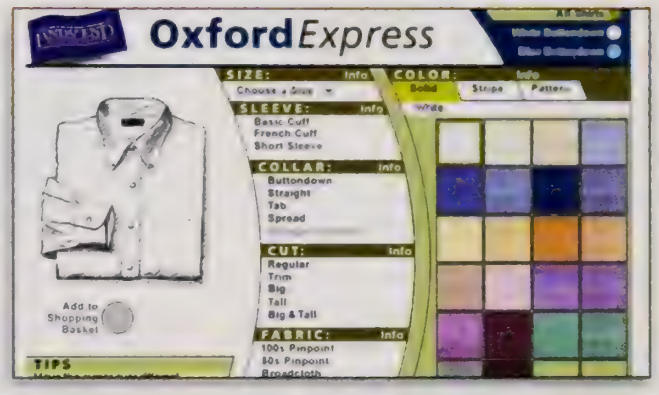
David Johansson
Melbourne Beach, Fla.

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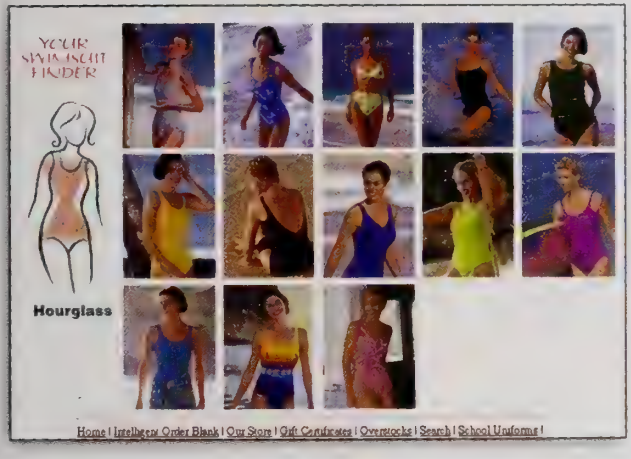
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. colleague and I submitted a funding proposal to a foundation in order to study the causes of illegal drug use. We maintained that realistic drug policy cannot be written until the makers of that policy know why people use drugs. The proposal was rejected, confirming our suspicion that no one in the antidrug complex wants to learn that the choice to do drugs is for most people a rational one, that users see themselves, rightly or wrongly, as benefiting from doing so.

Thomas B. Roberts
Northern Illinois University
De Kalb, Ill.

Joshua Shenk's insightful analysis would have been even more resonant had he considered the way in which so many of our current diseases are socially constructed. A classic study by the sociologist Peter Conrad suggests that the maker of Ritalin marketed to physicians "hyperkinesis" as a disease before marketing their cure to the same audience. The medicalization of rambunctiousness has proven to be a tremendously profitable business, with profound consequences on how schools respond to inattentive children. The same type of causality holds true for the slightly less alarming but still dreaded disease advanced by Listerine advertisements, "halitosis," otherwise known as bad breath.

When mass marketing of pharmaceuticals is commonplace, increasingly, invention is the mother of necessity.

Stephen Sweet
Ithaca, N.Y.

Joshua Shenk's report is illuminating, but he largely ignores the value of the distinction between legal drugs and illegal drugs as a form of social control. Compare, for example, marijuana and Ritalin.

No one knows the long-term effects of Ritalin, the pills prescribed for attention deficit disorder. The drug doesn't work for everyone. There is no consensus on how it relieves symptoms. Reports of non-prescription use by people seeking a high are increasing. But the act of filling a prescription for a child just out of kindergarten is met with a sympathetic nod from the government.

Seek a prescription for marijuana, and the same government is aghast: The long-term effects are unknown! It doesn't work for everyone! We don't know how it relieves symptoms! People use it to get high!

Because marijuana, more than other illegal drugs, serves as an emblem of American nonconformity, many embrace it as a powerful symbol. The crusade against marijuana offers a way in which we can legally root out and punish those who refuse to adhere to the expectations of authority. Those who are caught are labeled and corrected.

Ritalin ultimately brings its users to the same conformist place, with the help, of course, of our approving government. It is telling that instead of separating people from mind-altering chemicals, authority sometimes asserts itself through its sanction of mind-altering chemicals. Of course, the two drugs treat different maladies. AIDS wasting syndrome, for which marijuana may relieve suffering, threatens lives, but ADD threatens order in the classroom. Another difference is that unlike Ritalin, marijuana has no known toxic dosage.

Stephen Young
Roselle, Ill.

Joshua Shenk's attempt to group illicit drugs with psychotropic drugs—because both alter the mind and body—is harmful in its simplicity and contributes to the already existing stigma suffered by the clinically depressed. The purpose of illicit drugs is to produce a good feeling, a high. The purpose of antidepressants is to restore to "normal," or at least to acceptable, one's ability to function. The desire for sleep and appetite, and energy and concentration enough to make it through the day, is not the same as the desire to get high on alcohol or cocaine. It is harmful to suggest that antidepressants induce pleasure, for inherent in that belief is a reproach to patients who crave a sense of well-being.

The distinction is akin to the one between the athlete who takes anabolic steroids in order to enhance his performance and the diabetic who takes insulin in order to enhance his survival.

Tracy Bjorgan
Regina, Saskatchewan

Joshua Shenk makes some excellent points about our arbitrary distinction between licit and illicit drugs, but he is way off-base in comparing the hallucinogen MDMA with antidepressants such as Prozac. MDMA, commonly known as ecstasy, is dangerous.

The changes found in both human and animal brains after MDMA use are not like those found after the use of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), of which Prozac is an example. The changes *are* quite like those seen as a result of the diet drug dexfenfluramine, which was recently pulled from the market because it caused heart problems.

Anyone taking MDMA as an anti-depressant would wind up worse off: the drug decreases in efficacy with continued use, and even casual users report short-term depression following their "trips." In someone already predisposed, this exacerbated depression can be quite serious. And because of a liver-enzyme deficit and an unpredictable overdose/allergic reaction syndrome, someone could take MDMA safely one day and the next day die on the same dose. Avoiding heat and drinking water do not prevent the problem, and in fact can, as in one notorious death in England, make it worse. Unless the drug were found to be a cure for cancer or AIDS, it could never be approved; the risk-benefit ratio is simply unacceptable.

If we are to make changes to our drug policy, they must be based on fact, and those who push for such changes must be as forthcoming about the harms related to the drugs they like as they are about harms related to the drugs they don't like.

Maia Szalavitz
New York City

Papa's Prose and Cons

Tom Jenks's otherwise interesting eview of the newly released novel by Ernest Hemingway ["The Old Man and the Manuscript," May] quickly devolves into exactly the kind of pop-psychological analysis hat he criticizes for its role in add[ing] complexities rather than penetrat[ing] them." Jenks derides what he calls "literary academics operating as amateur psychologists," et he shamelessly uses an unfinished piece of writing to illuminate Hemngway's intellectual, artistic, and moral shortcomings. To what end his personal deconstruction?

By the same token, it shouldn't matter that Jenks believes Hemingway to have been just an "exceptionally gifted and sensitive boy," that by cleverly looking for clues we see that Hemingway "wishes he could make himself] happy."

Perhaps Milan Kundera is right when he observes that the "novel ... is ravaged by the termites of reduction," people like Jenks who are bent on mapping out some sort of universal key to a text that explains its author's psyche. Art is art because it transcends its creator's personality, because it moves us and itself beyond authorial intent. Jenks's strange blend of new historicism and Freudian criticism does little to advance our understanding or enjoyment of the literature.

Patrick Nolan
Saratoga, Calif.

Are Ernest Hemingway's posthumously released works truly inferior to those published during his lifetime? It may be true, as Tom Jenks suggests, that Hemingway's early novels *A Farewell to Arms* and *The Sun Also Rises* are his best, but the posthumous books offer less guarded, more intimate portraits of the characters and of the writer himself. As Hemingway ages, the emotional and physical restraints forced on his early heroes fall away. In *A Moveable Feast*, for instance, we are treated to an insider's view of an unabashed love for the author's first wife (and an unashamed lust for his second). And, thanks to Jenks's editing of *The Garden of Eden*, we now have wider access to a tangled, uninhibited world unleashed from Hemingway's early moral codes.

Glen Taylor
San Francisco

Apropos of Tom Jenks's review of *True at First Light*, I must confess that I did not recognize in Jenks's Dorian Gray–like portrait the author who earned the affection and admiration of both my grandfather and my father, his publishers.

Charles Scribner III
New York City

Vox Populi

I thoroughly enjoyed the e-mail exchange between novelist Richard Bausch and Senator John Warner [Readings, May]. When I similarly expressed my disapproval of the NATO actions in Yugoslavia via an e-mail to President Clinton, I received a long "autoresponder" message informing me that "we appreciate your interest in the work of the Administration" and helpfully pointing out that "The White House home page provides, among other things, a single point of access to virtually all government information available on the Internet. Children especially enjoy the 'White House for Kids' feature—look for your tour guides, Socks and Buddy, the First Pets." I did not follow up with either of the First Pets, but perhaps they would have been more sympathetic to their constituency.

N. H. Lorenzen
Benicia, Calif.

Richard Bausch's correspondence with Senator John Warner put me in mind of my own experience with political e-mail a few years back:

Dear Congressman Bunning,

I want you to know that I think you're doing a great job as a Congressman! You were also one of the greatest baseball pitchers of all time and one of my idols when I was a high school pitcher. I have a Jim Bunning baseball card.

I often tell my students that I was once a great baseball pitcher, but they don't believe their old history teacher. I know it would put you on the spot to have to go on the record with your opinion, but you could send me a coded e-mail response.

Let's do it this way. If you agree that I was a great high school pitcher, send me an e-mail simply thanking me for contacting you. On the other hand, if you think I was the greatest baseball pitcher of all time, write an additional paragraph informing me that my letter will be brought to your attention if I live in your congressional district, asking me to include my mailing address and welcoming me to the Internet.

The response came the same day:

Thank you for contacting me.

If you live in my congressional district, please be assured that any message you send me over the Internet will be brought to my attention. Be sure to include your mailing address. Thank you again for your interest.

Steve Mosley
Cape Girardeau, Mo.

Bright Puzzles

I would like to take a moment to mourn the passing of a great institution, Thomas H. Middleton's double acrostics. These puzzles brightened many days for me and my family; respite was not ours until both author's name and quote were read in full each month.

I thank Thomas Middleton for many magical hours.

Suzanne Leduc
Vancouver, British Columbia

Correction: Due to an editing error in Noam Chomsky's essay, "The Demolition of World Order," in the June Readings section, the number of Kurds killed by the Turkish government was incorrectly inflated to 2,000,000. In fact, an estimated 37,000 Turkish Kurds have been killed since the early Nineties, while over 2,000,000 have been displaced from their homes. We regret the mistake.

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NOTEBOOK

Tremendous trifles

By Lewis H. Lapham

I have often observed that nothing ever perplexes an adversary so much as an appeal to his honor.

—Benjamin Disraeli

Senator Bill Bradley showed up in Greenwich Village in early June to parade his virtues as a presidential candidate before an audience of about 500 people at New School University, and halfway through the program it occurred to me that if Thorstein Veblen were still sitting in the hall, he would have regarded the senator as the political equivalent of a marble birdbath or a pet pony. Veblen joined the faculty of the New School in the 1920s, some years after he published *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, and Bradley presented a brilliant proof of the hypothesis for which Veblen coined the term "conspicuous consumption," or, in his more sardonic paragraphs, "honorific waste."

An economist by profession and by inclination a satirist, Veblen derived his theory from the study of the upper ranks of American society at the zenith of the Gilded Age. The idle gentry then in residence in New York City and Newport, Rhode Island, were in the habit of spending extravagant sums of money on oysters and ball gowns (also on parrots, top hats, gold-headed walking sticks, and croquet tournaments), and Veblen suggested that the ferocious consumption of an always more elaborate store of superfluous goods testified to their "pecuniary decency" and thus to their inward states of grace. The man who could afford to fill a fishpond with champagne was a man in close and constant touch with Providence.

Senator Bradley quite clearly met the definition of a superfluous good, his campaign money provided by our own modern reincarnations of Veblen's late-nineteenth-century railroad and banking tycoons (i.e., by Robert Redford, David Geffen, Michael Eisner, Dustin Hoffman, Michael Jordan, etc.) and his presence (in a room or on a ballot) demonstrating little else except the moral refinement of his patrons. Seated on the stage with the editor of *Parade* magazine—a servile gentleman who asked questions in the manner of a butler presenting grapes or buttered toast—the senator began by telling the story of his birth on the banks of the Mississippi River, his idyllic childhood under the sycamore trees in a small town true to the memory of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, his going to Princeton and Oxford University, afterward to the N.B.A. with the New York Knicks, and so to Washington, a latter-day Mr. Smith, proud to serve his country as a senator from New Jersey. Not that he ever did or said anything that anybody could remember, but the modest telling of so sunny a success story (in a voice both reasonable and barely audible) set up the good news of the senator's Great Awakening. During his travels with the basketball team, and then again during his years in Congress, he came to know and love the American people, went out to meet them, listened to what they had to say, knew that he was on the right track when he and a citizen with whom he was enjoying an emotional encounter embraced each other in a flood of warm and honest tears.

Asked by the editor of *Parade* to define a "meaningful life," the senator mentioned the need to "engage another human being at a deep, personal level." His listening to black people taught him important lessons about the racial prejudice that still disfigured the America not pictured in the beer commercials. When his wife was stricken with breast cancer, he learned that every day is precious, also to "seize the moment," "lead from your convictions," "speak fully from your heart."

And why was he running for president? Because he knew he could provide the "leadership" that has been missing from all our lives. And what did he stand for? For life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And how did he propose to mend the American political system

[illegible] declared irreparably [illegible] when he retired from the [illegible] in 1996? Campaign finance [illegible], calling the media to the [illegible]ner altitudes of conscience. The entire content of the conversation (preserved on film for the Library of Congress, said the editor of *Parade*, on the behalf of "men and women yet to be born") could have been reduced to a message printed on a box of Wheaties.

But so also could the campaign messages being delivered elsewhere in the country by Hillary Clinton, George W. Bush, and Steve Forbes. Because none of them possesses the specific knowledge or experience likely to fit them for the offices they seek, they present themselves as edifying models of conduct and deportment, remarkable for their delicacy of feeling, their "compassionate conservatism," and their deep concern for orphaned children and Cape Sable seaside sparrows. All the candidates endorse the cause of civility and recommend a show of sympathy for the suffering of one's fellow man. Bradley had told his audience at the New School that when listening to particularly sad stories, he often said to himself, There but for the grace of God go I.

A month earlier, speaking to a reporter for the *New York Times* about her Senate campaign, Mrs. Clinton had said, "I think it would be a very good thing, not only for Buffalo or Erie County or New York but our whole country, for each of us to take a deep breath and think, you know, there but for the grace of God go I." Steve Forbes, meanwhile, in a television commercial commissioned from the advertising agency famous for its repositioning of Mrs. Paul's Fish Sticks, echoed Bradley's theme about the goodness of the American people. Seated in a high-ceilinged room distinguished by a gathering of important drapes, an effect suggestive not only of the White House but also of the Vanderbilt mansion in Newport employed as the set for Robert Redford's *Great Gatsby*, Forbes said that he stood foursquare for "truly realizing the American dream, which, as you know, is allowing each of us and all of us the chance to discover and develop to the fullest our God-given talents."

Veblen might not have recognized the set decorations or the background music, but the passage of a hundred years hasn't dimmed the force of his observations about the character of a society in which the aptitude for acquisition stands as the definitive measure of self-esteem. As the nation has prospered, the leisure class has increased and multiplied, assimilating lower social orders formerly regarded as subservient or ancillary (Hollywood movie stars and Harvard professors, as well as expensive divorce lawyers and Washington television journalists) and enlarging the sphere of its amusements.

The habits of spending favored at the turn of the twentieth century by the privileged few now characterize the society as a whole, and what was once the leisure class has become the leisure state. Devoted to the displays of honorific waste, the government at Washington employs an opulent household of domestic servants (upper, lower, congressional, regulatory, etc.) comprising as many as three million clerks, functionaries, orators, consultants, briefing officers, press and appointment secretaries, aides de camp, weapons analysts, chauffeurs, grooms, speechwriters, cooks, media spokespersons, and teachers of aerobics. A staff undreamed of in the philosophy of Alva Vanderbilt or August Belmont, performing what Veblen would have recognized as the tasks of vicarious leisure. They consume the master's goods as proof of the master's ability to pay for their superfluity; the less that is required of them, the more eloquently they testify to their master's wealth and prowess.

The bulk of the money available to the country's political campaigns comes from the relatively small cadre of high-end sponsors (a list of maybe 200,000 names, some of them individuals, most of them corporations, trade associations, and special-interest groups) who write the checks for sums in excess of $1,000. Our democracy now consists of this one constituency (known to Veblen in 1899 as "the radiant body" of American wealth and wisdom), which reserves to itself the right to choose the candidates, hire the bands, blow up the balloons.

Even in Veblen's day, ostensibly purposeless leisure had begun to lose its value as an "unremitting demonstration of ability to pay." The man who wished to make a successful appearance at a golf club or class reunion couldn't simply say that he had been sitting in a chair for eight months. The canon of reputable leisure obliged him to speak with some degree of knowledge about antique furniture or the breeding of greyhounds. The more useless the occupation in question, the more credit accrued to his account. A knowledge of medieval Latin commanded more respect than a knowledge of contemporary Italian. The modern forms of etiquette require earnest professions of faith in a democracy now almost entirely ceremonial.

The immense prosperity of the last twenty years has admitted so many new members to the precincts of the leisure class that the competition for a place in the important gossip columns (i.e., the ones devoted to national political affairs) has become a good deal more severe. In the late 1890s a man could acquire a reputation for *gravitas* by squandering a fortune on polo mallets; in the late 1990s so many people can do likewise that the expenditure no longer satisfies the criteria of honorific waste. But not everybody can afford to bankroll a presidential campaign as hopeless as Bill Bradley's or pay the prices demanded by Bill and Hillary Clinton for an evening in the Lincoln Bedroom, and the man who can say that he has been traveling in China with Al Gore and a Buddhist nun attains a higher rung of status than the man who has been going to trade fairs or drifting around the Caribbean on a cruise ship. Discussions nominally political thus become questions of aesthetics. Does Elizabeth Dole wear fur coats? Can Steve Forbes ride a horse?

Is Al Gore really made of wood?

During the same week that I listened to Senator Bradley express the

hope that once elected president he ould nudge "our collective humanity half-inch forward," I blundered into quorum of journalists taking up the uestion of Hillary Clinton's wish to ecome a senator from New York. The three women present in the bar f the Algonquin Hotel complained f her effrontery and gall—"a brass-aced carpetbagger" whose increasing-y frequent visits to the city made a ness of midtown traffic. They could ee little else in her face except self-ighteous certainty and devouring mbition (the same expression that hey noticed in the face of Special 'rosecutor Kenneth Starr), and they hought a candidate for the Senate hould feel some sort of attachment o (or connection with) the state that e or she sought to represent.

The older of the two gentlemen in he company pointed out that obert Kennedy was still a registered oter in Massachusetts when he was lected senator from New York in 965 but that within a month of tak-ng office he knew where to find oth Mott Street and Coney Island. Hillary Clinton was a quick study, e said, and she wouldn't have much rouble remembering that the Yan-ees play in the Bronx, the Knicks in Madison Square Garden, the Giants n New Jersey. Sigourney Weaver ad played the wife of the American resident in the movie *Dave* (played he part a good deal more convinc-ngly than Mrs. Clinton was apt to lay a New York senator), but no-ody had asked her to conduct a tour f the White House or explain our oreign policy in the Balkans.

The younger gentleman, a writer or an online magazine and some-hat closer to the spirit of the times, idn't find anything wrong with car-etbagging. A standard American perating procedure, he said, en-orsed by the managers of Wall treet hedge funds as well as by the wners of suburban shopping malls nd the proprietors of major league aseball teams. Did anybody think hat when George Steinbrenner hose his infielders he gave much hought to their affection for (or ac-uaintance with) their nominal ometown? Business school profes-ors advised against the signing of loyalty contracts with any particular city or set of map coordinates, informing their students that the big money must be free to come and go as it pleases, all the deals in transit and all the employees migrant. Why deny to politicians the privileges extended to a junk bond?

What was interesting about the conversation was the absence of any reference to a topic in the news. Just as Senator Bradley on the stage of the New School had declined to spread the cloak of his noble intentions in the mud of public and ambiguous event (no mention of the bombing of Yugoslavia or the shooting in Colorado's Columbine High School, nothing about the drug trade, abortion, Al Gore, welfare reform, or the cost of medical insurance), so also the journalists at the Algonquin didn't think it necessary to mention Mrs. Clinton's views on Israel or adultery. They were concerned with the questions of stylish performance, with the way words look and sound, not what they supposedly mean, and they could as easily have been talking about Sigourney Weaver.

I don't know why I should have been surprised. Twenty years ago in a New York bar, at least one of the journalists present would have inquired as to the whereabouts of "representative self-government," issued a statement on behalf of "we, the people," remembered that the American promise granted poor citizens the same liberties enjoyed by the presidents of General Motors and Mobil Oil. These days the conversations dwell on the wonders of the Internet and the miracle of the stock market. The lack of interest in the purpose of a democratic politics corresponds to the steadily declining rate of attendance at the November voting booths. For the most part, I meet amused spectators (college students as well as newspaper columnists, also trial lawyers and history professors) content to look upon the presidential campaigns in much the same way that Veblen looked at the summer social season in Newport—as a never-ending round of dog shows and masquerade balls staged by a leisure class rich enough to afford the costumes, the hairdressers, and the time. ■




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HARPER'S INDEX

Ratio of U.S. students killed in or near schools since last August to those killed in the 1992 school year : 1:2

Chance that a student death at school in the last year was a suicide : 1 in 5

Chance that the murder of a student at school in the last two years was caused by beating, strangling, or knife wounds : 1 in 4

Year in which George W. Bush first described juvenile "superpredators" as "fatherless, jobless, fearless, and godless" : 1996

Year in which his father attended a CIA intelligence meeting wearing a red wig and false nose : 1975

Rank of broccoli and peaches, respectively, among U.S.-grown produce with the highest residual pesticide levels : 18,1

Number of state and county fairs that participated in last year's National Best Spam Recipe Contest : 77

Weight in pounds of Thailand's 1999 Jumbo Queen, displaying "the grace, elegance, and enormity of an elephant" : 352

Weight in pounds of a bronze elephant donated to the U.N. last year by Kenya, Namibia, and Nepal : 7,000

Number of days before its unveiling last winter that shrubs and potted trees were positioned to obscure its penis : 1

Circumference in inches of the biceps of the G.I. Joe Extreme doll introduced last year, if he were six feet tall : 27.3

Number of purple hearts in the U.S. inventory in 1985 : 121,475

Number that the Defense Logistics Agency has requisitioned since : 9,000

Minimum number of Geneva Convention violations of which NATO was accused last May by a lawyers' group : 18

Number of days it took the German army to conquer Yugoslavia in World War II's "Operation Punishment" : 11

Number of troops that could have prevented Rwanda's 1994 genocide, according to the head of U.N. forces there then : 5,000

Average number of Zimbabweans killed each week by AIDS : 2,500

Average number of Americans killed each week by prescription drugs : 1,900

Number of ranks by which 18 U.S. sailors were demoted last April after refusing anthrax vaccinations : 1

Percentage of the medical supplies bought since 1996 under Iraq's oil-for-food program that has been distributed : 43

Ratio of eggs rolled on the White House lawn last Easter to bombs dropped on Serbia during its Orthodox holy week : 1:1

Ratio of the amount J. P. Morgan paid a man to fight in his place in the Civil War to what he spent on cigars in 1863 : 1:1

Ratio of annual per capita alcoholic-beverage consumption in the U.S. to that in Russia : 8:3

Percentage change since last year in the number of Russians enrolled in Hebrew classes : +80

Percentage change since January 1998 in the number of Russian Jews moving to Israel : +100

Tons of uranium from Russia's nuclear arsenal that the country will sell to a U.S. company over the next twenty years : 500

Annual cost of containing plants and animals accidentally irradiated at Washington's Hanford Nuclear Site : $2,000,000

Pounds of plutonium that a British nuclear plant has dumped into the Irish Sea since 1959 : 397

Percentage change in the number of ponds in Britain since the turn of the century : −75

Number of days last year that a British art museum exhibited a mound of dung from Dolly, the world's first cloned sheep : 51

Apparent age, in years, of three-year-old Dolly's DNA : 9

Age at which Elizabeth Dole became a Republican : 39

Age at death last March of the sturgeon Nikita, Khrushchev's gift to Norway, after an accidental immersion in salt water : 38

Number of live contraband Chinese chipmunks that the Dutch government ordered KLM to shred last April : 440

Number of CIA laptops containing top-secret information sold inadvertently at a government-surplus auction in 1995 : 25

Days after President Roosevelt's death in April 1945 that Vice President Truman was told the atomic bomb existed : 13

Days it took Eleanor Roosevelt that year to decline an invitation to run for U.S. senator from New York : 5

Chance that a *New York Times* article about Hillary Clinton's Senate campaign this year mentions her husband : 1 in 3

Number of Washington, D.C., cherry trees felled last spring by beavers : 4

Figures cited have been adjusted for inflation and are the latest available as of June 1999. Sources are listed on page 96.

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READINGS

[Chronicle]

BELGRADE UNDERGROUND

From "The War Diaries," by A.G., a filmmaker living in Belgrade, Serbia. The diary first appeared on Webcinema, a Web site devoted to independent film.

MARCH 23: Early in the morning, I went to help my friend M evacuate his wife and three-year-old son to a village outside Belgrade. Holbrooke has left Belgrade without an agreement; we expect air strikes to begin at any moment.

MARCH 24: At 8:45 there was a panic in our building, with neighbors running down the stairway to go to the shelter. Obviously, the NATO strikes have begun. We stay at home. The night is clear, the sky is full of stars. Perfect weather for the air raids. I feel no fear. I don't hear anything, and I don't see anything. An odd, soundless kind of war.

MARCH 26: I had a very good and long sleep. No sirens. School is out, and there are boys playing soccer in the back yard. Time passes, and it's a little boring. My friend R lights a small joint and invites us to smoke. Feeling the effects of the joint, I take my camera and go through the town: I can't describe the mixture of emotions and impressions I had then, walking stoned through the spooky town.

APRIL 1: While watching TV, we listen to Radio Free Europe. They broadcast an hour-long witnessing of a Serb woman working in a humanitarian organization, who spent the last two days in Kosovo. The news is horrible. Kosovo is now beyond the twilight zone. We also learn about Russian military ships sailing into the Mediterranean, which sounds like a doomsday scenario. Everything tonight sounds like this. I see Kosovo and Serbia as a kind of Chernobyl nuclear reactor that has exploded and is beginning to spread and radiate horror all over Europe. The Danish filmmaker Lars von Trier is right when he says that Europe is in a deep crisis. And the epicenter of Europe's crisis and bad consciousness is right here. Now this area will be sealed in a concrete sarcophagus, to be forgotten and not to radiate evil anymore. No matter how this war ends, it will be unimaginably hard to live in Serbia. M and I decide to flee to the West. But how? I go to my studio and send e-mails announcing my decision to leave Serbia, and I cry at the computer. Tonight the TV broadcasts *Soldier Blue*. It seems Serbs now feel themselves to be Indians.

APRIL 2: There's one bright point in this evening: TV broadcasts the whole *Star Wars* trilogy. Who knows why, maybe because of the battle between David and Goliath. Suddenly, *The Empire Strikes Back* is terminated because of the latest news: NATO hit the building of the Serbian Ministry of Police, in the very center of the city. The pictures are horrifying. This is the first time NATO has struck downtown. It's frightening, but none of us feels sorry that the police were hit.

APRIL 3: We go to a cheap café nearby and drown ourselves in gallons of beer. What will

happen to us? What will become of our beloved Belgrade? I come home drunk and immediately fall asleep. I wake up in the evening and then talk to my girlfriend. I tell her I want to leave the country and we should say good-bye. This desperate saying good-bye turns into several hours of apocalyptic sex, full of blues and sorrow.

APRIL 5: M and I wake up at midnight. We sit around a map of the world and dream. Then we start to work, packing more things and taking apart cupboards and beds for easier transport by car. M finds a piece of wood under his son's bed. He smiles; this is the piece of wood that his grandmother would put under his pillow to ward off demons and evil spirits. When he was a little boy and was afraid of the dark, he used to clutch at this wood and feel safe. And now the same wood was under his son's pillow. Will it keep evil forces away from his son in the times to come? I regret that I have no camera with me now. A nice documentary could come out of this wood's story.

APRIL 6: Some gifted young filmmakers and musicians are gathered tonight. Some want to stay here and act like some kind of artistic resistance movement. Others think it's senseless and doomed to failure. In the end we all agree that things have changed; no matter how this war ends, this city and this country will never be the same. The fatal damage is already done, and there is definitely no life in Belgrade for people like us anymore. Dark visions flood all of us. The thinking people in this country were very successfully shut down and wiped out by the first Tomahawk that hit Serbia.

APRIL 12: The news tonight is that Slavko Curuvija, the famous independent journalist, was murdered yesterday by "unknown persons," at his door in broad daylight. I go to The Place early in the morning to get the papers to leave the country. But The Place fails me: they say they can't do anything for me until the war is over. They tell me to try Another Place. I go to Another Place but get the same answer there—"come to us when the war is over"—and so I realize there's no way out.

APRIL 13: We discuss the target marks and badges that everybody wears here in Belgrade. This target mark is supposed to be the sign of resistance to NATO aggression. Many good-intentioned people abroad who don't approve of the NATO attacks feel sympathy for this mark. But my friends and I are deeply sick of this mark, which was invented and promoted by the Milosevic regime. I don't want to take part in anything like this, and I'm not willing to give this regime any amnesty for its evil deeds.

APRIL 14: V talks by phone to his friend in Bosnia, and they exchange war stories. It is amazing that some important things in our everyday life seem not to have changed after three weeks of bombing: public transportation works somehow, shops are full of everything (except cigarettes and now Coca-Cola). But people in Sarajevo had the same experience during the first month of war, and then suddenly, like turning off the switch, everything disappeared overnight and chaos began. We hear about the NATO bombing of the Albanian refugee column in Kosovo. Another horrible, senseless, and unexplainable accident. But the good thing tonight on TV is Bob Fosse's *Cabaret*. I adore the scene in the restaurant when that guy sings "Tomorrow Belongs to Me." This is one of the most magnificent scenes ever made.

APRIL 15: There was a heavy NATO attack on the industrial zone of Belgrade last night. I get up at noon. Another beautiful day, streets full of people. In prewar times, I used to sit in Knez Mihajlova Street, light a cigarette or two, and read newspapers or watch people passing by. Now I feel the same impulse, and I sit there. I ate beans last night and I fart in the sunshine and feel as happy as a human being can be in wartime. The city is full of miniskirts—beautiful legs parade all over Belgrade. Unfortunately, most of their owners wear target marks. I find two of them using a rubber tube to suck out petrol from their car's reservoir.

APRIL 17: I get up late, of course. V, his wife, and I decide to go to the nearby fishermen's club on the banks of the Danube. There was a shower this morning, and we carefully go down the muddy path and finally reach the club, which is known only to a few. The Danube changes its colors from gray and brown to green and steel blue. Its waves hiss quietly below our feet. Sunshine weaves lace in our glasses. And it suddenly occurs to us that maybe the war is over but we don't know it yet. How could this day belong to the war? And what kind of war is this? Everything reminds us of *Underground*, the film by Emir Kusturica in which a group of people live underground, not knowing the war above them is over, and somebody misuses them by keeping them convinced that the war is still on. Nothing happens in Belgrade these days. The days are bright and the nights are quiet. So is the war over?

APRIL 25: All the important things happen at night. The whole day is aimed toward the night, especially the period after midnight, when most of the attacks happen. You listen very carefully to each sound, expecting to witness some great shot. Sometimes the sounds are loud, sometimes very weak, and so you have to pay attention to everything you hear. Your



Door-Suburb, 1999, *by New York artist Robert Birmelin, from his exhibit "Betrayals of Memory," was on display in June at the Luise Ross Gallery in New York City.*

imagination often interferes with perception, especially if you smoke too much marijuana, which many do now, and then rare distant buses sound like aircraft, drops of water in the kitchen sink sound like distant explosions. And how does an explosion look when you stand in front of your house? First you hear planes. Sometimes they fly very high and then sound like normal jet planes from before this war. Sometimes they fly low, and then it's short and loud: "VROOOOM!" Missiles sound like car wheels hissing on tiny rocks. An orange flash on the horizon follows the roar. If you are in a good position, you can see the flame and smoke, and several seconds later you hear thunder. Then remnants of the blast come, like a sudden breeze waving the tops of the trees.

APRIL 26: At the concert in Belgrade's central square today the guests were some young French musicians rapping in French. I watch TV and laugh. I guess they came here with the romantic idea of the brave proud people who defy imperialistic NATO by joining the mass gathering at these concerts. But instead of a square full of young people, they found several hundred people in their fifties or sixties, obviously ordered by their bosses to leave work and come to this concert under obligation. And these old people stand in the rain under their umbrellas, looking in wonder at the young Frenchmen jumping around on the stage. It's getting harder and harder to find cigarettes.

APRIL 27: There is a funny story about a boy whose parents decided to celebrate his birthday in the shelter. He invited all his friends to come to the shelter the next evening at the usual time (9:00 P.M.), but the next day there was no alert, NATO didn't attack that night. The boy's friends wanted to come, but their parents wouldn't allow them to go to the shelter because there were no sirens, and the poor boy was waiting in vain in the shelter with his birthday cake. Thus NATO spoiled a child's birthday by not attacking!

APRIL 28: We listen to the reports from Surdulica. This little city with 15,000 inhabitants was hit by more than fifteen heavy missiles. Two of them hit a block of houses, it seems by mistake—the famous "collateral damage"—and many civilians were killed, at least six young children among them. How does the

pilot feel now? Serbian media call NATO pilots "criminals," "bloodsuckers," "drugged animals," etc. I believe this pilot is simply a technician whose job is to drive a plane and launch missiles, and that he's just doing his job. Launching missiles is like some kind of video game to him. Even if he hates Serbs and is strongly convinced they should be punished, I doubt he wants to kill civilians. But really, how does he sleep now, after killing half a dozen children?

APRIL 29: I pass by the Red Cross office, where Serb refugees from Croatia come to get humanitarian aid. These days they get flour, packed in big sacks, with three big letters on each sack: U.S.A. What an irony. America bombs them and America feeds them.

MAY 5: I pass by the destroyed federal police building and note a philodendron near one of its windows—a live being undamaged in the middle of the ruined, desolate, and burned-down place. God knows how it survived.

MAY 8: Morning finds us sitting in front of V's house and enjoying the beautiful day, after a period of clouds, rain, and wind. The sky is as clear as can be after the storm. The spring shows its best. Heavy green cherry branches wave against the sharp blue sky. There's a pair of sparrows making love on a fir branch.

MAY 10: It's alive! My philodendron has survived another bombing! I went by the federal police building again this morning. More than fifty hours after the last bombing, and its ruins still smoke. And in the middle of these smoking ruins, my philodendron stands at its window, green and proud.

MAY 20: Night falls and brings new attacks. V and I stand outside the house and listen to the sounds of war. One very strange explosion delights V, who is a musician. It was at a very low frequency ("beyond the subwoofer range," he said) and hard to perceive, but it produced strong pressure on our eardrums. Then we share a joint. And suddenly I feel a very strong need to listen to *Abbey Road* by the Beatles. V and I listen to it together, and we are completely disarmed by the music.

MAY 24: All morning I pluck cherries, dark, juicy, and washed by last night's rain. Maybe it was polluted rain, but never mind—cherries with raindrops look so poetic.

MAY 29: The more things we miss, the more dreams we have. The dream of running water comes true this morning. It has a turbid white color, but we believe it must be water—it's liquid and it comes from water pipes. I wash myself in the cold whitish water, drink some brandy, and go downtown. The concert is a miracle: eighteen electric guitars plow the air, producing a mesmerizing Wagnerian sound wall, channeling our pure anger toward the war. Anger, sickness, and bitterness. A collective guitar mantra for saving our souls.

JUNE 2: Many friends come by this afternoon. All the men talk about this and that, while the women sit around the battery-powered radio

[Restrictions]

RECONSTRUCTING DIXIE

From a set of "covenants and restrictions" appended last year to the deed of the Delta Plantation in Jasper County, South Carolina. Henry Ingram, who owns several video-gambling parlors in the area, paid $1.2 million for the property in January 1998 and plans to build a motel, restaurant, and convenience store there. The 1,688-acre plantation was established in 1829 and was destroyed by General William T. Sherman's troops in January 1865.

The property known generally as "Delta Plantation" shall be hereafter subject to the following covenants and restrictions:

1. The property shall never be leased, sold, bequeathed, devised, or otherwise transferred, permanently or temporarily, to any person or entity that may be described as being part of the Yankee race. "Yankee," as used herein, shall mean any person or entity born or formed north of the Mason-Dixon line.

2. No person with the last name Sherman shall ever own, lease, enter, occupy, walk upon, or hold any interest of any nature or kind in the property. No business entity with the name Sherman in its name, trade name, or any previous business name shall ever acquire or maintain any interest in the property or provide any goods or services thereon.

3. No redwood lumber may be used by any person who builds anything on the property. This restriction is due in part to a large redwood tree in the western United States that is named after the late coward and war criminal William T. Sherman. Additionally, this restriction is due to certain environmental views held by the authors of these restrictions.

4. Nothing contained herein shall be construed as active discrimination against Southern persons of African descent. Any person of African descent is entitled to a 10 percent discount if he or she purchases the property.

and listen carefully to the news. The Finnish president and the Russian representative have come to Belgrade with a new peace proposal. The women expect to hear some news that will signal the end of the war, but the men are not interested at all; they know that even if Milosevic accepts the proposal and the war ends tomorrow, it will not be the end of the troubles. The evening is pleasant, and we are all intoxicated and resigned. This is our regular state now.

JUNE 3: Today the men do listen to the news. Milosevic and the Assembly have accepted the peace proposal, but it seems the farce will continue for a while. Now more than 1,500 civilians are dead and many more soldiers. Kosovo has been emptied, and the Serbian economy has been completely destroyed. Somebody will have to take responsibility for that. We fear this will lead to civil war among the Serbs themselves.

JUNE 4: The smell of lime blossoms fills the air. The girls are more beautiful than ever, their round naked calves and thighs almost transparently yellow in the afternoon sun. Like summer fruit.

[Welcome Wagon]

A DISCOURAGING WORD

From "Code of the West," a twenty-page booklet published by the Spokane County Public Works Department in Washington and distributed with building and planning permits. According to County Commissioner Kate McCaslin, "People who want the world to be perfect—with paved roads and no flies, noise, or dust—ought to stay in town."

The men and women who came to this part of the country during the westward expansion were bound by an unwritten code of integrity and self-reliance. We offer the following information to help those seeking to follow in the footsteps of those rugged individualists.

Access

The fact that you can drive to your property now does not guarantee that you, your guests, or emergency-service vehicles can achieve that same level of access at all times. Please remember that extreme weather conditions can destroy roads. Some public roads may not be built to current standards and may not withstand the test of time. Further, emergency response times for sheriff, fire, and medical care cannot be guaranteed.

Utility Services

Water, sewer, electrical, telephone, and other services may be unavailable in your area. Power outages can occur in outlying areas more frequently than in more developed areas. A loss of electric power may cause problems with computers. It can also interrupt your supply of water from a well, and may cause you to lose the food in your freezer or refrigerator.

Agriculture

Agriculture is an important business in Spokane County. Remember that farmers often work around the clock, especially during planting and harvest time. Low-flying crop-duster planes may fly overhead during irregular hours. It is possible that adjoining agricultural uses may disturb your peace and quiet. You may also find that you are sensitive to chemicals (mainly fertilizers and herbicides) that are often used in growing crops. Many people actually have severe allergic reactions. Farm animals can be dangerous. Bulls, stallions, pigs, and rams can attack human beings. Also, animals and their manure can cause objectionable odors.

Mother Nature

Rural development often encroaches on the habitat of coyotes, bobcats, cougars, bears, rattlesnakes, raccoons, skunks, porcupines, mice, mosquitoes, ticks, and other animals that can be dangerous or a nuisance. To help manage wildlife populations, we have opened many areas in the county for hunting. Hunting may involve individuals who trespass, litter, and fire guns. Don't automatically assume that your property is in a no-shooting zone.

[Essay]

PRINCIPLED UNCERTAINTY

From "The Value of Science," by Richard Feynman, in The Pleasure of Finding Things Out, *to be published in October by Helix/Perseus Books. Feynman, who died in 1988, won the 1965 Nobel Prize in physics.*

From time to time, people suggest to me that scientists ought to give more consideration to social problems—especially that they should be more responsible in considering the impact of science upon society. It seems to be generally believed that if scientists would only look at these very difficult social problems and not spend so much time fooling with the less vital

scientific ones, great success would come of it. Most scientists do think about these problems from time to time, but we don't put full-time effort into them—because we know that social problems are very much harder than scientific ones, and that we usually don't get anywhere when we do think about them. I believe that a scientist looking at nonscientific problems is just as dumb as the next guy—and when he talks about a non-scientific matter, he will sound as naive as anyone untrained in the matter. Since the question of the value of science is not a scientific subject, this discussion is dedicated to proving my point by example.

The first way in which science is of value is familiar to everyone. Scientific knowledge enables us to do and to make all kinds of things. Of course if we make good things, it is to the credit not only of science but also of the moral choice that led us to do good work. The applied sciences should free men from material problems. Medicine controls diseases, for example, and the record here seems to be good. Yet there are also men patiently working to create great plagues and poisons. Scientific knowledge is an enabling power to do either good or bad; it does not carry instructions on how to use it.

I learned a way of expressing this common human problem on a trip to Honolulu. In a Buddhist temple there, the man in charge explained a little bit about the Buddhist religion and then ended his talk with a proverb: "To every man is given the key to the gates of heaven; the same key opens the gates of hell." What, then, is the value of the key to heaven? It is true that the key may be a dangerous object if we lack clear instructions that help to distinguish between the gate to heaven and the gate to hell, but it obviously has value. How can we enter heaven without it?

Intellectual enjoyment, which some people get from reading and learning and thinking about science and which others get from working in science, is clearly valuable as well. Science has led us to imagine all sorts of things that are infinitely more marvelous than the imaginings of the poets and dreamers of the past. Science teaches us that the imagination of nature is far, far greater than the imagination of man. Consider how much more remarkable it is for us all to be stuck—half of us upside down—by a mysterious attraction to a spinning ball that has been swinging in space for billions of years than to be carried on the back of an elephant supported on a tortoise swimming in a bottomless sea.

We find that thrill of discovery whenever we look deeply into any scientific problem. Knowledge serves only to deepen the mysteries of nature, which lure us onward to more discoveries. It is true that few unscientific people have this particular type of religious experience. Our poets do not write about it; our artists do not try to portray it. I don't know why. Is nobody inspired by our present picture of the universe? The value of science remains unsung; ours is not yet a scientific age.

Perhaps one reason for this is that you have to know how to read the music. A scientific article, for instance, might say something like this: "The radioactive phosphorus content of the cerebrum of the rat decreases to one-half in a period of two weeks." Now, what does that mean? It means that the phosphorus in the brain of a rat (and also in mine and yours) is not the same phosphorus that was there two weeks ago. All the atoms that are in the brain are being replaced, and the ones that were there before have gone away. So what is this mind? What are these atoms with consciousness? Last week's potatoes! Which now can remember what was going on in your mind a year ago—a mind that was long ago replaced. When we discover how long it takes for the atoms of the brain to be replaced by other atoms, we come to realize that the thing I call my individuality is only a pattern or dance. The atoms come into my brain, dance a dance, and then go out, always new atoms but always performing the same dance, remembering what the dance was yesterday.

Ultimately, however, the real value of science may lie in uncertainty. The scientist has a lot of experience with ignorance and doubt and uncertainty, and this experience is very important. Scientific knowledge is a body of statements of varying degrees of certainty—about some of them we are mostly unsure, some are nearly certain, none are *absolutely* certain. We scientists are used to this, and we take it for granted that it is perfectly consistent to be unsure, that it is possible to live and not to know. But I don't know whether everyone realizes that this is true.

This is not a new idea; it is the central idea of the Age of Reason and of the philosophy that guided the men who made the democracy under which we live. The idea that no one really knew how to run a government led to the notion that we should arrange a system in which new ideas could be developed, tried, and tossed out—a system of trial and error inspired by the scientific advances of the eighteenth century. Even then it was clear to socially minded people that openness was an opportunity and that doubt and discussion were essential to progress. If we want to solve the problems that face us, we must leave the door to the unknown ajar.

The Desert That Glistened With Water.

Southeastern New Mexico is home to mesquite and chaparral, mesas and horizons that shimmer with heat. For animals of this parched land, survival comes with water. So people who work nearby helped design and build a system of dozens of unique watering units that gather, store and distribute water to bobcats, antelopes, hawks and more. Quenching nature's thirst and giving it a chance to survive.



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People Do.

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Daydreaming, *by Korean artist Hang-Ryul Park. His work will be on display this month at the Korean Contemporary A Exhibit at the Centre National d'Exposition in Jonquiere, Quebec. Park lives in Seoul.*

[Monologue]

A CELEBRATION OF FLIES

From Morning, Noon, and Night, *by Spalding Gray, to be published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux in September. Gray is the author, most recently, of* It's a Slippery Slope. *His interview with the Dalai Lama appeared in the February 1992 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

After lunch I think, What shall I do? What can I do? I feel like I have to lay my hands on something. I've got to do some work with my hands. Then I think, Oh yes, of course, I'll get out the lawn mower. That's something I can do. The lawn could use one last cut for the season. I go to get the hand mower out of the toolshed. I bought a hand mower as soon as we moved to Sag Harbor because we had one when I was a kid, and I love the sound of it cutting. As a kid I cut my lawn with a hand mower, but as a young adult I became less and less interested in what I'd come to experience as the "real world." I started to distrust hand mowers and real people. People were imperfect and rarely dramatic enough for me, and a real hand mower always got dull. And I wasn't really interested in replicating the traditional family structure I'd grown up in. I was not interested in creating my own American nuclear family. So, instead of entering into a relationship with the so-called real world, I ran off and joined an experimental theater company, where we created our own worlds.

Now, with my hand mower in the back of my Sag Harbor home, it's as if I'm on a stage, or a movie set, waiting for the action to begin. I feel like Ozzie Nelson who is being played by Spalding Gray who is playing a family man here in the Let's Pretend yard of life. Then I jump into it. I enter and begin the scene of cutting the lawn.

After I finish cutting the lawn, I wonder if I have time for a quick sail in my little boat, but then when I check the time I am both pleased and surprised to see it is already two-thirty in the afternoon. Great! Time for me to pick up my son, Forrest, at school. I have something meaningful to do. I will pick him up from school and take him downtown to rent a video.

On my way to pick Forrest up from kindergarten I think about last year, when I would pick him up at his preschool. I think about the way he would streak across the lawn crying "Daddy!" as soon as he saw me. Then he would

jump into my arms and I'd spin him around. I thought that would go on for years. But now they march Forrest out with all the other children, and they stand along a hurricane fence as though they're in a police line-up, waiting for parents to come and identify them. Now that he doesn't dash out to me, I have a hard time recognizing him at first. Today, when I spot him, I get real excited and yell, "Hi honey!" Then, as soon as I hear myself, I get self-conscious and think, Oh my God, is it still all right to call him honey? In public? I mean, he's five years old and all the other fathers are saying to their sons, Hi guy! Yo sport. Hey fella! Let's get cracking! Yeah, we're outta here.

"Hi honey," I say more softly as he walks beside me now. "Did you have a good day at school? We're going to get your bike and take a ride downtown to rent a video this afternoon." We're out of the schoolyard and on the road now. And it's at about this point on the walk home that Forrest always begins his litany of etymological-derivation questions, and he starts right in on me with, "Dad, could I tell you something? Why do they call a road a road?" I usually tell him, as I do today, "Forrest, you know I don't know a whole lot about where words come from. I'm still trying to figure that out for myself." But Forrest continues on. "Dad, could I tell you something? How do cars come into the world?" Suddenly I see a black-and-white science film from my seventh-grade past, narrated by Ed Herlihy. I see a big, what I think is a big Bessemer furnace pouring what? Is it iron or steel? And what's the difference between iron and steel? I wonder. Looking over at Forrest, I also see that he's already well on to his next thought. "Dad, could I tell you something? I think I know why they call a fish a fish."

"Really, honey? Tell me why."

"Because it has a fin and that begins with the sound *ph*. Dad, I know why they call a hotel a hotel."

"Well, why Forrest?"

"It's because when the whole family gets to the hotel they all start laughing. They laugh, ho ho ho ho ho, and then they *tell*, Dad. They tell all about what happened on their way there. Get it, Dad? Ho-tell."

At home, Forrest puts his big purple crash helmet on, which makes him look like a cockroach. Then we get his bike with the little training wheels on it out of my writer's shed and we are off for the Long Wharf Video Store.

Just outside our gate he rides for a bit and then brakes and turns to me to say, "Dad, could I tell you something? Aliens don't have armpits."

"How do you know?"

"I just do, Dad.

"Dad, can I tell you something? I know what's inside ghosts."

"Oh, really, Forrest? Well then, what is inside ghosts?"

"Nothing, Dad."

"And what is nothing, Forrest?"

"Nothing is just a word, Dad.

"But Dad, 'oh my' is not a bad word, is it?"

"No Forrest, I've told you over and over that there are no bad words. A word only starts to take on a good or bad meaning when it's used in context, and we'll discuss that one later. Also, 'oh' and 'my' are two words, not one."

"But my teacher said we could not say, 'Oh my God.'"

"Forrest, you can say any word you want. You can say 'God.' You can say 'my.' You can say 'oh.' You can say 'God my oh.' Now let's go over the lesson again. What might your teacher think is a real bad word? Let's take a really good bad word. Let's take 'shit.' Well now, we don't have the word 'shit' yet, do we, so we're going to have to make it up. Create it. Done. Now, I'm going to write the word 'shit' in the air. It starts with the letter 's.' Now is 's' a bad letter? Does it smell? No. My first name begins with 's.' It's kind of a nice snaky letter. Now we make the 'h.' Anything bad about that? No. Now we have 'i' and now 't.' There it is Forrest, there's the word, s-h-i-t, written in the air. Now please don't mistake the word for the substance in the toilet. The substance in the toilet is the thing-in-itself. It smells and it has some offensive properties. Don't confuse the word with the substance. The word is only a signifier. Now Forrest, the Bible had it somewhat wrong, or at least the Book of John did. The Book of John says, 'In the beginning was the word.' The opening of Genesis is more right on. It says, 'In the beginning God created . . .' Now, you can forget about God for the time being and just think of the act of creation. That's all verb. That's all action. So we have the act, the creation, and then we have the substance created. That's what we call the thing in and for itself, and then we have the name. You see, only after it's something does it get named. Now look, wait, I've got another idea. Let's try writing the word 'shit' with a stick here in the dirt. Will writing it in the dirt make it a dirty word? No, because we have to carve the dirt out with a stick in order to make the word. So it really is an absence of dirt, isn't it?"

I put the stick down and look up at Forrest and realize that I've gone a little bit too far with today's lesson. Forrest looks up at me and says, "Are you all right, Dad?"

Next, we stop at the bank to get some cash from the ATM. Forrest has no interest in coming into the bank with me, though it's not really the bank I'm going into, it's the entrance to the bank where the ATM is kept. Forrest waits out-

side, and as I go in I realize that I have never seen the inside of my local bank. I was late to get an ATM card. I might never have come to have one if my accountant hadn't arranged it for me, and I remember now, like it was olden days, walking into my New York City bank. I remember feeling the grand open space of it and seeing the guards and the vaults filled with real money. I remember seeing the smiley bank officers at their open unpartitioned desks. All these officers smiling and saying, "Good morning, Mr. Gray." Then there was the line of customers waiting for the tellers. Some of those female tellers were so sexy and cute, and the almost automatic way they counted the money made them even cuter and sexier. I often thought of their underwear and how and where it fit them rather than the new crisp bills they counted out for me. There was a whole world there, now gone, that Forrest will never see. What a ludicrous idea that it would come to this, sticking a card in one metallic crack and watching fresh twenties come out of another. And I do it. I stick my card in and watch the money come out. Loving the feel of that little bundle of cash, I stick it deep into my pocket, where it rests next to that other warm bundle. I love the feel of that paper money, and I have no real interest in plastic. I prefer paper to plastic any day.

Outside, Forrest is sitting on his bike waiting for me and ready with, "Dad, why do they call a bank a bank?"

"Well now, let me see . . . ," I say. "Maybe it has to do with 'embankment,' money in, water out." Then I think, but why is a riverbank called a riverbank? Forrest is already way down the sidewalk giving peace signs to passersby. These peace signs are new for him. He learned how to make a peace sign from his baby-sitter, Theresa, and he is doing it to everyone he sees on the street. It's fun for me to step back and watch the responses. Some return the sign, some pretend they don't see it.

Now we walk past the real estate windows filled with pictures of houses for sale. There are more real estate offices than there are churches in Sag Harbor. We walk past the liquor store and the IGA, and as I look at the few people on the street, I marvel at how my eye is not caught and drawn to some sexy woman. What a change from New York City, where the women wear their sexuality on their sleeves. After growing up enough to finally realize that I could never directly experience even a little portion of what I saw on the streets of New York, I got tired of seeing it. It became for me a nervous distraction, like what I used to feel when I went to the ninety-nine-cent porn movies on Eighth Avenue. They were an inspiration for masturbation and little more. When I got older and stopped masturbating, I didn't want to go out of my loft because of what I saw. The streets were adrift with anonymous sexy women. It was a man's dream turned to nightmare.

I became a drooling vicariant with a big fantasy head. That constant flow of apparently available flesh on the streets undermined my attempted choice of being with just one woman. It wore me out. I was past all that now, thank God. Now, as I look around me on Main Street, Sag Harbor, I realize that I am no

[Directive]

OFFICE-PLANT POLITICS

From a memo e-mailed in May to Los Angeles employees of DIRECTV, a satellite-television company, by Bonnie Lutz, director of administrative services.

A recent inventory of the El Segundo facilities determined that many company-owned plants will need to be moved from their present locations.

Please be advised that current company policy allows for plants to be provided to the positions of vice president and above and executive assistant to a vice president and above. Plants are distributed in these denominations:

• One floor plant and one table plant to the vice president position and above.

• One table plant to the executive assistant to the vice president position and above.

Note that these plants are attached to the position, not to the individuals holding the positions or to the locations of the plants. Should holders of plants lose their eligibility according to the criteria defined above, they must surrender the company plant(s) to the successor of the respective positions. If holders change their location, they may move their plants only if their eligibility has not changed.

In light of this policy, any company-owned plants located in offices not assigned to VPs and above, or their assistants, will be returned to inventory. Plants in excess of the allotted number per eligible position will be reclaimed. Individuals who have personally owned plants in their work areas will not be affected, nor will plants assigned to common waiting areas.

Thank you for your cooperation.

longer distracted and I don't miss it. I realize that I'm not shopping anymore. I am monogamous and I have, for better or worse, settled down in this seaside town to live and grow old with my family.

Just past the IGA, Forrest stops his bike again and says, "Dad, could I tell you something?"

"Sure, sweetie. What is it?"

"Why are deer poops so small? Because, Dad, a deer is almost as big as a horse and the poops are the size of a rabbit's."

"That's a good question, Forrest," I say. "And as soon as I get home, I am going to look that up in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. I knew I bought those books for a reason."

"Also, Dad, could I tell you one more thing? Why can't we feel the Earth spin?"

"Now, that's another good question, Forrest. Because I know the Earth is spinning right now. I am going to look that one up too just as soon as we get home."

Almost to the video store now, Forrest stops to deliver one last bull's-eye of a question.

He says, "Dad, could I tell you something? How do flies celebrate?"

"What?" I say, not sure that I have even heard him right. And then he repeats it. "Dad, how do flies celebrate?"

The answer comes to me, and I simply give it to him. "Well now, basically I'd have to say by flying from one pile of poop to another."

[Manifesto]

FROM RUSSIA WITH LUST

From The ABCs of Sex: A Study of Sexual Culture in a Free Market World, *by Vladimir Zhirinovsky, published in Moscow last winter. Zhirinovsky, the leader of Russia's ultranationalist Liberal Democratic Party, claims to be "the sexual knight of all the girls in Russia." Translated from the Russian by Eve Conant.*

Sex in Russia is in a wretched state. But before we suggest solutions to our problems, we should first see how it's going in other countries. Let us look at the leader of the modern world, the United States. Although it may claim leadership in the arms race, computers, and rock music, America is a very backward country as far as sex is concerned. In fact, it's an actively anti-sexual country, as evidenced by its anti-sexual laws, such as those concerning sexual harassment, and by a number of federal and local programs designed to limit the sexual needs of young people.

But there are worse examples. The world expressed its disgust for the persecution of the U.S. president, who was guilty of patting the backside of a young girl working in his administration, but Americans vilified him. The United States is clearly a sexually backward country.

Thailand is the sexual capital of the world. It opens its doors to all who are sexually hungry and who come to satisfy their appetites. It offers all possible sexual services with a smile. The Thai populace is raised with great respect for a healthy sexual life and spirit. As a result, Thailand has a sexually oriented economy: its young people have a lot of good sex and make a great profit from it. What follows is a sense of goodwill and respect for the law, which is partly why harsh anti-drug policies were so effective there. Thailand also has the best situation as far as AIDS is concerned, since there are more venereologists in that country than anywhere else. It proves that the more sex there is, the less AIDS and drugs, and the more health, smiles, and laughter.

Thus, Russia must model itself after Thailand rather than the sexually primitive United States. This will create a big injection of capital. There is nothing wrong with gaining profit from sex, let alone experience. The task of developing a sexually oriented economy must happen first in the field of tourism, which is currently suffering. Everyone working in this area must remember: rest, tourism, and sex are inseparable. Ask anyone and he or she will tell you that a vacation without sex is money down the drain—and even worse, is a stress for the nerves.

After a lot of work, the best rest is rest with a lot of sex. Sexually enriched rest and tourism result in an influx of vital energy that is long-lasting. Russia's sanitoriums, spas, and resorts must offer their own sexual services to guests, who can either use them or have sex among themselves at their leisure. All beds must be double-size, and all rooms must be sufficiently supplied with condoms. Moreover, the personnel must be aware of the clients' sexual needs and be ready to meet them.

Sexual services should be incorporated into the practices of Russian educational institutions; it would improve their finances. Professors and other honored guests could have young ladies "escort" them, or they could have young men satisfy their sexual needs. This way the student's sexual potential will also be fulfilled. We could even arrange special trips for defloration.

It is important to get over the prejudice that a girl's introduction to sex is her exclusive and intimate business. Society must control this process, which would be wrong to entrust to

thirteen- or fifteen-year-old girls. Never in history has it been the personal business of young girls, nor should it be. A thousand years of human experience should not be ignored.

Imagine if there were a "tradition of the silver ring," in which a girl loses her virginity, and the experienced man, her "sex knight," gives her a silver ring to commemorate the occasion. The girl would wear the ring with pride for the rest of her life. This can be a simple piece of jewelry, purchased from the state, with the man's initials and the date inscribed on the inside. Then she can go on with her young sexual life with whomever she chooses, but she will never forget her sex knight. If a man has become a sex knight for a young girl, then his wife has the right to do a similar deed for sixteen-year-old boys. This will open up sexual relations between the generations in a way not heard of before.

Of course, this is just the beginning. You should practice more advanced techniques with your sexual partner in bed, on the beach, in the hayloft, in the forest, in the banya, in the sea, in the sauna, in the tent, in the automobile, the yacht, the office, the train, and in spaceships. Be daring! Enjoy yourselves and get rich.

[Letter]

YES, VIRGINIA, THERE IS A SODOMY CLAUSE

From a May 9, 1999, letter by Franklin E. Kameny, a Washington, D.C., activist, to Roanoke, Virginia, circuit judges Richard Pattisall and Robert Doherty, Roanoke assistant commonwealth's attorney Alice Ekirch, and Roanoke chief of police Atlas "Joe" Gaskins. Last fall eighteen men were arrested during sting operations in Roanoke's Wasena Park for allegedly soliciting undercover officers to perform an act of sodomy, a felony under Virgina law. In May, Judges Pattisall and Doherty dismissed challenges to Virgina's anti-sodomy law.

Gentlepeople:

Given the decisions by Judges Doherty and Pattisall to uphold the recent arrests in Roanoke for solicitation of sodomy, and given the undisputed facts of American sexual practices—that over 90 percent of American adults engage in oral sex—I hereby solicit, urge, entreat, and invite each of you individually to engage with me in an act or acts of sodomy of your choice and as defined by Section 18.2–361 of the Virginia Code, in some indisputably private place in the state of Virginia, at a time of our mutual convenience.

If I am not prosecuted for the instant solicitations contained herein, an equal-protection precedent will have been made on behalf of the eighteen defendants arrested for simple verbal solicitations.

It is my intention to embarrass each of you individually and by name, and to bring you into public contempt and ridicule, as well as to make a laughingstock of your benighted, barbaric, backward state of Virginia. I further urge that people march into Roanoke police stations and solicit every police officer in sight, and that officers be subject to mass solicitations wherever they go in order to provide impetus for the reconsideration and reform of Virginia's antiquated anti-sodomy laws.

Sincerely yours,
Franklin E. Kameny, Ph.D.

[Scene]

THE MASKED BALL

By Klaus Mann, in Fiction, *volume 15, number 1. The eldest son of Thomas Mann, Klaus Mann was a leading figure among German anti-fascist exiles after 1933. He committed suicide in 1949. Translated from the German by James Keller.*

The lunatic was squatting on top of the cabinet, laughing. She had combed her long hair down in front of her face, which was made up in red and yellow and black, and oddly short and thick in shape; its cheerfully chubby cheeks looked just like a laughing Buddha's visage . . . and so she was crouching, her legs pulled up, her black-tinted hands thrashing around with her heaving breath, high atop her extravagant pedestal, laughing senselessly. They were all laughing with her, from the corners and tables and ottomans where they had gathered, faces painted and wearing their flamboyant outfits. The saint was juggling yellow and red balls more skillfully than anyone would have believed, easily twelve at once, or so it seemed, while shrieking with laughter. Her hair was of red fiber and seemed to be burning on her head, all ablaze like a fiery rocket that can't stop; and from under that fire her blue-shaded sphinx eyes gazed forth, deep and frighteningly large. The prince was laughing along with her, and the high priest and the actress too, and even the young earl. Only the king was sitting in silence on his throne,



The Five Sages, *a painting by Ashley Bickerton, from "Going Dutch: One Man's Odyssey into the Depths of Anal Retention," was on display in June at the Sonnabend Gallery in New York City. Bickerton lives in Bali, Indonesia.*

with his pronounced profile, his hair perfectly parted, impeccable in his dignity. The young Jew was not laughing either, but was standing, as beautifully and sadly as a mask, leaning against the wall, squinting at the saint.

The actress, who had such golden brown eyes that she would have been noticed for them alone, struck the back of the waiter, who was feeble by nature, so fiercely and suddenly that he held his mouth wide open; he was frightened to death and his face formed the most horrifying grimace. The saint was so overjoyed by the scene that she bit the actress, who was roaring with laughter, deep into her bare and tanned shoulder. The lunatic, whose hair hung over her face like a silken veil, seemed to be laughing so hard that she was about to pass out, and she flailed her black hands like an injured bird that is trying to fly but to no avail. The young Jew looked at the saint, whose teeth were sunk into the shoulder of the laughing actress, and grinned. Even the high priest smirked contentedly, stretched motionless on the floor, covered up to his chin by a black satin blanket, his face, like a wood etching in all its nobility, turned silently toward the lamp. But the young earl, crouching under the sofa in a blue-and-white nightgown, was making senseless hand motions out of deference to the waiter, whose sad expression had collapsed with horror. And the king understood nothing. His nose was as prominent as a shrine, and it seemed particularly frivolous to him to see the actress conversing with the high priest while the saint still had her teeth in her shoulder.

The prince was standing with his legs crossed suggestively, leaning against the wall and chattering about his lot in life; nobody listened apart from the young earl under the sofa, who nodded approvingly with his wise and rosy face and smiled mischievously. "So there you have it," said the prince. "I'm as arrogant as a duke, stoic as a mountain lake, melancholy as a beguiled princess, and hedonistic as a young whore." The young earl smiled coyly, and the king, annoyed, shook his head, which was embarrassingly modern with its pointy goatee and powdered bangs flowing over the childlike splendor of his robe. But the high priest reached his hand out to the prince from under the black covers, and the prince kissed it silently with his hot lips.

When the clock tower tolled for the prayer hour, the saint's mouth finally released the actress's tanned shoulder; in the dark shadows, from which her oval face shone pearl-white, like a praying madonna, the saint murmured her litany.

The young earl, ashamed by all the commotion, took out his pocket brush and ran it through his unruly hair. With a soft and sonorous voice, the actress asked the prince for some walnut cream to soothe her fairly severe shoulder wounds from the saint's teeth.

Yet the lunatic, as though the saint's prayers were giving her strength, suddenly flapped her

rms through the room and flew, black and shrouded, out the window into the wintery yard, where she could continue laughing as she hunched over the leafless branch of a tree. By the way, nobody seemed to notice or care about her. Only the high priest had closed his eyes tightly for a split second as she, a fluttering demon, had whizzed past him. But it might also have been that the saint, motionless, her pious oval head lowered in contemplation, standing in the dark, had begun mumbling her frantic prayers even faster.

The king, annoyed and thinking the whole thing was a pointless bothersome bore, left the hall to return to the affairs of the state.

[Conjecture]

THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN HORDE

From "The Death That Saved Europe" by Cecelia Holland, in What If? The World's Foremost Military Historians Imagine What Might Have Been, *a collection of essays to be published next month by G. P. Putnam's Sons. Holland's most recent novel is* Railroad Schemes.

In the summer of 1241, an observer on the walls of Vienna might have caught a glimpse of strange horsemen drifting over the plains east of the city. Had the observer been well informed, he would have known that these odd and ominous riders on their little horses were Mongols, scouts from a vast army at that moment camped only a few hundred miles down the Danube River. Against these marauders Vienna was almost defenseless. The Mongols had a few months before disposed of the two most formidable armies in eastern Europe, the decisive battles occurring within a day of each other, though widely separated in distance.

On April 9, 1241, a sizable army of Germans, Poles, Templars, and Teutonic Knights marched out of Liegnitz to attack a slightly smaller force of Mongols advancing steadily westward across northern Poland. The two armies met on the flat field of Wahlstadt. The initial charges of the heavily armored Christian knights seemed to break the Mongols, who fled. The knights pursued, in growing disorder, straight into a perfectly laid Mongol ambush, where they perished almost to the last man. And yet the Mongol army that delivered this defeat was only a diversionary force. While they were driving through Poland, the great Mongol general Subotai and the main body of his troops forced the snowy passes of the Carpathians and descended onto the Hungarian plain. A third and smaller Mongol force circled south of the mountains through Moldavia and Transylvania to screen their flank. Subotai, one of Genghis Khan's "four hounds," as he called his favorite generals, was thus coordinating his forces across two mountain ranges and several hundred miles. Subotai is one of history's unsung military geniuses; his operation in Europe, a difficult and for him unusual terrain, was flawless.

Subotai and his army descended into Hungary after marching 270 miles—through the snow—in three days. As the Mongols approached across the plain, King Béla of Hungary advanced from his capital, Buda, to oppose them. Subotai backed slowly away until he reached a bridge over the Sajo River, where the Mongols made their stand. On April 10, one day after the battle at Liegnitz, Béla drove the Mongols back. Fortifying his camp with heavy wagons lashed together, Béla swiftly built a makeshift fort, securing both sides of the bridge. The Mongols surrounded it and for most of the next day assaulted the Hungarians with arrows, catapults, burning tar, and even Chinese firecrackers, keeping up a constant barrage until the embattled Christians were at the breaking point. Then suddenly a gap opened in the Mongol wall surrounding the Hungarians. Some of Béla's exhausted and disheartened men made a dash for it. When the first few seemed to have escaped, the rest followed in a panic. Attacking from both sides, Subotai and his men leisurely destroyed the confused and demoralized mob that Béla's army had become.

With Hungary under their control, western Europe lay before them, stunned and almost helpless. No Christian army so far had stopped the Mongols or even slowed them down. The well-informed Viennese observer had every right to tremble for his people; the scourge of God was upon them.

The impact of the Mongol conquests can hardly be overestimated, though the swift arc of their ascendancy spanned only a hundred years. Until the rise of Temujin, the remarkable man who became Genghis Khan, the word "Mongol" denoted only one of a number of nomadic peoples who hunted, herded, and warred over the central steppes of Asia and the Gobi Desert. Temujin changed that by exploiting the central Mongol belief that they were born to rule the world and led his people off to conquer an empire that ultimately stretched from the East China Sea to the Mediterranean.

"They came, they sapped, they burnt, they slew, they plundered, and they left," wrote a contemporary chronicler. In 1209, Genghis

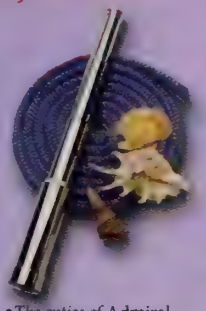
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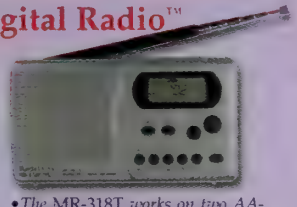


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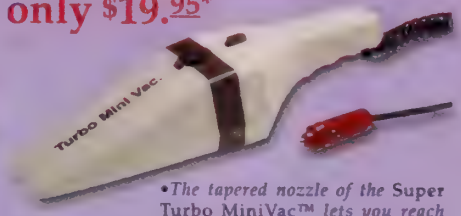
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Khan and his armies attacked northern China and began the long process of grinding down the world's oldest and most populous civilization. Cities fell and were destroyed, and for a time the great khan considered depopulating the whole of northern China and converting it into a great pasture for his horses; he was deterred from this when an adviser pointed out that the Chinese would pay more taxes alive than dead.

In the west, steady expansion against the Turkoman peoples of central Asia brought the Mongols into contact with the flourishing states of Islam, especially Khwarezm, a land of fertile fields and the fabled, thriving cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, Harat, and Nishapur. In 1218, Genghis Khan invaded Khwarezm and devastated it. Calculated massacre was a central element in his strategy: if a city resisted his armies, then once it fell to him—and they always fell—he slaughtered everyone. The death toll was staggering: 1,600,000 were killed at Harat in 1220, and after rumors reached the Mongol prince T'uli that some had survived there by hiding among the piled corpses, he ordered all the bodies decapitated when he took Nishapur sometime later. According to contemporaries, there were 1,747,000 such bodies. The figures are ghastly, unbelievable. Even when a city surrendered, it was looted and destroyed.

Only a few years later, the attack on Russia began. The first campaigns along the Volga won the Mongols a foothold, and in 1237 they again attacked Russia with Subotai masterminding the campaign, systematically reducing the cities there to rubble. Hundreds of thousands died. Then in 1241, after a summer's fattening on the great plains of southern Russia, the Mongols turned to eastern Europe.

Why were they so unstoppable? What was the Mongols' secret? The Mongol army was like a modern army set down in a medieval world; its strengths were speed and maneuverability, firepower, discipline, and an excellent officer corps, who were chosen according to not favor or birth but proven ability. Whereas Mongol life emphasized discipline, the armies of medieval Europe were mere aggregates of soldiers, their battles mostly confused melees studded with individual combats; a good general was somebody who managed to get the bulk of his available forces to the battlefield before the fighting was over. Subotai coordinated the movements of tens of thousands of men, across mountain ranges and in unknown territory, as precisely as movements on a chessboard. Not for centuries would there be another army as efficient and efficacious at the gruesome business of leveling other people's societies.

And level them they did. China's population declined by more than 30 percent during the years of the Mongol conquest. Khwarezm and Persia were crisscrossed with an elaborate underground irrigation system that since antiquity had sustained a thriving agriculture; the Mongols destroyed it utterly, and Arabic scholars contend that the region's economy has yet to recover fully from the devastation. The wars of the khans in Iraq and Syria went on for sixty years and reduced a vigorous civilization almost to ruins.

Psychologically, the impact of the invasion was incalculable. Before the Mongols swept through, the Islamic world centered in Baghdad was intellectually vigorous, bold, adventuresome, full of poetry and science and art. After the invasion, the dour conservatism of the fundamentalists darkens it all. So too with Russia, where the great cities of Novgorod, Ryazan, and Kiev were fat on their river trade until the terrible winters of the 1230s; a dozen years later,

[Collateral Damage]

IN EXCELSIS BOMBO

From a list of medieval monasteries and religious shrines bombed during the first month of NATO air strikes on Yugoslavia in April. The list appeared in the May 1–15 issue of CounterPunch, *an investigative newsletter published by Jeffrey St. Clair and Alexander Cockburn, and was compiled from information provided by the Yugoslavian Foreign Ministry.*

Gracanica Monastery
Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church
Hopovo Monastery
Kadinjaca memorial complex
Monastery of the Church of St. Juraj
Monastery of the Holy Mother
Monastery of St. Archangel Gabriel
Monastery of St. Archangel Michael Church
Monastery of St. Nicholas
Orthodox cemetery in Gnjilane
Orthodox Christian cemetery in Pristina
Patriarchate of Pec
Rakovica Monastery
St. Antonio Roman Catholic Church
St. Marco Orthodox Church in Belgrade
Vojlovica Monastery

travelers found Kiev a village of a hundred souls, huddled in a blackened boneyard.

Our well-informed observer, standing atop the wall of Vienna, pondering the fate of Europe, would have had some inkling of his danger as he watched the Mongol horsemen in the distance. He might have known that the Mongols launched their campaigns in the dead of winter, so that their horses were fat and strong from the summer grass. Surely they would fall first on Vienna, just up the Danube from Hungary. Faced with the destruction of one of Europe's great cities, the European princes would be sufficiently aroused to send out another army, and when that army was destroyed Europe would be defenseless.

The Mongols' reconnaissance was always expert and efficient; they would strike first at the riches of the Low Countries, overrunning Antwerp, Ghent, and Bruges before swerving south toward the broad meadows of middle France. On the way they would destroy Paris. Possibly a detachment would force the passes of the Alps and descend into northern Italy. Cities that chose to fight would be annihilated. The Mongols would carry off everything they could lift and burn the rest.

What would remain? Wiping out the cities of the Low Countries would erase the nascent financial center of Europe. In the thirteenth century the vigorous wool trade centering on Antwerp and Ghent was fueling steady economic growth throughout western Europe. The first stock market originated somewhat later in Antwerp. The Mongol assault would pull up this developing society by the roots. No one would be left to tend the windmills and dikes; the sea would again cover Holland. There would be no rise of capitalism and the middle class. No printing press, no humanism. No Dutch Revolt, the seedbed of the great democratic revolutions from England to America to France. No Industrial Revolution.

The destruction of Paris, the intellectual center of the High Middle Ages, would be even more disastrous. Intense study of Aristotelian logic at the University of Paris was laying the groundwork for a fundamentally new, scientific worldview. The Nominalists were already insisting on the irreducible reality of the material world. A hundred years after the Mongols, a rector of the University of Paris would develop the first theory of inertia. On these ideas would stand the great theories of Galileo, Kepler, and Newton; the coming of the Mongols would leave no trace of them.

If the Mongols penetrated Italy, and there was nothing really to stop them, what would become of the Pope? If the papacy failed, Christendom itself would begin at once to change. Without a central authority to proclaim and enforce orthodoxy, however imperfectly, the faith would collapse into dozens of divergent sects. Without a central authority to rebel against, there would be no Reformation, with its powerful new ideas about human nature.

Destroying Rome, the Mongols would destroy Europe's strongest link to its antique past. Without the examples of classicism to inspire them, could there have been a Dante, a Michelangelo, a Leonardo? Even if their ancestors survived the massacres, the desolation of their cities and countrysides would have reduced these people to a bleak struggle for survival with little room for poetry and art.

In 1241, however, our Viennese observer knew nothing of this; he knew only that out there on the plains of Hungary lurked a terror that could shatter his world, steal its energies and resources, and crush its aspirations. And so he watched from the walls and waited for the blow to fall.

It never came. Early in 1242, the Mongol army suddenly withdrew. Thousands of miles from Vienna, a single death had saved Christendom from disaster. A single death—and the very ethos that drove the Mongol army.

The death was Ogodai's. The brilliant, humane, and drunken third son of Genghis Khan had not only kept his father's empire together but had directed its expansion. And yet the political organization of the khanate did not match its military sophistication. The Mongols remained nomadic tribesmen, bound by a personal loyalty to their chiefs. When the khan died, the law required them to go in person back to their homeland to elect a new khan. On the brink of the assault on Europe, great Subotai folded his tents and turned his horses toward the rising sun.

The Mongols never returned. Their focus thereafter was on China, Persia, and the Arab states. In 1284, a Marmeluke army from Egypt met a Mongol army at Ayn Jalut, in the Holy Land, and defeated them there. It was the beginning of the end. The Japanese and the Vietnamese repulsed Mongol invasions in the distant east. The Mongol tide was ebbing.

The Polish still celebrate April 9 as a day of victory, reasoning that however awful the defeat at Liegnitz may have been, it somehow sapped the invaders' strength and will to continue. Thus they cling to the illusion that the terrible sacrifice was meaningful—that they deserved to triumph. But the valor of the defenders had nothing at all to do with it. In fact, it was the Mongol worldview, the same force that propelled them so furiously outward, that sucked them back home again, together with a stroke of blind luck, and saved Europe.



From "An American Diary," a series of paintings by Roger Shimomura inspired by the diary his grandmother Toku Shimamura kept during her internment at Idaho's Camp Minidoka during World War II. The first image corresponds to an entry dated December 7, 1941: "When I came back from Church today, I heard the dreamlike news that Japanese airplanes had bombed Hawaii. I was shocked beyond belief. I sat in front of the radio and listened to the news all day. . . . Our future has become gloomy. I pray that God will stay with us." In February 1942, President Roosevelt signed an executive order authorizing the removal and internment of Japanese citizens and Japanese Americans living on the West Coast. In all, the army interned some 120,000 people in "relocation centers," where most remained until the end of the war. "An American Diary" is currently on display at the Indianapolis Museum of Art. Shimomura lives in Lawrence, Kansas.

WHEATIES

Chasing the ripening harvest across America's Great Plains

By Shane DuBow

Out of grain-belt towns where pickups outnumber people, and meager rains mean meager yields, and every census since 1920 has recorded more farms lost forever to bank foreclosures and to the depopulating tug of urban jobs, the custom cutters appear each spring on Great Plains highways, with their cell phones and semi rigs, towed combines and towed grain bins, fax-equipped mobile homes and file folders packed with unpaid bills. Soft-stomached, strong-armed men motoring south toward the climes where the crops ripen first. At truck stops from Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, to Shackelford County, Texas, they stop for sweet tea and high-noon "dinners," their orders full of yes-ma'am's and well-done meats. They sport baseball caps adorned with the names of implement dealers or feed lots or the five- to forty-man harvesting outfits to which they belong. Often they head up large families. Invariably they own ranch-style homes, though if all goes well they may not see those homes again before the first frost.



Between now and that frost, these men—known also as contract harvesters or "wheaties"—will drive for hundreds of hours atop throbbing machines, harvesting and hauling crop for the tens of thousands of American farmers without the time, capital, or heart to do it themselves. Mostly these cutters will harvest and haul wheat (though also corn, milo, soybeans, sunflowers, and "specialty crops" such as mung beans and canola), snicking off and gathering up the plants' edible heads with tank-size vehicles, a task that starts around Mother's Day, six weeks after the southernmost still-green shoots have commenced to "head out" with clustered seeds. Once this has happened—that is, once those six weeks have passed and the seeds have dried to the point where they might be stored without spoilage—the cutters will have, at most, two weeks to bring in the crop in one part of the country before they must move on; the landscape yellows northward at an average speed of sixteen miles per day.

A bushel of wheat weighs about sixty pounds, and in 1997, U.S. harvesters, an estimated 2,000 or so cutting crews, helped bring to market some 28 million tons of it (about half the nation's total crop), enough to meet the annual bread needs of every American family for 2.3 years. To do the harvesting, of course, the crews use combines, named for the way they combine the previously distinct and labor-intensive tasks of reaping, gathering, threshing, and then separating the wheat from the chaff. To do the hauling, they use tractors and trucks. Every crew hand's job, then, is to drive something big—across fields and between farms and back and forth to the county elevators that dot the so-called Bread Basket Trail. Every crew boss's job, in addition to driving something big, is to rack up billable acres, keep the hired hands

Shane DuBow is working on a collection of linked short stories. This is his first article for Harper's Magazine.

Photograph by Daniel Dancer / Sipa Press

loyal, get lucky when it comes to bad weather and breakdowns, and get serious when it comes to building a reputation as a clean-cut good old boy who can bring the crop in fast. Thus, each crew boss will do all he can to promote his business, especially if he happens to act as spokesman for the 927-member U.S. Custom Harvesters' Association, a duty that obliges one forty-three-year-old Shorty Kulhanek to take my phone calls and promise me a bunk in his crew's trailer home so that I might tag along and see what it takes to chase the harvest from May to October, from wheat to corn.

HE'S ONLY BEEN DOING THIS, READING WHEAT LIKE THIS, EVERY YEAR SINCE THE AGE OF ELEVEN

MAY 25, MEGARGEL, TEXAS (POP. 256): SCOUTING CROP

My first meeting with Shorty takes place on the dirt turnaround before his hangar-size work shed. He's built like an aging pit bull. Despite his name, he appears to be at least five foot ten. "Hey, it's Mark Twain," he booms, and when we shake hands the grip seems important, as does the eye contact and the fact that his belt is monogrammed and his Wranglers are pressed. Have I slept okay? he wants to know. Gotten some coffee, eaten some breakfast? When I nod yes, he slaps a knee—"Well, okay then"—and bustles us into his extended-cab F350 (a $37,000 Ford pickup) to scout some crop.

We drive and drive through the drab shimmering flatness. We pass abandoned homes, armadillo roadkill, bullet-plinked road signs, and dozens of lewdly bobbing pump-jacks sunk before the price of crude dropped in the early 1980s and "downtown" Megargel ghosted out. Up a graded byway, among the outlying parched-earth spreads, a world of wheat blurs past. Some of it, Shorty notes, stands veined with green—still ripening—and some of it appears ragged from the early spring grazing of cows, and all of it he can pretty much read at a glance, seeing as he's only been doing this, reading wheat like this, every year since the age of eleven, when his dad first put him on a combine. Has such dedication kept him from anything else? Shorty cocks his head—he doesn't think so. In fact, he wants me to know that not only has he spent many an off-season working, alternately, as mechanic, trucker, cowpoke, and cleaner of phone-company offices, but he also recently saw "both oceans" for some harvesters' conventions, though he'll never return to the sight of one—Long Beach, California—he says, "because it was like white people were in the minority."

Two small birds flush along a ditch. A towheaded youngster throttles an ATV. Shorty banks around a clump of broccoli-shaped trees. As a lifelong agricultural worker, can he name some of the hometown flora and fauna? He shrugs. "Folks grow wheat here 'cause there ain't much rain." And then, with a little prompting, he ticks off some of the preseason things he's done to prepare. For weeks, he says, he's been training for sleeplessness by staying up late, touching base with far-flung customers, tightening bolts on his new $150,000 combines, and—most important—hiring on a crew who, he hopes, will stay committed and mostly sober for the next six months. But will they heed his instructions and keep from getting maimed or killed? Will they manage to hold up through the sixteen-hour days, triple-digit heat, and mind-numbing routine? Will they prove mechanically inclined under pressure, when their vehicles break down? And will they get along as a group in close quarters despite their differences? Shorty has hired: Jack, the thirty-three-year-old top man, who fetches $400 a week (with a $1,200 bonus if he lasts to harvest's end); the fifty-one-year-old "Mayor," so dubbed because he won Megargel's most recent election by a good fifty votes; and Hugh, the just-arrived twenty-something who's come all the way from "Kangaroo Country," where Shorty places want ads ("no long hair, no earrings") in these labor-scarce times.

And how much have all these preparations cost him?

Shorty sucks one of his Jolly Rancher Fire Stix and clears his throat. "Probably between thirty and fifty thousand dollars," he guesses, which means that he might not break even until Montana, some twelve weeks into the season, when the wheat harvest is nearly done, the corn harvest looms, and the half-million dollars he hopes to gross may begin to seem a tad optimistic.

And what of all the agricultural hard times I've been reading about in farming newspapers and government reports? Does Shorty know that since the Depression the numbers of U.S. farms and farm residents have dropped by 70 and 85 percent, respectively? Or that the number of U.S. farms now failing to turn a profit approaches one in two? Or even that the average price fetched by an acre of wheat has risen only 500 percent since the Civil War, whereas the average price fetched by a new combine—now as much as $200,000—has risen 1000 percent just since World War I? On a more personal note, does Shorty know that as a self-employed agricultural worker, he falls into what one study calls a "stoic and independent" occupational group that frequently endures more yearly injuries and on-the-job deaths than any other, along with a suicide rate three times that of the nation's population at large?

"All I know," he says, "is the harvest's a stop-nd-go kinda deal. Work late when it's dry, say our prayers when it's wet. Do whatever you can o stay ahead of them bills."

The need for such anything-goes bill manage-ıent, of course, is nothing new to the agricultural ommunity. What is relatively new is the cul-ure-altering power of the self-propelled combine, vhich, since its advent in the 1940s, has cut a wide wath through traditional rural life. Where once ringing in the crop drew neighbors as well as ail-riding "harvest bums" to share labor and scarce quipment, now the labor and scarce equipment

ers, of late, hasn't been foul weather, pricey implements, or tight-fisted bankers but a market-sinking bounty.*

This isn't to say that Shorty, as a harvester, finds himself in such an enviable spot. Although not directly affected by today's low prices, his fortunes remain tied to those of his customers, because if they suffer he might lose business. Some farmers quit altogether, auctioning off land and equipment to pay their debts. Others keep farming but trim costs by forgoing custom work and cutting their own crops with whatever combines they can resurrect from barn storage. And still oth-



ften come solely from afar. Where once bring-ıg in the crop required, at minimum, perhaps a welve-person crew, now the modern combine oes it all with just one driver. And where once regional harvest might stretch to a month (be-ause the crop was cut early, then bundled and left) dry in teepee-like shocks), now the stretch is vo weeks max (because the crop is cut late—and ready dry—to suit the combines), so that when latitude comes due and the small grains come in-) their most fragile state, it's a race against the ements, every crew for itself.

For harvesters, this race demands shaving as any acres as possible for as many months as pos-ble because of how they get paid. There is the ase fee—currently around $13 an acre—and ıen there are two additional fees: one for high-eld fields and one for trucking crop to storage. ince these last two fees are reckoned in terms of ıe number of bushels rather than the price per ushel, a harvester can still prosper* (at least in ıe short run) even in a down market, a blessing ven that the main problem for American farm-

ers—often those with fields badly damaged by drought, hail, or frost—plow their crop under, graze cows on it, or even burn it, so marginal are the cost benefits of bringing it in. Which brings us back to Shorty, stuck with these weighty investments—new combines, tractors, trucks—that need to be paid for, year after year, despite a shrinking customer base and a farm economy that constantly demands bigger, costlier machines.

Later, still on my first day out and still in Shorty's F350, only now with "the boys" squeezed onboard, we're racing field to field, eyeballing crop and hoping for the dew to burn off. We're also doing a lot of stopping so that Shorty's twenty-two-year-old son, Shane, apparently being groomed to run a crew of his own, might wade

In total, with the cutting, hauling, and high-yield fees ll added in, it's possible to make anywhere from $15 to 25 per wheat acre, depending on yields.

A temporary mid-1990's spike in commodity prices seeded the trouble by encouraging growers to plant more. Then came the 1996 passage of the so-called Freedom to Farm bill, which put an end to federal controls on supply and brought with it a brief flush of subsidies—to ease the transition—thus encouraging many farmers to splurge on high-yielding seeds and grow even more. But then the Asian financial crises hit, world markets contracted, and outlets for agricultural exports began to dry up. In the past four years, for example, the amount of wheat imported by China has dropped 94 percent.

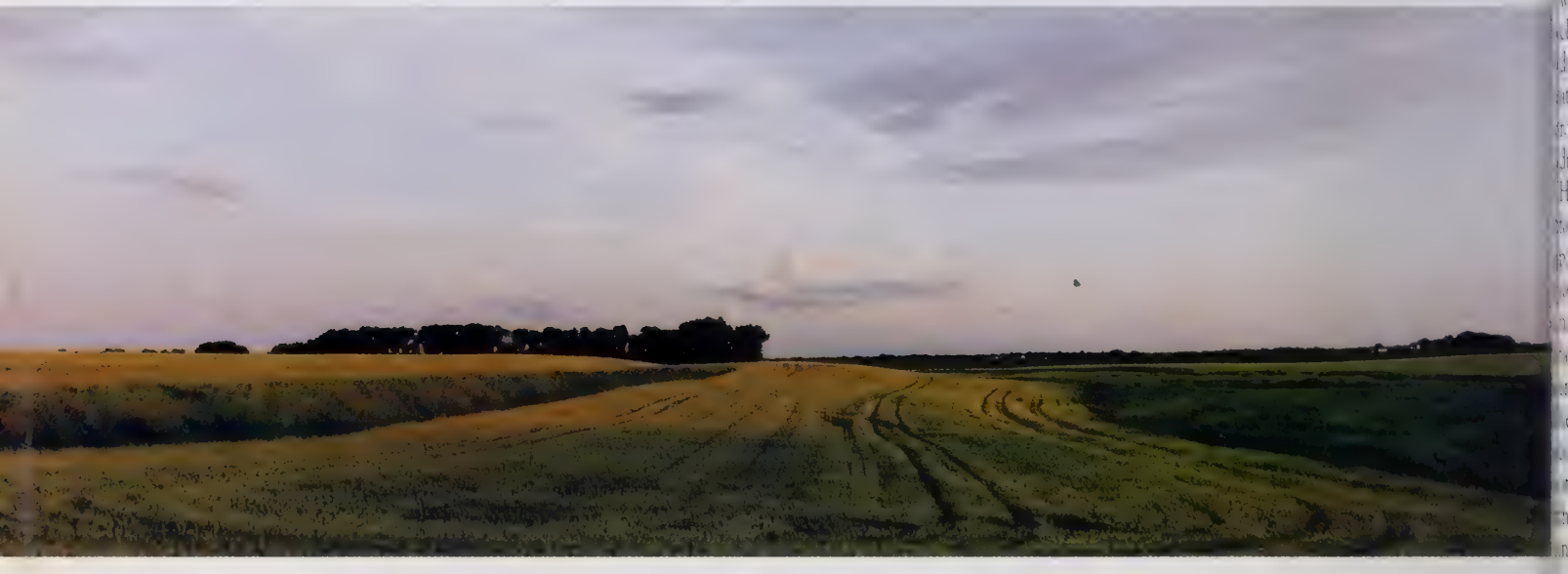
noramic photographs by Chris Faust

into various tongues of wheat to assess their progress toward a cuttably hard and dry state. To do so, Shane first strips heads from a few stalks, rubs the heads between his palms to crack the skins, blows the chaff out as if reviving a stunned bird, and then pinches up a few kernels—not unlike Grape-nuts—for some tentative squeezing and tasting, after which he squints his eyes and leans into his father's window for a conversation like this:

Shorty: Is it ready?
Shane: It's not soft-soft.
Shorty: But is it ready?
Shane: Might be.
Shorty: Might be two days?
Shane: Might.
Shorty: Well, let's git on.

MAY 29, MEGARGEL, TEXAS: GOOD OLD BOYS

The field here is called Love, after a long-departed landowner, and Shorty and Shane (in a new Gleaner of his own) are cutting it without pause, cutting it in 27-foot parallel swaths, side-by-staggered-side, circling clockwise, spiraling in, speeding through the thin spots as fast as their cutter bars (like giant hedge shears) can efficiently snick the stalks (about five miles per hour). And they will keep on speeding as long as their onboard moisture meters keep kicking out readings around 14 percent—above which the buyer at the local grain elevator, Keith, will tack on a per-bushel dock to dry the stuff in his towering bins.



So we "git on" in the pickup to the next unchecked field, while the rest of the crew, all three of them, slouch in back, wincing through hangovers and rough humor about who has and who hasn't drunk "a few beers" over at the Mayor's house the night before. No one, however, jokes about a certain blind curve that, Shorty warns, has "killed two, three" truckers over the years. And no one jokes about the smoke that has been drifting up from Mexico—the countryside burning with El Niño wildfires—or about the attendant haze that has blocked the sun and made the fields dry more slowly, while cutters and growers alike sweat the wait, praying against plant-flattening meteorology. So when, in the course of these early rounds, Shane discovers that the season's first slim quarter, 160 acres, has finally wizened enough to reap, Shorty speed-dials the relevant grower on the mobile, says, "Okay, it'll go," then races back to gun his 12-ton, silver-gray Gleaner R62 into the grain.

After several days of this, the crew has found its routine.* Mornings go to servicing the vehicles and eyeballing crop, evenings to supper-on-the-move and sometimes watching coyotes chase the field mice that are spooked into the combines' stubbly wakes. In between there's not much but driving and more driving and the struggle to keep awake. Jack mans the grain cart. Hugh and the Mayor man the trucks. Sometimes the cutting drones on past midnight, and Shorty and Shane cut with their lights on, halogen beams stabbing down. Other times, the cutting stalls early on account of malfunctioning machinery, long lines

** Already, it should be noted, I have been graciously taken in; been offered a crew cap and free meals; been introduced, variously, as "the new hand," "the city boy," and "Mark Twain"; been asked, more than once, to move a pickup or dash to distant towns, in my compact rental, for spare parts. And already, too, I've learned not to drive my compact rental, or any other low-clearance, gas-burning (as opposed to diesel, which burns cooler) vehicle, onto the field, where it might spark straw and flame us in.*

t the elevator, or barometric drops. At night, before sleep, the day's visions remain—the pulsing fields, the churning paddle reel, the snicked stalks flounced back into the machine's knee-level maw.

Always, Shorty urges efficiency. All vehicles get turned off when not in gear. All waiting trucks get parked nose-to-road to avoid turnarounds. All transfers between combine and grain cart happen as close to the trucks as possible so that the grain cart needn't race back and forth. And then there are the quickly learned tricks, such as cutting a particularly dry acre to dump atop a damper load so that, come sample-scoop time at the elevator, the moisture will read low. Or the trick Jack does to make the cutting look more precise, quietly flattening any strips of missed wheat with the grain cart's monster treads.

For a while, I ride with Shorty, and the outside world looks softer through the tinted-glass enclosure of his combine cab. He sits in a shock-damping ergonomic seat. He stares out wide-eyed at stands of tawny crop shushing toward fence rows backed by purple mesquite. He has been driving twelve to fifteen hours a day, for days. He has not exercised, read a paper, or found time for anything on television (except the weather reports) all week. Still he summons energy for dirty jokes (there's a complicated one about a rooster named Brewster) and firm pronouncements ("The family that prays together stays together") and endless gossip as we circle the field. One farmer, he says, has made a fortune and lost it, having cosigned too many friends' defaulted loans. Another's done some nice things to his yard, no thanks to his cheating wife. Another's been ill and in need of harvest help, which Shorty has provided, free of charge.

Now and then his talk turns to the road ahead and all the ulcerating uncontrollables the road represents: grain embargoes; sudden twisters; green bugs that eat grain; hired hands who bolt; trucks that roll; farms that fail; subsidies that wane; elevators that combust; grain blights called smut, scab, and rust; and especially the current drought in Montana, traditionally one of Shorty's high-acreage states. He names them all, squints and goes silent to negotiate a tricky turn. The dangers here, he has told me, hide around the edges: a deep drainage, choked with sunflowers; a forgotten roll of barbed wire; a wheat-obscured, sickle-dulling rock.

But even I, after only four days on harvest, recognize the Power Ram pickup jouncing straight at us as a troubling sign. It is a troubling sign because the Power Ram belongs to Ronnie Kincy, and this isn't his wheat. He's the young farmer who hasn't apologized yet for losing his calm several days ago, after news of the crop-killing hail up in Kansas, when he panicked—maybe that hail would hit Texas?—and prematurely demanded that Shorty get to his fields, pronto, despite Shorty's knowledge that those fields were still green. To keep the peace, Shorty retested Ronnie's crop for moisture and lost three working hours (approximately $900). Now, though, with the Power Ram idling on the field's periphery, Shorty turns to me in his cab's air-cooled confines—picture a glass elevator fitted with electronics—and he winks, before biting into another 87-acre lap, a round-trip journey that will keep Ronnie waiting for ten minutes if he wishes to replace me in the jump seat for some face time with the man at the wheel.

EVEN I, AFTER ONLY FOUR DAYS ON HARVEST, SEE THE PICKUP JOUNCING STRAIGHT AT US AS A TROUBLING SIGN

Meanwhile, Shorty's mobile rings and rings—anxious farmers checking in—and his callused hands juggle tasks. With his right he manages the two-way radio, the CB, and the phone, along with the dozen or so shifters, buttons, and dials that rule the combine. With his left, he claws the necker's-knob steering aid that has enabled him to keep on harvesting—despite a doctor's doubts—long after an accidental shotgun blast pulped his left bicep.*

He was born Charles Ray Kulhanek and acquired the nickname Shorty as a boy—an appropriate nickname, as it turned out, since he stopped growing four inches below the smallest of his three brothers. Of the four, he's the only one who's followed after their father, George, and taken up harvesting—as one brother puts it, "We all got tired of the road life and the gambling." As a Megargel high schooler, Shorty played basketball, but like a lot of harvesters, he's since put on some pounds. His first wife is a sore subject. His second wife, Donna, is a part-time nurse who's given herself over now to the harvest's demands, which include cooking, clothes washing, gofering, pinch driving in the grain cart, and, by Shorty's decree, always putting her face on before stepping out.

The combine arcs to the right, and for a few minutes Shorty reminisces about the old days, long before the advent of onboard satellite-linked computers, back when the combines still ran cabless and small-town boys still considered the harvest an eye-opening rite-of-passage not to be missed, even if it meant donning goggles and long-sleeved shirts to fight the chaff rash. But then he goes abruptly silent again as we turn back toward Ronnie, and by the studied attention

** In fact, the doctor had wanted to amputate the arm, but Shorty refused, and returned to his combine the very next season despite a scarred and shrunken limb that looked as if it had been flensed and repacked around the elbow with less tissue.*

he devotes to the two-way, I'm given to understand that he's got some worries. About paying back his loans, perhaps. Or perhaps about the capabilities of his crew. Hugh drives too tentatively. The Mayor needs glasses. Jack, by his own admission, carries some hard-drinking demons after blowing his knees out playing junior college hoops and then, years later, seeing a roughneck friend get decapitated on an oil rig. And what of Shorty—does he worry about himself too? When asked he gets weirdly vague, like an athlete hiding weakness to stay in the game, though it's no secret that he's already undergone a quadruple bypass, endured years of migraines (brought on by the bone-rattling machinery), and quit his side ventures (tending his dad's wheat and raising stocker calves) after his doctor advised him to live with less stress. Also, he's been advised to carry emergency nitro and watch his diet—an impossible thing, he grumbles, because "How am I gonna eat a salad on a combine?" a lament that somehow leads to a tidying of the combine, his immediate domain, by tossing tea bottles and sandwich wrappers out the window. "God Bless America!" is what he says.

THE TWO IMPLEMENTS (SOME $300,000 WORTH OF MACHINERY) RUN PARALLEL, JUST A FEW FEET APART

And still there is Ronnie, hunkering in his pickup, .22 in the rack, waiting for us to come full circle. He waits there, in part, because the combines billow chaff dust and the chaff dust itches the skin—in this 106-degree heat—like a fresh haircut. He waits there also because he's waiting on his drinking buddy Jack, who is still manning Shorty's grain cart and who is only now swinging around to unload us as we pass.

The "grain cart," in practice, refers not only to the deep-bellied, van-size grain wagon that Jack tows but also to the fully enclosed, 180-horse, $92,000 tractor he tows it with. The grain cart's purpose is to keep the combines cutting at all times, without pause, and so as soon as Jack pulls even, the unloading happens on the fly, like passing a baton, if the baton were, in fact, 300 bushels of TAM 202. This is an early-ripening, hard red winter wheat developed by Texas A&M University, and when the time comes, it augers out of Shorty's Gleaner via a 17-foot unloader tube at a speed of 2.3 bushels per second and with a sound, just discernible above the diesel roar, like tinkling rain. The task takes less than three minutes. But in that time the two implements (some $300,000 worth of machinery, tires as tall as my head) must run parallel just a few feet apart. Pull too wide and you've got money, in the form of grain, spilled on the ground. Pull too close and you've got mangled steel. For complication there's the thirtysomething Ronnie, who's now bouncing around and making faces in the grain cart beside Jack. Shorty shakes his head and chuckles. Jack's voice, sluiced with dip, drawls across the two-way. "Aaa, come in Pawpaw?"

Shorty sighs for effect. Jack's job, after unloading the combines, is to shuttle wheat cross-field to the elevator-bound trucks, driven either by the Mayor or by Hugh. Jack's job is not to pass time probing the airwaves for comic relief, though this is often what he does, and this is why Shorty seems to gather himself now for some brewing joke.

"Go ahead, Jack," is what Shorty says.

"Yeah, aah, Pawpaw, this old boy here wants to know when you're going to get your fat stinking ass over his fields?"

For a few seconds Shorty mutters something paternal and disappointed about how Jack and Ronnie have been dragging each other down since grade school, but then back on the radio it's as if he's risen, or maybe sunk, to their game. "Well," he says slowly, "Mark Twain here wants to know who's the fat boy you got riding along?"

In the opposing cab we see Ronnie grab the mike. Through the two-way's static and squelch we hear Ronnie say, "I'll show you a fat boy." And then we see this pale white thing flattened against the glass, the twin flabby sections of Ronnie Kincy's naked ass, which I take to be some goofy show of reconciliation and which Shorty seems to take, in these tense early days, as an example of the sort of human bonding and welcome high jinks that, he's professed, explain his thirty-one years on this annual 3,000-mile quest. What Shorty actually says, though, the literal utterance that makes me believe he's in this for "the people" and "the relationships" like he always says, is: "Stupid fuck. He's a good old boy. We have fun."

LATE JULY, POTTER, NEBRASKA (POP. 358): BREAKDOWN

West along U.S. 30, with the Ogallala aquifer floating below and a sky of swollen, carp-belly clouds floating above, we parallel an empty railway, skirting fields of sugar beet and desiccated stubble en route to the town of Kimball, where Shorty's got business. After leapfrogging across three states to four different towns—to Sublette and Colby in Kansas, to Chappell and Potter in Nebraska—for four ten- to fourteen-day stopovers of hectic work, and after a record-breaking two months of heat has killed hundreds of people nationwide, and after news reports have dubbed this season the "Harvest of Despair" for its harsh dryness, sorry futures, and power to nudge indebted farmers into

bankruptcy and hot-line crises,* Shorty finds himself thriving, ahead of last year's pace by some 2,000 acres, which is about $40,000 gross, though I had to figure the earnings by talking to an agricultural economist because Shorty either can't or won't provide me with the financial specifics. As he's hoped, his ability to retain regular customers has thus far kept him ahead. So has the relatively trudging progress of this year's ripening, which has given him time to solicit additional acres at each of his stops. Luckily, the weather has held favorably—though a tad "warm" for comfort—and all the yields have run high. On the downside, some vehicles have fallen apart. And some still need fixing. Fast. Before tomorrow's scheduled departure for Montana, Shorty's last stop for wheat and a good thousand-mile haul now predicated on the successful repair or replacement of



a 100-pound carbon-clogged radiator for a crop-hauling, 13-speed, 240-horse bobtail (an elongated dump truck).

We are three in the F350. We are me, Shorty, and Hunter, the crew's newest addition,** a young, sulking New Zealander whose indifference toward vehicular upkeep has begged more than a few bitter remarks from the Mayor, Jack, and Hugh. That's because each man has had to help attend to Hunter's truck, despite the fact that each has been assigned a machine of his own to have and to hold throughout the season, the idea being to promote mechanical intimacy and dodge breakdowns with preventative care. Often this entails nothing more than a first-light check of belts, fluids, and tires, the last of which involves clubbing rubber with a wooden "tire buddy," or nightstick.

Hunter, however, has been caught slacking even here, despite the fact that by now, after nearly two months of hood-up routine, he's seen more than enough breakdowns to gather the importance of his chores. He has seen the mutilated combine drive-belt that stalled work for more than two hours and sent Donna on a mad parts-run across southwest Kansas. He has seen (or at least heard of) the electrical short in one of the trucks, the fluid-spraying hydraulic leak in Shane's combine, and the ill-sealed water pumps in both combines that required a midfield visit from Norris, the Gleaner support rep, in his harvest-following, parts-laden jumbo truck. So when Hunter slacked once more just this morning, Shorty finally snapped and ordered him into the F350 so that he might at least ferry back the bobtail that's been left in Kimball at the radiator shop.

Kimball is a faded Mayberry, a shabby, low-slung business district bisected by the highway and crossed with maybe two dozen residential side streets. The radiator shop is, in fact, the Plains Body Shop, an open-bayed brick garage where shit-shooting seems prerequisite to the transaction at hand. While Shorty settles up inside, Hunter and I squat in the bobtail's shade, with Hunter asking excited questions—How's Los Angeles? What's in New York? When Shorty steps out, Hunter, rather than scrambling to action, continues his inquiries, even as Shorty grabs the tire-buddy from the bobtail's cab and begins

In the fall of 1998, Congress set aside $6.5 billion in emergency aid for cash-starved farmers.

** Shorty's operation expands and contracts, gaining and losing men and machinery as conditions demand. In Texas he runs two trucks, two combines, and one grain cart because that's all he needs for the acres he has. For Kansas, however, he leases a third combine from his dad and hires on two more hands, Hunter and Kenley, to see him through his most acreous state. Before Nebraska, he sends Kenley home to Megargel and parks the third combine on a farm outside Colby—not to be picked up and returned until after Montana, when the wheat is done and he's headed back toward Sublette for the start of fall corn.*

to come at us, clubbing rubber and checking for signs of fluid leaks as he nears.

"You 'bout ready to earn your wages?" Shorty says to Hunter once he's reached us. Hunter scowls, waits a beat, then walks toward the highway, away from the truck.

"I ain't asking you again," Shorty calls, hurrying after Hunter until Hunter whirls to meet what, I am sure, will be a tire-buddy blow to his head. Somehow, though, the tool's been dropped and Shorty's closed the distance empty-handed, though still ready, it would seem, to fire a punch. Hunter sets his feet and spreads his hands. Shorty gestures violently. Their bellies almost touch. I hear Hunter mutter something about quitting—right now, right here—then I hear Shorty declare, "No, you will not." And a moment later: "You promised you'd get me to Montana, and that's what you're going to do. Drive that truck like you said. You can go to hell or wherever after that, but you're for damn sure going to do what you promised, or so help me I'll have you thrown in jail. And I can do that. 'Cause I'm the one that sponsored your visa."

SHORTY USES HIS FINGERTIPS TO SEEK OUT THE NAMES OF MEN WHO'VE DIED OR LEFT HARVESTING

Hunter nods without surrender, then, unexpectedly, does exactly as he's been told—jumps into the bobtail, rolls his shoulders, and roars off. Without speaking, Shorty and I drift across the street to a machinist's shop—Precision Manufacturing—where Shorty asks about getting some excess weld ground off the hitch on his pickup. The machinist grinds and buffs. The sparks fly. Shorty murmurs, "This kind of work fascinates me," as if the thing with Hunter hasn't just happened. And as if he himself won't be doing this same sort of hands-on mechanical labor as soon as we get back to Potter, where the crew's been getting ready for our upcoming move.

We gather these impressions upon our return: that the Mayor and Hugh have gone shirtless to grease-gun their trucks, eye their springs and U-joints, and scan their tires for "may-pops" where the treads have worn thin; that Jack and Shane have set to work breaking down the Gleaners, which involves, first, blowing them clean to prevent the state-to-state spread of "noxious weeds"; that Hunter's truck seems to be safely parked here in Potter without any sign of Hunter himself. The call that confirms it comes from Shane on the cell phone, who's heard from Jack, who's had occasion to visit the crew's trailer home and note the disappearance of Hunter's sleeping bag from his bunk.

"Probably he hitched a ride out," Shane guesses, and Shorty nods grimly—he'll need a new hand now to make Montana—and scrapes something sticky off the windshield with his thumbnail.

That evening, Shorty treats everyone to steak suppers in an effort to boost morale. But, despite cuts of meat as big as throw pillows, the crew seems irrevocably drained—around their eyes, they've all got dark circles—and demoralized by the prospect of taking on Hunter's work. So demoralized, in fact, that several hours later a supposedly on-the-wagon Jack pulls a single twenty from his billfold and hobbles off to the Golden Mug Saloon.

At the same time, Shorty learns that a certain longtime customer has passed on, his funeral to be held back in Kansas, 300 miles to the south. The news presents competing obligations. Should he check on Jack or let him vent? Should he drive 300 miles south for this funeral while the boys stay back to break down the combines or should he hustle up to Montana tomorrow for more "blowin' and goin'" at a rate of $4,000 to $6,000 a day? Should he fret about all the northern fields likely to prove stunted, or worse, by the early-season drought? The answers aren't obvious, and by bedtime no final declaration has been made, save the one voiced by Jack, one trailer over, when he stomps in from the bar and exclaims, without prompting: "Yeah, well, least I'm still here!"

With morning comes resolve and perfume, the smell of dress-up, as three of us—me, Shorty, and Donna—speed south toward Oberlin, Kansas, to "make an appearance, pay some respects" at the funeral of one Kenny Rodgers, "a good old boy," Shorty says, and the first man his daddy ever cut for back in '57. "He treated us like family, and I grew up with his kids, and I'll be damned if you ain't got but one chance to bury a man and do it right."

The programs at Paul's Funeral Home come illustrated with stalks of soft-focus wheat, and the reverend speaks in agricultural metaphors about the Lord's reaping and sowing. Shorty sags heavily in his seat. He wears pressed Wranglers, a short-sleeved button-down shirt, and buffed cowboy boots, and during the head bowing he snoozes a little on Donna's shoulder while Donna cradles his hand.

Our ride back to Potter features silence. A few muttering remarks from Shorty about the disconcerting brevity of the reverend's officiating. A quick stop at an open roadside Quonset, where, Shorty says, passing harvesters have been leaving their marks since he was a boy. Inside, the walls bear all manner of scratched-in signatures and shallow carvings—like lovers' hearts gouged on trees—and Shorty uses his fingertips, in the dimness, to seek out the names of men who've died or left harvesting alongside those who've carried on. "Here," Shorty says excitedly, after a good bit of searching. "Here," he says again, pointing

a number of faded scrawls. "Here's my broth-, here's my dad, and look, this is me." I look here he says to look. The three of us gather ose to see. And then sometime after dark, back the F350, Shorty turns my way to ask: "Say, lark Twain, can you drive?"

It doesn't seem fair, what happens to Nebraska, the way the mountains hunch up and the landscape turns interesting so soon after ossing into Wyoming. Two days have passed nce the funeral—days spent fussing with the mbines and tuning up the trucks—and we're last hustling north toward Montana, crossing e sort of open-range cow country where the ra-o dial, set to seek, just spins. And where the n, beaming spottily through the clouds, makes e ground feel chosen where it hits. We are ur tractor-trailer rigs, a suburban for Donna d her kids, plus two pickups, one of which, utfitted with flanking tool bays, an air com-



essor, and a spare diesel tank, I've been tapped drive. In addition, we each tow (at least) a mbine, a tractor, or, in my case, a silver, Eisen-wer-era mobile home. Most of the time Shorty ads, at a decent interval, radioing back-road nditions—nasty curves, steep grades—for the mbering trucks that, at these speeds, with these ads, might need a mile to slow down without redding their brakes. Meanwhile the asphalt, th its great frictional heat, has one or anoth- of us throwing tread several times a day.

We pull to the shoulder in a long, blinking e. The grasshoppers pop before us. It's my job the service truck to bring on the tools while norty and crew make like a pit team. Maybe ey change a tire in four minutes flat, using the r wrench with the one-inch impact to con-nce the big nuts. Or if we've stopped for Hugh, hose truck won't keep up, maybe they take four minutes to change a fuel filter, see if that helps. Whatever the problem, if the work requires getting prone, they'll spend another four minutes, at least, blowing dust off one another with the $1,500 Honda air compressor.

For "dinner," and a brief respite from the shake of steering wheels and the wail of rpms, we stiff-leg on into a garish truck stop, its parking lot jammed with big rigs and long, low combine trailers and nylon-capped hands wielding tire-buddies or channel locks or 12-inch crescent wrenches. At the table, Jack rubs his aching knees, pours nine sugars into his iced tea, and complains about having to leave his "co-pilot"—a life-size cardboard bikini model—in his truck. Shorty, biting his lip, slides me a *Pro Trucker* magazine and ignores the menu's heart-smart entrées in favor of "chopped steak." Donna frowns and settles her daughter and son, twelve and fourteen, who are on harvest for summer break. The Mayor suggests that poor Hugh, because his truck won't go and because he's so scrawny, order the child's plate. And everyone, at some time or other, gripes about the slow service, as if we're all irrevocably calibrated to the pace of the road.

Across the aisle, there's another impatient-looking, squinty-eyed crew. Shorty, as boss, asks where they're from—the gist of most harvest introductions—and a phlegmatic man in overalls says Kansas. "Been up to Montana yet?" Shorty wants to know. The man chews some boiled carrots and nods his head. "Lot a harvesters up there already?" Shorty asks, and the man nods again, and Shorty takes delivery of his sandwich at the same time he calls out, "Check."

At dusk, some eleven hours and 600 miles into our day, we cross into Montana and stop at a trailer park in Hardin, because it's illegal here to haul oversize loads after dark. Come dawn, we

pull back onto the highway as traffic allows, which means that some distance down the road. Donna and I, in our respective vehicles, must stop to wait. We roll gingerly onto the shoulder to see if it's firm. The semis whiz by, vacuuming wind. Donna idles just ahead, and on the radio I can hear her checking in for Shorty's location, how far back, just before a metal-on-metal shrieking—like a braking train—rocks the service truck and fills my mouth with spit. A pickup fishtails past, blown tires cut to rind, and flaps to a stop. What has happened, I gather, is that I've been sideswiped, and I tell Donna as much on the radio, as calmly as I can. Her response floats back with the soothing, den-motherly tones of one accustomed to strife in general and young male strife in particular. "Are you still with us?" she coos, and when I tell her I am, she strides back to my truck, glances up the road, and then suggests, with some delicacy, that I slide out, on account of I'm probably not licensed to haul what I'm hauling and there might be smokey bears.

Which in the end there aren't, because it turns out the damage is mostly cosmetic—a long ugly scrape down the length of my trailer—and it's decided, upon Shorty's fuming arrival, that indulging in the formalities might waste too much time. Instead, Shorty forces a smile for the pickup's driver, hands over his business card—it names him as "Shorty" and features four mobile phone numbers, two land lines, and a P.O. box address—and suggests that she, the driver, send him a check for damages as soon as she can. "Hell with it," he says to Donna, under his breath, while to me he offers a pat on the back and a sympathetic grin. "Mark Twain, I just thank the Lord you wasn't stepping out." And then, rather than popping off, which he's been known to do, Shorty just puffs his cheeks, shakes his head, and shepherds us north. Past the reservation where Custer made his stand, past the towns of Pompeys Pillar and Big Timber, up through the Little Belt and Big Belt mountains, on and into the grain-rich region known as Montana's "Golden Triangle," where the farms, rumor has it, get 20,000 acres big.



JULY 27, FORT BENTON, MONTANA (POP. 1,700): WAYLAID

The Bramlette trailer park in Fort Benton hugs a tree-lined, leafy section of Lewis and Clark's wide-banked, silt-stained Missouri. We level the trailers and dawdle with the hookups, because the ground is too moist for Shorty to hit the fields straight off. How long might the fields take to dry? Not even Shorty wants to guess, and none of the hands seems to care. They've got laundry to catch up on—turn those jeans inside out to keep them dark—and forced downtime to take advantage of before the onset of what promises to be a solid month of Big Sky work.

We raid a nearby garden for green onions to dip in ranch dressing. We take in the tourist shops and the riverside walkways until night falls and the Past Time bar fills with rowdy crews, like ours, with nothing to do but drink and argue about NAFTA ("the big screw-over"), a subject that eventually leads a large Canadian bunch to lace up their shit-kickers for the purpose (it doesn't actually happen) of kicking the shit out of a large U.S. bunch who've been hassling them about stealing jobs.

Morning finds Shorty buying lottery tickets, "just for the hell of it," and loading up "the boys" in his pickup to scout some crop, most of which, as expected, has been swathed. This means that the crop's been cut early and left to dry on the ground—khaki clippings in long, tousled rows—

the theory being that a swathed field might both dry faster and, with its low profile, better survive one of the region's notorious storms. To harvest a swathed field, however, Shorty and Shane must change over to the $5,000 "pickup headers" (named for the way they skim the ground "picking up" crop with long thin tines), which Shorty stores year-round in a local shed.

Before that, though, Shorty must firm up a few year-old verbal contracts with some "visits." What he is doing, in effect, is letting his regular customers know that he's arrived, so as to head off any solicitations from other crews. What he is also doing, unintentionally, is leaving his own crew idle after two days on the road, and this bores them enough to make them do what Jack is doing now, which is calling the farm dog over—a dark, wagging beast—to pry open its jaws and spit a frothy stream of tobacco down its throat. "Get on, you old fucker," he says. The dog gags. The crew looks on. The heat presses down. Somehow talk settles on the Mayor's mustache, which is thick and gray, and which the Mayor defends by describing its advantage. "Good for eating pussy," he cracks. Some jokes follow. What do you call a lesbian dinosaur? Lickalottapuss. What do you call a gay dinosaur? Makeasoreass. What do you call a hand that's gone AWOL and left his crew undermanned? A fucking queer. Some rowdy play ensues. First Jack teases Hugh about missing his "little butt buddy," Hunter, the run-off hand. Then Hugh, tired of taking it, throws a punch that hits Jack in the thigh and makes him howl and limp about until Shorty trudges out from the homestead, catches wind of the crew's snickering mood, and says, "What?"

The harvesting drags on. Shorty's commitment to doing what he does—and his need for constant business—seems permanently cast. After a rain, he might check the fields twice a day—bouncing out in his pickup while the hands fix trucks, play cards, nap. He'll cut wheat all night if that's when it dries. Or if he can't cut, he'll cruise around rustling up acres, stopping in at the elevator in Great Falls, at Ma's Cafe in Fort Benton, hoping to find compensation for the yields here, which are proving skimpy (as little as ten bushels an acre in some places), and for all the spreads that are proving unplanted—more than a few farmers having refrained from sowing crops likely to die in the drought.

By the end of August, despite Shorty's obsessive solicitations, it's become apparent that Montana will tender about 20 percent less work than normal. Still, as Shorty and crew prepare for the trek back to Kansas for fall corn (and Donna returns home to start the kids in school), he wants me to know that 20 percent is not enough lost income to erase his early-season gains or to make him especially anxious—"'cause what's the point of worrying about things you can't change?"

SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER, SUBLETTE, KANSAS (POP. 1,414): TOO MUCH WHEAT, TOO MUCH CORN

Through the hot days and cool nights of Indian summer, Shorty's trailers sit on a sad spray of gravel in a sober little town littered with rusting machinery and corrugated metal sheds—plus seven churches, two chiropractors, and a ten-man police force known locally for its cowboy tactics. Shorty's view takes in a grim blacktop backed by a succession of grain bins, known as "prairie cathedrals," and beyond them a landscape carpeted, fencerow to fencerow, with Pioneer 3162, a high-yield field corn used for fattening cows. While waiting for that corn to dry, Shorty takes on three more hands, breaks out a second grain cart (stored locally in a shed), and changes over to steel-clawed corn headers ($30,000 each and stored locally too). Then he makes the rounds, visiting customers and checking fields until, at last, the moisture tests low enough for him and his crew to fire up their vehicles and start to pick.

The new headers comb the rows. The stalks shudder and fall. Apart from the headers, the combines work the same as they did for wheat, do the same internal chores. Only now they thrash out shelled corn kernels—shredded cobs and husks sprayed out behind—and the machine-to-machine relay required to unload them is speeded up to account for the corn's greater bushel-per-acre volume, as much as five times that of wheat. To hear the hands tell it, this faster pace keeps them too busy to think, which helps the time pass, which helps them endure. It helps also that the elevators close earlier now,* meaning more hours for cheap 12-packs, bad TV, and leisurely café suppers, which often include the chicken-fried chicken salad but rarely, if ever, include the vegetable currently being worked, something the hands, in their off-hours, would rather not see.

THE PACE KEEPS THEM TOO BUSY TO THINK, WHICH HELPS THE TIME PASS, WHICH HELPS THEM ENDURE

Everywhere there is corn—corn in the fields, corn dust in the air, corn kernels in piles outside elevators still swamped with wheat—and as the weeks pass, the mounds of corn grow

** A tradition based on the notion that standing corn, compared with standing wheat, is less vulnerable to weather, so less in need of late-night efforts to rush it in.*

sand-dune high and occasionally kernels blow in drifts across the highway, until, finally, corn prices reach a low of $1.70 per bushel (it costs a farmer $1.62 to produce a bushel of corn). Two of Shorty's scheduled customers call to say they've decided to save money by picking their own. Shorty's lost income amounts to some 1,000 acres (about $50,000), which leaves him particularly vulnerable to further setbacks such as, for example, bad weather.

So, of course, the rains come next, mucking up those acres Shorty has managed to retain and leaving local elevator owners scrambling to get their corn off the ground and into the bins before it goes bad. To get the corn in the bins, however, they need to sell off and send away tons of wheat. And to do that, they need men like Shorty, who gamely abandons his combines and mobilizes his trucks to help "disperse" the same wheat he cut and trucked here five months before. From the elevators in Sublette, it's a thirty-three-mile jaunt to the Garden City terminal called Wind River that loads grain onto trains. Shorty's rate is anywhere from five cents to ten cents per bushel—no penalty for overloading unless he gets caught.

Which he does, eventually, though not for overloading but for hauling without the proper permits, an offense that prompts a several-days-long forced shutdown and leaves him wary when he and his crew get back to their hauling, racing their trucks to log in one last load before the terminal's eleven P.M. close. If the Department of Transportation were to catch him scofflawing again, catch one of his trucks, say, speeding or overloaded, the penalty might mean a steep fine—as much as a few thousand dollars—or even an impoundment. On the other hand, if Wind River closes before they get there, it'll mean a loss of $300 for the hauling, plus another $150 or so for running the machines, paying the hands, and staying insured.

Hastily but cautiously, they truck. Past the soggy road that leads to the soggy farm where Shorty's pricey combines sit parked, past rank feedlots thick with cows and swarming with flies, past satellite dishes big enough, it would seem, to channel all Rush Limbaugh all the time. The trucks ramp down in Garden City and lurch into queue along a winding driveway that leads to the Wind River probe. The probe is a silver, phallic thingamajig attached to a trailer-high mechanical arm. What the probe actually does, once we've pulled beside it, is thrust down into our wheat to test for moisture. Next, we drive over some scales—to get the truck's loaded weight—and then we chuff into a trailer-long open-ended bay to dump our grain. The wheat sieves through metal grates in the concrete floor. If it mounds up, an elevator hand in a dust mask might dab at it with a shovel before Shorty gooses forward for another weighing. Afterward, rolling light now and bound for bed, he meanders back with nothing much to illuminate the road's twists and turns other than the deadening familiarity of having made this run dozens, if not hundreds, of times before.

After a while the trucking jobs trickle down, and Shorty finds himself alone in his trailer—at a card table littered with junk food and accounting—just hemorrhaging money and waiting around. The phone doesn't ring. The two-way doesn't squawk. The air smells of imminent frost. With nothing much left to harvest and too many hands for each to drive a truck, he's aiming to release his three Australians as soon as he can. Beyond that, though, there's not much he can do to offset his lost acreage other than to keep on hauling and—as he's done on this Sunday—pray for "peace of mind."

Already he knows he's cut at least 25 percent more wheat than the year before. But he doesn't yet know his final tally for corn—perhaps as much as 30 percent down—nor does he know the hidden costs of all that he's done. Will those steak suppers and café dinners wreck profits that might have been saved by trailer-cooked meals? Was that trip to Kenny Rodgers's funeral too much of a departure? Should he have made for the Dakotas instead of Montana when news of the drought first leaked out? Should he have dismissed extra hands as soon as the picking looked thin? Should he have eaten healthier food, indulged in some exercise, forced Shane to stay in school and dodge the migraines, the heart troubles, and the first-marriage divorce of his own harvest life?

At this point, it's too hard to say, but outside, if Shorty cares to open his blinds or venture forth on foot, he might take in the most corporeal testament to what he has done—the striated mountains of yellow corn and red milo rising up across the highway to dwarf even his biggest machines. If he does not venture forth this evening, maybe it's just as well, because (though he doesn't yet know this) he'll be staying here quite a while, bedding down alone—except for some weekend visits to see Donna and the kids—trucking crop, from grain bin to terminal, from outdoor pile to feedlot, straight through winter and on into late spring, when at last he'll pack up and make for Megargel, just in time to catch the southernmost still-green fields starting to pulse like tidal kelp, and thrum with hot growth, and ping with bug life, and draw up enough moisture and mulchy decay to finally head out, once again, with clustered seeds. ■

DISPATCHES FROM A DEAD WAR

On the island of Cyprus, a hateful peace emerges

By Scott Anderson and Sebastian Junger

Editor's note: In July 1974 the Turkish military seized the northern third of Cyprus after a violent coup by right-wing Greek Cypriots supported by Greece appeared to threaten the Turkish Cypriot minority. Twenty-five years later, Cyprus remains partitioned, a case study in how ethnic hatred perpetuates itself but perhaps also a manual on how peace might be sustained in places like Kosovo. In February Harper's Magazine *sent Scott Anderson and Sebastian Junger to report on this intractable zone of conflict. To decide who would go to which side, they flipped an old Greek coin with a man's head on one side and a war chariot on the other. The coin landed chariot-side up, which meant that Anderson traveled to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and Junger to the Greek side, the Republic of Cyprus.*

SEBASTIAN JUNGER, REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS:

A fool throws a stone into the sea and a hundred wise men cannot pull it out.

—Cypriot proverb

The rusting yellow car sits on four flats against an old wall in the buffer zone, directly in front of a cement bunker with a machine-gun slit. Painted a cartoonish camouflage, the bunker is manned by a lone Greek Cypriot soldier, who smokes a cigarette as he watches us.

I have been walking the length of the buffer zone in Nicosia with a British peacekeeping soldier named Murphy, who carries a silver-tipped walking stick instead of a gun. He uses it to point things out. We've started at a U.N. observation post at the east end of town and progressed between the two irregularly parallel cease-fire lines under a dreary rain that patters through the thick no-man's-land foliage and fills puddles in the road. Murphy has shown me where in 1989 a Greek Cypriot soldier supposedly dropped his pants and from fifty meters away mooned his Turkish counterpart, who promptly shot him dead. The spot, now a patrol landmark, is identified by a sign: MONUMENT TO THE MOON. Farther along is a place where the U.N.-patrolled zone, known in Nicosia as the Green Line, squeezes down to the width of a narrow street. The balconies of two buildings on either side extend to within ten feet of each other, and a few years ago Greek and Turkish soldiers took to strapping knives to the ends of long poles and jousting with each other. In other places they sling stones or shout insults.

"We can't do anything about it unless we see it happen," Murphy tells me. "It's all right for the [Greeks] to say, 'These Turkish soldiers are throwing stones at us.' . . . So we phone up the Turks and say, 'We've had reports that some of your soldiers are throwing stones.' The first thing they say is, 'Well, did you see it?' And we say, 'No, we didn't.' So there's not a lot we can do."

Now we stand in the rain in front of the old yellow car, which also is identified by a sign: YELLOW CAR. A landmark for U.N. patrols, the car was once the focus of a bitter dispute between the Greeks and the Turks. In the original delineations of the buffer zone, Turkish territory was described

Scott Anderson, a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine, *is the author of* The Man Who Tried to Save the World: The Dangerous Life and Mysterious Disappearance of Fred Cuny *and* Triage, *a novel. Sebastian Junger is the author of* The Perfect Storm. *This is his first article for* Harper's Magazine.

as extending from the "front" of the yellow car to the corner of a building. By "front" the U.N. meant the end of the car where the headlights are located. The Turks, however, argued that the front was the end of the car nearest to one of their observation posts; the resulting difference in the angle of the cease-fire line would give them another fifty square feet of territory.

"They finally worked out a compromise," Murphy tells me. "The line stayed where it was, but a Turkish soldier gets to stand in the triangle of disputed territory for five minutes each hour."

The Green Line was established in 1963 by a British commander who was trying to quell street fighting that had erupted between Greek and Turkish militias. He supposedly took a green pencil and bisected a map of Nicosia from one side of the old Venetian fortifications to the other. Eleven years later, after the Turkish army overran a third of Cyprus, the buffer zone was extended across the length of the island, a distance of 112 miles. A few months later, the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces in Cyprus [UNFICYP] oversaw a massive, but peaceful, population transfer of 40,000 Turkish Cypriots from the south to the north to replace the estimated 175,000 displaced Greek Cypriots, most of whom had fled south during the invasion. The exodus was proclaimed voluntary as well as temporary, but of course it was neither. When the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus finally declared itself to be an independent state in 1983, all but the most optimistic refugees realized that they were never going home.

Today the two countries mark their borders as the cease-fire lines that were established in 1974. Between the lines is the buffer zone that none of the 190,000 Turkish Cypriots to the north or the 655,000 Greek Cypriots to the south may enter without special permission. Per capita, Cyprus is the most militarized country in the world after North and South Korea—with 35,000 Turkish and Turkish Cypriot troops and 14,500 Greek Cypriot troops, monitored by 1,200 U.N. soldiers—yet it is one of the most peaceful; only sixteen people have been killed along the divide since 1974. Greek Cypriots refer to the buffer as the "dead zone." On Greek Cypriot maps, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is labeled "Area Occupied by Turkish Troops," and in conversation, Greek Cypriots often refer to it as the "so-called Turkish Republic," or simply "the pseudo-state." There are no embassies or consulates in the TRNC besides Turkey's, and the U.N. does not maintain formal diplomatic relations with them. There is a checkpoint at Ledra Palace, in the middle of the buffer zone on the western edge of Nicosia, but only foreign passport–holders may cross through it, and only from the south to the north and then back again. You cannot go in the other direction, and if you visit the TRNC, you must be out by five P.M.



KYRENIA, A VILLAGE IN THE TURKISH REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN CYPRUS

Within Nicosia the Green Line doesn't look like much, just a series of deserted streets that end at brick walls and cement barriers. Every so often appears a sandbag bunker with a Greek Cypriot soldier inside, invariably smoking a cigarette. The line has a strange pull to it, like the edge of a cliff or a third rail; it was the first place I went when I arrived in Nicosia. I dropped my bags at the hotel and walked past the fancy shops on Ledra Street to a cul-de-sac, where some staging had been set up against a concrete wall along the line. It's the only place where tourists can look out over the rubble of no-man's-land, and a flight of metal stairs has been installed to encourage viewing. While I was there an English family arrived and trudged dutifully up to the platform, children licking at ice-cream cones and parents fiddling with camcorders. They looked over the railing at the ramshackle Turkish positions a hundred feet away, clucked their disapproval, and had their photo taken with a young soldier who was standing guard nearby. Then they wandered off to do more shopping.

The soldier had an M-16 slung around his neck and spoke fair English. I asked him if he and his buddies ever talked with the Turkish soldiers on the other side, but he told me that this was the one spot on the Green Line where the Turks don't post guards. Apparently, tourists who step

Photograph by Mark Simon / Black Star

up to the platform occasionally get carried away and start yelling, and the Turks don't want to deal with that. Elsewhere, though, the Turks will shout insults at the Greeks or throw rocks.

"Do you ever yell back?" I asked the Greek soldier.

"No," he said, smiling. "We are careful not to provoke them, because we are the weaker side."

It was a strange admission for a soldier to make, though in keeping with the general theme of the lookout point. Alongside was a photo exhibit of the wartime destruction and a map showing, day by day, the changing battle lines of the Turkish invasion. Few countries would offer up such evidence of their own worst defeat; it was practically a monument to Turkish military might. The point seemed to be that Cyprus was the object of unbridled aggression from a highly militarized government, and that if the world didn't act decisively, who knew what would happen next.

Thirty years ago it was the Turkish Cypriots who had to be careful not to provoke. The problems started in earnest in late 1954, when two Greek gun-running boats made the 250-mile crossing from the island of Rhodes to Cyprus and landed on a deserted stretch of the western coast. On board were hundreds of pounds of explosives and a former Nazi collaborator named General George Grivas, who had arrived to lead a guerrilla group called the National Organization of Cypriot Fighters. Known by its acronym, EOKA, the group was committed to kicking the British out of Cyprus—they'd been there since the Ottomans handed it to them in 1878—and eventually uniting Cyprus with mainland Greece. The prospect of union with Greece—*enosis*—presented a terrifying threat to the 18 percent Turkish minority in Cyprus, however, who in no way wanted to become Greek citizens. So it was with considerable alarm that they watched 300 EOKA guerrillas, fighting with pipe bombs and homemade machine guns, elude 20,000 British troops and 4,500 Cypriot police in the rugged Troodos Mountains. By 1959 the British still hadn't been able to stamp out EOKA, so they gave the Cypriots their independence—and thus made Cyprus the rest of the world's problem.

It was clear to the West that, given the level of rhetoric, General Grivas wasn't going to stop until he had achieved union with Greece, an outcome that Turkey would never permit. The south coast of Turkey lies only forty miles away, and a Greek military presence so close to its borders was unthinkable. If the *enosis* movement were to succeed, Turkey would invade Cyprus, Greece would intervene, and suddenly there would be—at the height of the Cold War—a full-blown conflict between two NATO members.

To prevent such a disaster, the British arranged for a meeting in Zurich between the antagonists. They finally agreed to a fabulously awkward constitution that provided for a Greek Cypriot president, a Turkish Cypriot vice president, and disproportionately large Turkish representation in the parliament. England was to retain two military bases on the island, and both Greece and Turkey were allowed to contribute small contingents of troops for common defense. As signatories to the agreement, England, Greece, and Turkey all could intervene militarily if they deemed the Cypriot constitution to be in danger. On August 16, 1960, the Republic of Cyprus was born, with a former EOKA leader, Archbishop Makarios III, as president. Almost from the beginning the arrangement was a nightmare.



A U.N. SOLDIER PATROLS THE BUFFER ZONE

It was the contention of the Greek Cypriots that the Turkish Cypriot minority had no reason to fear for their safety, and that hatred between the two groups was the result of Turkish propaganda and British manipulation. ("As late as 1955 Greeks and Turks had always lived peacefully together, like brothers," reads a placard at Nicosia's Museum of National Struggle. "Their relations had always been completely harmonious, and the Turks had never put forward any claim on the island.") In reality, things had never been so rosy. Although they had tolerated each other for centuries, Greek and Turkish Cypriots had largely lived in separate communities, and calls for *enosis* drove the two groups even farther apart. By the early 1960s death squads of Greek nationalists were regularly killing Turkish Cypriots, who, instead of turning to the government for protection, started to gather into easily defended enclaves and arm themselves. In retaliation, the Greek Cypriots tried to strangle the Turkish communities with economic blockades, and the situation quickly escalated into gun battles in the streets. By late 1963 the Green Line had been established across Nicosia, but even that didn't stop the fighting, and Archbishop Makarios finally appealed to the U.N. for help. Several thousand peacekeepers were sent in with a renewable ninety-day mandate, but by then the Turkish

THE LINE DIVIDING CYPRUS HAS A STRANGE PULL TO IT, LIKE THE EDGE OF A CLIFF OR A THIRD RAIL; I WENT THERE AS SOON AS I ARRIVED

Photograph by Scott Peterson / Gamma Liaison

Cypriots had completely severed relations with the Cyprus government, and fighting was breaking out regularly between the two militias.

Like a bad marriage, the split was only a matter of time. In the late 1960s Archbishop Makarios officially stopped calling for *enosis* as a political goal, and in July 1974 he accused the Greek military of trying to undermine his power. A cadre of right-wing officers, outraged by what they perceived to be a betrayal of Hellenism, sacked the presidential palace and chased Makarios into hiding. They also killed hundreds of moderate Greek Cypriots suspected of being communist sympathizers or simply soft on Turks. Within days they had replaced Makarios with an EOKA fighter named Nikos Sampson, who had already proven his patriotism by taking 700 Turkish Cypriot civilians hostage during the Green Line clashes ten years earlier. Within forty-eight hours the Nixon Administration had dispatched a high-level diplomat named Joseph Sisco to try to keep Turkey out of the war, but it was already too late. "We will not repeat the mistake we made ten years ago," the Turkish prime minister told Sisco on July 19. The next morning a flotilla of Turkish troop carriers scraped ashore near the north Cyprus town of Kyrenia and disgorged 6,000 Turkish troops.



The assorted maps of Cyprus tend to illustrate the politics of the publisher more accurately than they do the realities of the island. Since 1974 the government in the north has replaced Greek names with new Turkish ones, many of which not even government officials bother to use. And just as the international community refuses to recognize the TRNC diplomatically, so most international maps have ignored Turkish name changes. But the Greek Cypriots have also complicated matters. In 1994 an ultranationalist at the Greek Cypriot Ministry of Education and Culture convinced his government to revise its own atlas. A new system for transliterating the Greek alphabet was adopted in order to "purify" the language of Cypriot influence and bring about a kind of linguistic enosis with mainland Greek; villages were rechristened in honor of EOKA heroes; and Nicosia, presumed to be an anglicized name for the capital, was abandoned in favor of Lefkosia, one letter different from the Turkish spelling. As in the north, most southern residents simply ignore the new road signs, and several villages have maintained their old names in defiance of government orders. U.N. cartographers, meanwhile, try to employ internationally recognized spellings while disclaiming that the names on their maps "do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations." Most names used in this article comply with U.N. maps.

SCOTT ANDERSON, THE TURKISH REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN CYPRUS:

"I will tell you a story about Cyprus. Once there was a snake, and one day this snake came into the house of a man who had a son. The snake bit the man's son and that son died, so in his grief the man took up a knife and cut off the snake's tail. The next day the snake came back and said to the man, 'Okay, now let's be friends.' The man said, 'We can never be friends, because you killed my son, and that is a pain I will carry in my heart forever, and I cut off your tail, and that is a pain you will carry in your heart forever.' So that is why there can never be peace in Cyprus."

—elderly Turkish Cypriot woman

An old man and a scruffy white dog stand at the edge of an empty swimming pool, both seemingly lost in thought as they stare into its depth. The pool is exceptionally deep—maybe fifteen feet—and lined with cracks, its bottom covered with a thick layer of dead leaves. The man spots me on the opposite side of the gate and beckons me through.

"Very bad design," the man mutters when I come alongside. "Big problems."

I ask if he's thinking of repairing it.

"No, no," he chuckles. "It has been like this for twenty-five years. It is a museum." He looks to the three-story house beyond; it is an angular structure, concrete balconies and windows perched above the sea. "All this is a museum. In 1974 it was the home of [President] Makarios's doctor; now it is for the Peace Operation martyrs."

In the early-morning hours of July 20, 1974, advance units of the Turkish amphibious force started coming ashore in a small cove about three miles west of this house on the north coast of Cyprus. It marked the beginning of what Turkish Cypriots still call the "Peace Operation." A matter of definition, perhaps, because the most immediate results of that operation were the deaths of as many as 4,000 soldiers and civilians, the dislocation of over 200,000 more, and an international crisis that very nearly led to regional war. I'm not here to quibble, though; the old man starts toward the house, and I follow.

Map by Tony Linnaco

It was a cold overcast day, and I had headed west out of the coastal resort town of Kyrenia to explore the nearby beaches where the Turkish soldiers had first come ashore in 1974. I had stopped at a memorial park on a bluff overlooking the sea, an austere mausoleum with the graves of some seventy Turkish soldiers arrayed before an abstract sculpture of bent black metal. To one side lay another kind of graveyard, some two dozen old tanks and armored personnel carriers parked in neat rows and surrounded by flower beds and trees. Most of the weaponry appeared to be of 1950s vintage, the feeble armor the Greek Cypriots had mustered to oppose the Turkish army, and the joint ravages of combat and pilferage had transformed them into empty husks. It was while walking amid the tanks that I had glanced over the fence to see the man and his dog by the swimming pool.

At the entranceway to the house, the old man stops and draws my attention to the scars in the flagstone wall. "This is where they killed Karaoglanoglu," he says, referring to the Turkish ground forces' commander killed early in the invasion. He points to a nearby clump of trees. "The Greeks were hiding in there, and when Karaoglanoglu peacefully approached this door—*tok!*—a mortar." He shakes his head sadly, then pushes open the door and motions me inside.

The far side of the house is a wall of windows, and just beyond is the Mediterranean, all whitecaps and thrashing waves on this stormy day. The bottom floor is taken up with display cases of captured Greek weapons, fragments of shells and grenades. Upstairs are four rooms, each lined with row upon row of black-and-white photographs of young men in formal pose, Turkish soldiers killed in the Peace Operation. Some of the photos appear to be from high school graduations, the teenagers in civilian dress and smiling, whereas others look to be enlargements of military identification cards, the subjects more somber and with shaved heads. Here and there are glass display cases containing the dress uniforms of dead officers and their personal effects: wallet-size photographs of wives or children or girlfriends, letters home written on thin paper, medals.

If not much of a Peace Operation, the first phase of the Turks' 1974 invasion was also not much of a military triumph. In fact, it was pretty much a fiasco, a detail glossed over by the Turkish government but given unintended confirmation by the neat juxtaposition of the rows of "martyr" photographs in the oceanfront museum with the display of antique enemy weaponry in the adjacent field.

On that first day, all had gone rather smoothly for the Turkish soldiers. Coming ashore at the western end of Five-Mile Beach, the 6,000-man vanguard had met little resistance and by evening had fanned out along the coastline; in the morning, commanders planned to cross over the Kyrenia mountains and link up with the paratroop unit that had landed just outside Nicosia—or Lefkosa, as it is known to the Turks. It was with nightfall that things began to go awry.

Incredibly, the naval armada that had delivered the vanguard to the Cyprus coast headed back to Turkey at dusk—and so did the jet fighters that had provided air cover throughout the day. Even more incredibly, there was virtually no communication link between the landing force on the island and military planners on the mainland. Greek Cypriot fighters, complemented by Greek soldiers, seized the moment to attack all along the Turkish line, surrounding the paratroop unit outside Lefkosa and streaming down from caves in the mountains above Five-Mile Beach to fall upon the landing units strung out along the coast. Throughout the night, ferocious battles raged as positions were overrun, retaken, and lost again in a chaos of close combat made worse by raging brushfires.



GREEK MOTHERS DISPLAY PHOTOS OF THEIR MISSING SONS AND HUSBANDS

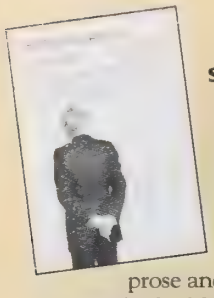
At dawn the Turkish air force finally returned to the skies, and what had been a seesaw battle now turned into a slaughter. Turkish planes bombed military positions across the island, decimated Greek Cypriot armored convoys caught in the open, and cleared their entrenched mountain positions with napalm. By the time a cease-fire was declared the next day, the Turkish army had carved out a narrow enclave that extended all the way to the Turkish Cypriot neighborhoods of Lefkosa.

But the Peace Operation wasn't done just yet. Over the next three weeks, as diplomats franti-

Photograph by Scott Peterson / Gamma Liaison

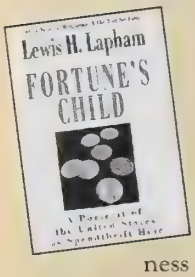
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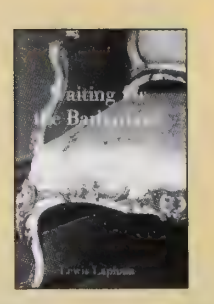
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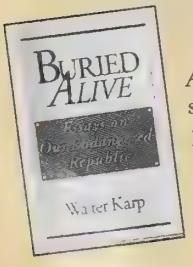
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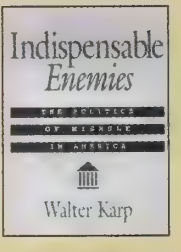
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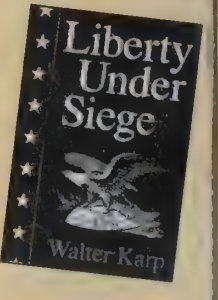
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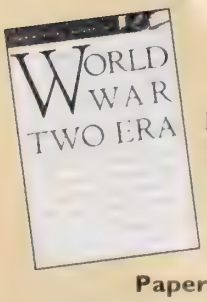
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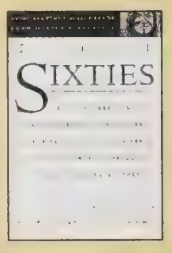
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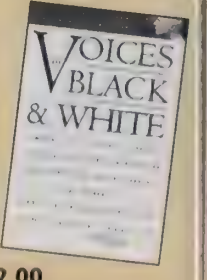
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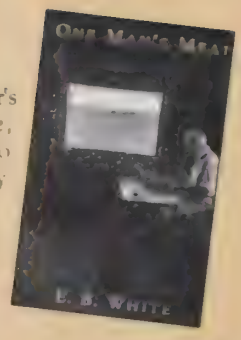


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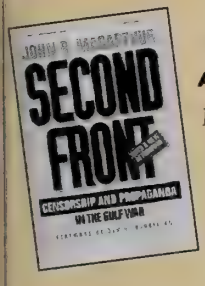
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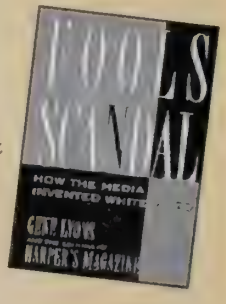


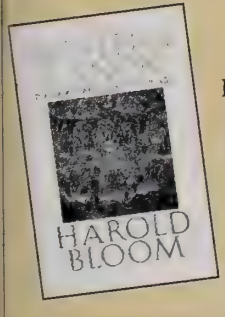
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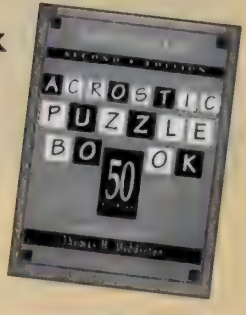


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cally sought a solution to the crisis, Turkey quietly built up its force on Cyprus to some 30,000 troops—and they were ready to roll when the peace talks collapsed. In just three days the Turks poured out of their bridgehead to seize more than a third of the island and create the frontier they still hold today.

It's all a little hard to imagine at ground level, however. Up close, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus resembles nothing so much as a quiet, slightly raffish tourist destination. The once-pretty villages along the northern coast have been transformed into sprawls of cheap hotels and fish restaurants, weird concoctions in faux-Tudor or -Bavarian style to lure the British and German vacationers who predominate. Those



AT THE EDGE OF THE BUFFER ZONE

who tire of lolling on the beach can take hikes in the hills, visit the ruins of castles, or play the slots at one of the grim roadside casinos. Along with tourism, the TRNC has become an international tax haven—"an ideal place for foreign businessmen," government brochures exhort—with an array of dubious-looking offshore banks tucked away in the backstreets of Lefkosa.

Lurking at the edges of the landscape, however, is a parallel universe—the martyrs. Over the past twenty-five years the Turkish Cypriots and their mainland Turkey protectors have studded the countryside with monuments and cemeteries and museums dedicated to those who have fallen, and the message these buildings and fields carry is directed equally at the villagers in the hills and the tourists on the beach: this is a land created by blood and defended by blood; there can be no return to the old days.

In the story of their existence, the Turkish Cypriots weave an epic tale of victimization and dominance. From their vantage point, history has been a 400-year-long siege in which the majority Greek Cypriots have never ceased trying, through both force of arms and guile, to force them into an intolerable union with Greece—or to push them off the island altogether. Nowhere does this mythology more radically diverge from that of the Greeks than in the interwar period of 1964 to 1974, between the collapse of the republic and the arrival of Turkish troops.

In the Greeks' telling, this was the island's golden age, an idyllic time when the two communities coexisted in harmony. In the Turks' rendition, it was the time when the noose was steadily tightening around their necks, when they were forced to seek safety in tiny vulnerable enclaves, and any trip outside the "ghettos" meant constant harassment by Greek Cypriot authorities or worse. With the bloody EOKA coup against Makarios in July 1974, Turkish Cypriots figured that they were the next targets for annihilation, once the Greek moderates were dealt with, making the Turkish Peace Operation a justified act of defense.

That sentiment is firmly on display in the monument built above the little cove on Five-Mile Beach where the Turkish soldiers came ashore. Just down from a great pillar of concrete jutting out of the ground at such an angle as to be nicknamed "the Turkish erection" are seven concrete stele that purport to tell, in brief words and bad etchings, the history of modern Cyprus.

The first two stele borrow heavily from Picasso's *Guernica:* lots of unhappy people and animals afloat in flames. By the third panel, help is on the way: lantern-jawed Turkish soldiers stride into the fiery wasteland with drawn swords, their progress heralded by flittering doves of peace. For the rest of the monument, the warriors for peace continue apace, the flames gradually tamped out, the doves joined by blooming flowers and pretty—if slightly lantern-jawed—girls.

Other honorifics to the Turkish Cypriots' version of a martyr-filled history are scattered throughout the TRNC. The former Greek fishing village of Ayios Yeoryios, where Colonel Karaoglanoglu was killed, has been renamed in his honor, and Five-Mile Beach is now officially the Beach of the Resolute Outbreak. Beside the old Venetian wall of Famagusta is a little graveyard with a sign in Turkish, English, and German that reads: "Armed Greek Cypriots and Greek thugs tried to eliminate everything Turkish to achieve *enosis*; in this cemetery lie Turks who, unarmed and defenceless, were martyred by Greek Cypriots and Greeks." In Lefkosa the government has built a Museum of National Struggle, perhaps to maintain parity with the Museum of National Struggle on the Greek side of the city.

Photograph by Markus Metzel / Black Star

In at least one sphere of the museum competition, however, the Turkish Cypriots have achieved hegemony. Located on Mehmet Akif Boulevard, the Museum of Barbarism is a single-story whitewashed building set in an unruly yard of flowers and fruit trees and surrounded by much newer and taller structures: chrome-and-glass auto dealerships, five-story office buildings. The particular acts of Greek barbarism it is dedicated to are those of 1963, and the curators have clearly opted for the scared-straight approach. Lining the walls of the foyer are a dozen ghastly black-and-white photographs of Turkish Cypriots of all ages lying dead in fields, in morgues, being exhumed from burial pits, their bodies bullet-riddled, knife-slashed, decomposed.

The Museum of Barbarism stays on its theme. In each of its several small side rooms, each lit with a bare light bulb dangling from the ceiling, is an unbroken line of similarly grotesque photographs mounted at eye level. Some of the captions identify the victims and detail the circumstances of death, but others are more general: "another innocent victim of the brutal Greek campaign to exterminate the Turkish population."

In the museum's largest room, one comes to an ominous display: a glass sarcophagus filled with bath towels and baby shoes. Instead of murder photos, two walls of this room are lined with the personal snapshots of a young family. One shows a young boy at a table crowded with other young boys, staring at a large cake set before him. "Murat, pensive on his seventh birthday," the caption reads. "With his left hand on his cheek, he tries to guess what the future has in store for him on this happy occasion, not knowing of course that he has few days left to live."

As it turns out, in 1963 this little house on Mehmet Akif Boulevard was the home of an army doctor, Major Nihat Ilhan; his wife, Muruvet; and their three young sons, including seven-year-old Murat. The major happened to be away when EOKA gunmen attacked on the night of December 24, but they found his family huddled for safety in the bathtub; the next morning, a photographer dutifully recorded the grisly scene. That photograph—Muruvet Ilhan lying dead in the bathtub, her three dead boys clutched to her chest, the bathroom walls and floor sprayed with blood—is now such an iconic image in Turkish Cyprus that the museum curators have hung several large copies of it, along with two paintings that seek to faithfully replicate the scene, as if only repetition can convey its awfulness.

But it is more than just an image, for beyond the sarcophagus of bath towels is the bathroom itself, untouched for thirty-six years. Beneath a coat of dust, a white bottle of liquid soap still stands on the edge of the bathroom sink, and the tub and walls bear the same cracks and bullet holes as in the photograph. "The marks on the ceiling," a small sign above the tub reads, "are brain pieces and blood spots belonging to the murdered."

SEBASTIAN JUNGER, REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS:

Posted at the Ledra Street viewpoint—alongside photos of Greek refugees and buildings pancaked by Turkish bombs—is a list of what the Turks gained by invading Cyprus. According to the Cyprus government, the Turks gained 70 percent of the island's gross output, 65 percent of the tourist accommodations, 83 percent of the general cargo capacity, and 48 percent of the agricultural exports. Those are just numbers, though; Greek Cypriots generally don't grab you in bars and complain about their loss of cargo capacity. They grab you and complain about the city of Famagusta.

Famagusta lies near the center of a long scallop of bay on the eastern shore of the island, facing Syria. In the thirteenth century it was the wealthiest port in the Mediterranean, and before 1974 its Varosha district, now a Turkish military base, was the most fashionable beach resort on the islands, flooded every spring by English and Scandinavian tourists. Like Nicosia, it is surrounded by massive stone walls that were reenforced in the sixteenth century by Venetian military engineers bracing for the arrival of the Ottomans. The invasion finally came in 1570. As any Greek Cypriot can recount, 50,000 Turks came ashore in the withering heat of midsummer, led by a sadist named Lala Mustafa. After sacking Nicosia and killing 20,000 of its inhabitants, Mustafa led his forces against Famagusta, which was defended by a garrison of Venetian soldiers.

THE LANDSCAPE OF CYPRUS IS HAUNTED BY MONUMENTS, CEMETERIES, AND MUSEUMS DEDICATED TO THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN

The Turks hammered the thick stone walls with an estimated 100,000 cannonballs until the Venetian commander, Marcantonio Bragadino, finally ran out of supplies. Bragadino arranged for peaceful terms of surrender, but the Turks—enraged by the losses they had suffered while taking the city—started torturing and killing Bragadino's soldiers. When Bragadino objected, Mustafa ordered that his ears and nose be cut off and that he be skinned alive. The skin was stuffed with straw and mounted on a wagon, and legend has it that Bragadino lived long enough to behold his own gruesome double paraded through the streets

of Famagusta with a parasol stuck in its arms.

Four hundred years later the Turkish army walked back into the city. It was August 1974, "phase two" of the Turkish invasion, and Famagusta's Greek Cypriot inhabitants had grabbed whatever they could and fled south to the small farming town of Dherinia. From a gently sloping hill they could look down on the beautiful beaches and now-empty hotels that had been their home just hours before. It almost certainly didn't occur to them that the situation was permanent; it almost certainly didn't occur to them—late in the twentieth century— that upper-middle-class Europeans could be driven out of their beach homes by a modern army without the rest of the world intervening. They were wrong.

THE GREEK CYPRIOTS DIDN'T BELIEVE THEY COULD BE DRIVEN FROM THEIR HOMES WITHOUT THE REST OF THE WORLD INTERVENING. THEY WERE WRONG

Now the closest they can get to Famagusta is a hillside several miles away where they can look out at the city. Two "viewpoint" cafés have sprung up, each boasting Turkish-atrocity photos and a rooftop viewing platform. I stop at the one called Annita's because it also overlooks a spot where two Greek Cypriots were killed by TRNC forces in 1996. Annita's is a three-story apartment building on the edge of a desolate swath of Dherinia suburb that abuts the buffer zone. Across the street is a roll of razor wire and then several hundred yards of untended fields and then more razor wire. A flagpole flying the TRNC flag—a red sickle moon and star against a white background—marks the beginning of "the pseudo-state."

I climb three flights of stairs to the café, sit down at a table, and order a coffee. It arrives with a pair of binoculars. On the wall of the café is a stop-action sequence of a young Greek Cypriot named Tassos Isaak getting beaten to death in a field; the field is the one I can see out the window. Next to the photos is a placard: "On the 11th of August, 1996, the barbarian Turkish settlers brutally murdered in cold blood and in full view of the UNFICYP, Austrian contingent, a peace-loving 24-year-old Cypriot. They used truncheons and metal bars to crush the spirit of freedom."



U.N. SOLDIERS ATTEMPT TO RESCUE TASSOS ISAAK

The events that led to Isaak's death were set in motion when the European Federation of Motorcyclists organized a ride to protest the Turkish occupation of Cyprus. One hundred and twenty riders left the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin on August 2, 1996, and proceeded on a one-week tour of Europe. They wound up in Cyprus on August 10, and, after joining forces with some 7,000 bikers from the Cyprus Motorcycle Federation, promptly declared their intention to crash the cease-fire line. After pressure from the U.N., Cypriot president Glafcos Clerides finally forced the bikers to change their plans, but thousands of protesters gathered in the Dherinia area anyway. The Cyprus police were deployed along the cease-fire line near what is now Annita's but had left the checkpoint unmanned, and by midafternoon the protesters had pushed their way into the buffer zone and started screaming at the Turkish troops. They were quickly confronted by a rough crowd of a thousand Turkish Cypriots who had been bused in by the Turkish military. The Turkish counter-demonstrators were predominantly civilians but carried bats and iron bars, and some were members of a vicious nationalistic group called the Grey Wolves, who had come from Turkey to deliver—in their words—"a special surprise package" to the motorcyclists.

Watching all this was Rauf Denktash, president of the TRNC, recording the events with a camera and telephoto lens. A melee broke out in the buffer zone, and as Turkish troops started firing into the crowd, four Greek Cypriots—including Isaak—got hopelessly tangled up in razor wire. UNFICYP policemen managed to pull three of them free, but Isaak fell to the ground and was quickly surrounded by an ugly knot of Grey Wolves. Photographs taken from the Greek Cypriot side show him desperately trying to ward off the blows while Grey Wolves and Turkish police officers in riot gear take turns beating him on the head with truncheons and iron bars. By the time UNFICYP peacekeepers managed to get to him, Isaak was dead.

A wall-mounted television at Annita's café plays, in a continuous loop, news footage of Isaak's death, as well as footage of the next death three days later. On the afternoon of August 14, immediately after Isaak's funeral, a few hundred motorcyclists returned to the same spot

Photograph from Gamma Liaison

outside Annita's and again managed to get past the Greek Cypriot police into the buffer zone. Among them was Isaak's cousin, twenty-six-year-old Solomos Solomou. Footage of the second protest shows Solomou dodging past two UNFICYP soldiers and slipping through a gap in the fence that separates the buffer zone from Turkish territory. Waiting for him was a line of Turkish troops, machine guns at the ready, and a cluster of state security officers on the balcony of a nearby building. Solomou managed to cross the Turkish cease-fire line and make it to a large white pole that was flying the TRNC flag. While security officers leveled their weapons at him and UNFICYP soldiers looked on in amazement, Solomou started shinnying up the pole.

He made it about a quarter of the way up before a red splotch blossomed on his neck and he slid back down to the ground. A total of five bullets hit him in the stomach, neck, and face. News photographs clearly show two security officers—later identified by the Greek Cypriot police as Kenan Akin, now a TRNC member of parliament, and Erdal Emanet, chief of the TRNC special forces—firing pistols from the building, quickly followed by Turkish troops kneeling and firing into the crowd of protesters. Two UNFICYP soldiers and seven Greek Cypriots were wounded, including a fifty-nine-year-old woman who had shown up to try to convince her son to come home.

I scan the buffer zone with the binoculars that came with my coffee, but it just looks like every other weeded-over field I've ever seen. The windows of the two-story building that the Turkish security forces fired from have been bricked in, with slits left for machine-gun barrels, and the TRNC flag still flies on the pole that Solomou tried to climb. I watch the video loop of the killings several times and then get back in my car and drive around until I find the cemetery where Isaak and Solomou are buried. It's a small plot of stone crypts surrounded by a concrete wall, tucked behind the town's soccer stadium. Isaak's grave is crowded with flowers, and several plastic-coated photographs of his own murder are propped against the gravestone. Solomou's gravestone is fancier. It depicts, in poured concrete, Solomou in the flagpole as Turkish soldiers level their guns to kill him. In a war with few casualties, along a front line with almost no gunfire, his tomb serves to remind people that there's still an enemy out there.

"The tragedy of Cyprus is that there is no tragedy," goes a sarcastic bit of local wisdom. The idea that there hasn't been enough suffering to merit world intervention is blasphemy, of course,



SOLOMOS SOLOMOU SECONDS BEFORE BEING SHOT BY TRNC SOLDIERS



AT THE FUNERAL OF SOLOMOS SOLOMOU

but there are still a few Greek Cypriots who believe this. They just have to be quiet about it. Later, after returning to Nicosia, I ask a longtime European diplomat what he thinks of the idea.

"Both sides revel in this sort of victimology," the diplomat says, asking not to be identified. "It's what we call a double-minority problem, where both sides feel like they're the oppressed minority. The Turkish Cypriots say that their security is threatened because they are a minority on the island. The Greek Cypriots argue that they're a minority if you take Turkey and Cyprus together. . . . And neither side will stand up to its obligations as an equal player in this dispute, so both sides wait for the other to take the first step."

The diplomat works in an ultra-high-security office near the Ledra Palace checkpoint. Out his window I can see a huge Turkish Cypriot flag marked out in stones on a distant hillside. Turkish troops supposedly went up there day after day and painted the design on the undersides of the stones. When they were done, they waited until nightfall and then turned all the rocks over. The next morning, the Greek Cypriots awoke to find

Photograph from Gamma Liaison (top); courtesy [illegible] (bottom)

a huge Turkish Cypriot flag emblazoned across the flanks of the Kyrenia range.

"Is there a solution?"

"The problem could be solved if you had cooperation between Greece and Turkey," says the diplomat. "Which is not on the horizon. If you look at Northern Ireland—I don't like drawing parallels, but this is quite a good one, actually—up until 1984 Britain and Ireland were at loggerheads, and the communities in Northern Ireland exploited this difference to ensure that the conflict just raged on. Then the British and Irish governments agreed to a joint policy on Northern Ireland and stuck to it, firmly. The two communities could not see any light between the policies of the two governments, and in the end they just had to come to terms with each other. If you had that kind of cooperation between the motherlands, the Cyprus problem could be solved pretty easily."



TURKISH FLAGS IN THE HILLS ABOVE NICOSIA

At the end of the interview the diplomat takes me up to the roof for a look at Nicosia.The sun is setting behind the Troodos Mountains, and we can hear the Muslim call to prayer drifting over from the north side of town. The buffer zone runs like an awkward scar through it all, and beyond it are the massive earthen berms of the Turkish defenses, dug in with tanks and artillery. The diplomat points out the slapdash Greek defenses on our side, and then traces the course of the buffer zone as it extends west. "It's filled with songbirds and wild animals," he says. "Hunters have killed everything else on the island, and it's the one place they can't go."

SCOTT ANDERSON, THE TURKISH REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN CYPRUS:

As purported warlords go, Rauf Denktash, the president of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, doesn't much look the part. A short portly man of seventy-five who bears a striking resemblance to Homer Simpson, he speaks English with just the trace of a British inflection—a result of his legal training in London in the 1940s—and is most often photographed in baggy sweat suits. On this day, sitting in his office in the heavily guarded Presidential Compound in downtown Lefkosa, he wears a business suit. The office is spacious and sunlit, and he shares it with a large aquarium of tropical fish and three very noisy parakeets, in a cage beside his massive desk.

For over four decades Denktash has been the dominant political figure in the Turkish community of Cyprus. One of the chief organizers of the outlawed Turkish Defence Organization back in the 1950s—and twice expelled from Cyprus for his violent militancy—he has been president of the TRNC since its founding. Obviously, such a man knows how to parry journalists, and the evening before our meeting I'd asked a local reporter the best way to handle him.

"Above all, don't ask him anything historical," the journalist urged. "As soon as you give him the chance to mention the constitution of 1960, you're doomed; you're going to get the Denktash history lesson for the next half hour."

Well, forewarned is forearmed. Sitting across from the president at the couch-and-coffee-table arrangement in one corner of his office, I ask my first, carefully designed, question.

"I'm already quite familiar with the history of Cyprus and—because I know you're a very busy man—I'd like to concentrate on what is happening today, on what you feel is most important for Americans to know about the TRNC and the current situation in Cyprus."

The president nods. "What I would like Americans to know is that Cyprus has two owners, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, and these two owners had agreed to form a partnership republic in 1960."

As the journalist had suggested the previous night: "doomed." With never a pause, Denktash begins his discourse on the island's modern history from the Turkish viewpoint: the rise of the EOKA terrorists in the 1950s; the 1960 London Agreement, which the Greeks immediately sabotaged; the terror that had existed in the Turkish enclaves throughout the 1960s; how the 1974 Turkish Peace Operation had undoubtedly saved them all from EOKA annihilation; the political stasis that has existed ever since.

"And what do you see as the ultimate solution to the Cyprus problem?" I finally manage, because even the most energetic seventy-five-year-old has to pause sometime.

"A bicommunal confederation," Denktash says. "That's it. The Greek Cypriots must recognize our legitimacy and our right to govern ourselves. We've never made any claim on them—we've never

Photograph by Jon Jones / Sygma

called Cyprus a Turkish island, we have always recognized that we share this small island with them—and they must view and treat us the same way. I have said this to the Greek Cypriots many times, and they have always refused to hear it."

Underlying Denktash's comments is a deep resentment of the Republic of Cyprus's ability to keep his domain isolated from the rest of the world. Since Turkey is the only country in the world that officially recognizes the TRNC, it means that international flights do not land there, all diplomatic missions are kept at the "interests-section" level, and all incoming mail is routed through a drop box on the Turkish mainland. On the flip side, the isolation gives offshore companies in the TRNC an enormous advantage over companies that have to adhere to international standards, and helps to fortify Denktash's state-of-siege message to his people.

In the Greek Cypriot worldview, Rauf Denktash is either the consummate political opportunist, his power dependent on his ability to keep the island divided, or a puppet of mainland Turkey and its "occupation" forces. In reality, Denktash appears to be enormously popular across the political and social strata of the TRNC. With a repetition that is at first quaint, then becomes tedious, his countrymen have the habit of calling him "the father of our nation," and make frequent comparisons to Kemal Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey. At times it seems that almost everyone in the country, whether expatriates along the north coast or farmers in the most remote and impoverished mountain village, has had some surprise personal encounter with the president. Usually these involve Denktash, a serious photography hobbyist, tramping through the countryside in his baggy sweat suits with a camera around his neck, his small security detail following at a discreet distance. And although there certainly are those who feel that he is getting too old for the post, his political power hasn't diminished; in each of the five presidential elections he has stood for, Denktash has emerged triumphant.

Even more remarkable is the degree to which his take on the "Cyprus problem" and how to resolve it is shared by his countrymen. If a visitor to the TRNC is not careful, he or she will be subjected to the "Denktash history lesson" by virtually anyone. Across the political spectrum—and with over a dozen political parties, that spectrum runs from hard-socialist to neo-fascist—nearly all party leaders have adopted Denktash's talk of a "bicommunal confederation," even if they can't quite articulate what that means. To a degree I've not encountered in any other ethnic conflict zone in the world—not in Bosnia or Sri Lanka, certainly not in Israel—the Turkish Cypriots appear to speak as one, and they have chosen Rauf Denktash to do the talking.

This is not to say, however, that the TRNC stands as some monoracial *volksland*; rather, it is a place full of quirky little anomalies, reminders of the past that the government has never quite decided whether to tout or be defensive about. In the Karpas peninsula, the long thin finger of land that extends to the northeast, some 600 Greek Cypriots have chosen to remain in their native villages rather than move south, as have a few hundred Maronite Catholics in the western town of Kormakiti; today these stalwarts continue to receive weekly deliveries of "emergency" supplies by United Nations troops. TRNC officials often cite the existence of these communities as proof of their live-and-let-live philosophy but become noticeably fretful at the prospect of a visitor actually going to them and hearing the residents' litany of complaints against the government.

BEYOND THE SCAR OF THE BUFFER ZONE ARE THE MASSIVE EARTHEN BERMS OF THE TURKISH DEFENSES, DUG IN WITH TANKS AND ARTILLERY

Throughout the countryside, Greek Orthodox churches have either been boarded up or retrofitted to serve as mosques, and with a frequency that defies coincidence, Orthodox shrines have the bad habit of occupying vitally strategic land, cordoned off behind barbed wire in militarily restricted zones and off-limits to all outsiders. With those Greek monuments that the government simply cannot remove from view—like the beautiful little monastery of Apostolas Varnavas (St. Barnabas) on the Mesaoria plains, one of the most important Orthodox sites on the entire island—they seem to rely on more subtle discouragement; although major highways in the TRNC pass close by, neither posts signs to the monastery.

To fill up this landscape, with all its vestiges of Hellenistic culture, and to fill up all the formerly Greek villages that were abandoned after the invasion—after all, only 40,000 people moved north to replace the 175,000 who moved south—the TRNC has energetically tried to woo others to move in. Most controversial have been the "Turkish settlers," thousands of peasants from Anatolia, one of the poorest regions in mainland Turkey, who have taken over entire villages on the Mesaoria and built new towns in the flatlands below Famagusta. Socially conservative and largely uneducated, the settlers are looked down upon by the far more liberal and cultured native Cypriots, and are a source of rage for Greek Cypriots, who see them as interlopers illegally occupying old "Greek land."

At the other extreme are the expatriates, mostly British and Germans, who have either taken up permanent residence in the TRNC or maintain summer homes here—and nowhere is their privileged status more in evidence than in the picturesque village of Karmi. Nestled in the Kyrenia mountains overlooking Five-Mile Beach, Karmi was a Greek Cypriot village until 1974; today it is "European-only" by law, meaning that not just Greeks and mainland Turks are forbidden to own property there but Cypriots as well. Over a game of pool at the cozy Crow's Nest pub, the owner, a good-natured Brit named Steve Clark, explains how that came about.

"Well, once the Turks came ashore in '74, the fuzzies [Greeks] all took off across the mountains—can't say I blame them—and this place just fell apart. A few foreigners were living up here, and they finally got together and went to Denktash and said, 'The only way this village is going to come back is if you make it all-European.' Denktash agreed, and that's the way it has been ever since."

Given twenty-five-year leases in return for renovating the village's dilapidated homes, the "Europeans" quickly transformed Karmi into a reasonable facsimile of a Cypriot hill town, if a bit abundant with flower boxes and cute house names. Judging by the minutes of their last town meeting—tacked up in an announcement box on the main square right next to the old Greek church—the residents' most pressing concerns revolve around rising water bills, noisy dogs, and renters who play loud music. Oh, and the ongoing struggle to get their leases extended for another forty-nine years.

THE EUROPEAN EXPATRIATES DISPLAY AN ANGER, TINGED WITH RACISM, TOWARD THE GREEKS THAT ONE RARELY HEARS AMONG THE TURKISH CYPRIOTS

"President Denktash has done a lot for us—well, for the whole country," says a slightly hammered Englishwoman at the Crow's Nest, "but we're having a very difficult time getting a clear answer on the leases."

Although many of the other expatriates living along the north coast find the apartheid quality of Karmi distasteful, they share the sentiments of the town's residents in at least one crucial aspect. Like determined expatriates everywhere, there is the tinge of the zealous convert about them. They tend to paint the Cyprus conflict in stark black-and-white: the Turks have done no wrong, are practically incapable of doing wrong; unification would be "a disaster, a holocaust"; the Greeks are lazy, scheming, vicious, never to be trusted. There is an anger, tinged with racism, to the "Europeans" that one rarely hears among the Turkish Cypriots, and many have directed that anger into lobbying politicians "back home" to grant full recognition to the TRNC—a point that will surely not be lost on President Denktash when the lease-extension papers finally reach his desk.

Not surprisingly, the Greek Cypriots have seized on each one of these issues—the desecration of antiquities, the "flood" of Turkish settlers, the "illegal occupations" in Karmi—and added them to their Thousand Points of Plight campaign. For each one, though, Rauf Denktash has a quick and ready response.

As I listen to the president, I begin to wonder how many times he has answered these same questions, given the same lecture—to visiting diplomats, to journalists, to assemblies of his countrymen—and it finally dawns on me why he simply ignored my first question and led me back into history. Because there's really nothing else to talk about. The current situation in Cyprus? Same as last year, same as twenty years ago. Albeit a Greek legend, there is something rather Sisyphean about Rauf Denktash. He has been saying essentially the same thing for twenty-five years, and no one but his choir has listened. The Greek Cypriots, the American and U.N. peace negotiators who periodically shuttle around the island, have always looked for an angle, an opening, and there never has been one. Rauf Denktash is obdurate and unyielding and steeped in history because so are his people.

"Do you ever get tired of this?" I ask. "Hearing the same questions, giving the same answers? Do you ever think of just chucking it all and retiring to Switzerland?"

Denktash slips into a slight smile. "No. I feel it is part of my duty as president to get our message out to the rest of the world in any way I can. Of that I can never tire. And Switzerland is too cold."

At the end of our long interview, as the president is walking me to the door, he suddenly veers over to a high bookcase. Standing on his tiptoes, he reaches up and pulls down an oversize paperback book and hands it to me. It is a collection of the photographs he has taken of his little domain over the years. I quickly leaf through it to show my appreciation—there are some nice portraits of villagers, others that look like standard postcards—and I think of the photograph I've seen of him, his camera strapped around his neck, watching the violent events of August 1996 unfold in the no-man's-land outside Dherinia.

"If the situation in Cyprus was exactly the same fifty years from now," I ask, "would that bother you?"

For the first time, Denktash seems caught slightly off-guard. He glances over his bookshelf

"Well, I would like to think that at some point progress would be made, that other nations will recognize our legitimacy."

"But you've found ways to work around that. You have security, you have a homeland. If nothing changed, would it bother you?"

He gives me a shrug. "Not really."

SEBASTIAN JUNGER, REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS:

If you go to Cyprus, pretty soon you will hear about Pyla, a small town outside Larnaca where Turkish and Greek Cypriots live together in peace. The town falls entirely within the buffer zone, so neither side was able to claim it as their own. During the Turkish invasion both sides, at different times, sought protection from the U.N., and today they still live together, literally under the shadow of an UNFICYP observation post. "Together" is a relative term, though. There are two mayors, two town halls, two post offices, two phone systems, and two cafés. There are, in effect, two towns, although Greek Cypriots invariably offer up Pyla as a shining example of bicommunal cooperation.

The other thing Pyla is famous for is fresh fish, a vestige of the black-market trade that once existed in the town. Since the TRNC isn't a recognized country, it may ignore such niceties as import duties and copyright laws, allowing Turkish Cypriot merchants to sell Western knockoffs to Greek Cypriots at rock-bottom prices. Ten years ago Pyla boasted forty or fifty Turkish shops doing a booming business in leather jackets, designer jeans, cheap sunglasses, and basketball shoes, but Greek Cypriot authorities eventually cracked down on the cross-border trade, because any commerce with the TRNC, legitimate or otherwise, was seen as a de facto acceptance of an illegal government and therefore a violation of Greek Cypriot law. Besides, shop owners in Larnaca were losing business. Police started pulling cars over outside Pyla and confiscating illegal goods, and pretty soon the only thing left for sale was fish caught in the TRNC.

I drive to Pyla on a beautiful early-spring day with the tree buds suddenly opening up and the Mediterranean sparkling blue and flawless in the distance. Pyla looks like every other farming town in the area, a cluster of small stone houses and cheap apartment blocks set amidst the stubbornly uninteresting fields of eastern Cyprus. There are no checkpoints on the road into town and no policemen to show my papers to, so I just drive in and park in the main square. There is a Greek café on one side, a Turkish café on the other, and a UNFICYP observation tower in the middle. On a nearby hill are a Turkish machine-gun position and a huge metal cut-out of Ataturk in profile, striding down the slope into town.

Since there is open access on both sides, Scott has decided to meet me here for a drink, and as soon as I step out of the car, he comes walking up and shakes my hand. I'm worried that after a week of Turkish propaganda he'll start gibbering about Greek atrocities, but he seems unchanged. He's been here for an hour and has already arranged an interview with the Turkish mayor, or mukhtar, so we cross the square and step into a street-level office with a big plate-glass window. The mukhtar's name is Mehmet Sakali. He wears an old blue suit, frayed at the cuffs, and a black wool sweater over a shirt and tie. His shoes need resoling, and he has the kind of leathery skin that you usually see on farmers or ranch hands. Scott asks how relations are between the two communities.



KEEPING WATCH IN THE BUFFER ZONE

"Not so well," he says. "No Turks go to Greek Cypriot coffee shops and no Greek Cypriots go to Turkish coffee shops. If a Greek comes and talks to a Turk, the spies in town will interrogate them. Day by day, they try to keep the people apart."

"How were relations before?"

"They were fine until 1958," the mayor says. "Then EOKA started killing people."

Scott and I have been told that the U.N. awarded Pyla a $1 million renovation grant several years ago, but the town lost the money because no one could agree on how to spend it. It was an important moment, because a successful collaboration would have served as a model for the rest of Cyprus. And bicommunal activities, as they're called, would greatly help the Greek Cypriot case for being accepted into the European Union, something they have lobbied for energetically over the loud objections of the Turkish Cypriots. Scott asks him what happened.

"We built a coffee shop and a church with the money," says Sakali, "but we can't agree on any-

Photograph by Jobard / Sipa Press

thing else because the Greeks insisted on all Greek workers. I've worked with three other Greek mukhtars, but now the Cyprus government is getting into everything and it's no good. We've set up meetings ten times, and each time this mukhtar has refused to come or has sent his town clerk. So how can I trust him?"

Scott gives me a baleful stare, which I ignore. After the interview we have a drink at the Greek Cypriot café, and then Scott leaves town and I go to talk to the Greek Cypriot mayor. He's not in, but the town clerk is, a clean-shaven young man named Stavrous Stavron. He offers me a seat in his gleaming new office and asks me what I need to know. I repeat the same questions we asked the Turkish mayor, starting with relations between the two sides.



WAR-RAVAGED BUILDINGS IN THE TRNC

"It depends on what you're looking at," he says. "You can see neighbors living together peacefully and you can see a village coming into conflict. It's intervention from the outside—by that I mean the politicians—that causes tension. The last year has been very difficult because the new [Turkish] mayor is a protégé of the extremists."

I tell him that the "new mayor"—Sakali—says the deal fell through because the Greek Cypriot mayor kept refusing to meet with him. Stavron shakes his head. "We ended up employing three Greek Cypriots to repair the Orthodox church and twelve Turkish Cypriots to renovate the Turkish coffee shop. Both projects were finished successfully, but then there were elections on the Turkish side and the new mukhtar won without any opposition. The old mukhtar was forced to not be a candidate—that's what I mean by 'outside influence.'"

It seems that Sakali—presumably a puppet of the Denktash regime—sabotaged the project by insisting on complete Turkish control, which of course the Greek Cypriots couldn't accept. After using only $100,000 of the million-dollar grant, Pyla had to relinquish the rest because the two sides could not come to an agreement. That each side would pass up nearly a million dollars in order to make the other side look bad is a devastating comment on the political leadership in Cyprus. If they can't cooperate here—in a fully integrated town that is crippled by unemployment—what chance do they have anywhere else?

"The old mukhtar was fair," Stavron adds wistfully. "He was a Turk—we knew he was a Turk, we knew we could never turn him into a Greek—but we appreciated his cooperation."

I thank Stavron for his time and walk back across the square. I have the impression that every person in town knows that Scott and I have been here and that half of them are still watching me through their window slats. I drive out to a Turkish restaurant for some of the fresh fish that Pyla is famous for. The meal is good but not good enough to make a town famous. I eat quickly and get back into the car. Dark clouds are rolling off the Troodos, and by the time I hit the highway a heavy cold rain is washing my windshield.

The Greek Cypriots can never win, I think, racing northwest toward Nicosia. The only thing that will bring stability to the island is a gradual meshing of the economies, and neither side will let that happen. The Greek Cypriots have stubbornly resisted doing any business with the TRNC because that would indirectly support the Denktash regime, and the TRNC has made it an unspoken policy to sabotage any budding relationship between the two countries. If peace came to Cyprus, the Greek Cypriots would become eligible for membership in the European Union, and that is something that Turkey—which has been rebuffed by the E.U.—could never accept. The only way out for the Greek Cypriots would be to recognize the TRNC diplomatically and declare the hostilities over, but that will never happen. Even acceptance into the E.U. isn't worth that.

And so the conflict groans on, and the peacekeepers keep walking their patrols.

"All the politicians in the south have been around since before independence," explains a prominent Greek Cypriot journalist (who, to my frustration, months later, requests that he not be identified, a reversal that testifies to the stifling paranoia of Cypriot politics). I seek him out the day after returning from Pyla. "They've made a career out of being defiant," he goes on. "These are the same guys who lost the war in '74.... They're prisoners of their own rhetoric; they know fuck-all about anything apart from the Cyprus problem."

The journalist is old enough to be part of the last generation to have any memory of the Turkish invasion. Anyone younger effectively grew up without contact with Turkish Cypriots and only knows what the government says about them. Clearly, he is tired of hearing it.

"No one will go on record and say it," he says, "but now your average man on the street would say, 'Why don't we just build a wall?'"

"Literally build a wall?"

"Yeah, a big wall, them on that side, us on this side," he says. "And we don't want to see them ever again."

Afterward I walk downtown for lunch. The

Photograph by Scott Peterson / Gamma Liaison

weather has cleared, and English tourists are again out in force. They wander in and out of Gucci and Benetton shops and sit at cafés with their faces turned to the sun. A few blocks away, thousands of Turkish troops wait in bunkers for their orders to attack. It'll never happen, I think. They already have what they want.

SCOTT ANDERSON, THE TURKISH REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN CYPRUS:

During my last few days in the TRNC, I travel with an interpreter provided by the government's Office of Public Information. It is an indication of how seriously the government takes its public relations initiative that the information office falls under the aegis of its Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Defence, but any concern that Ayshen, a pleasant if slightly stiff woman in her mid-thirties, has been assigned to keep tabs on me is soon dispelled: through most of the interviews, her boredom is palpable.

As it turns out, Ayshen is originally from the city of Limassol, in what is now the Republic of Cyprus. Her family was solidly upper-middle-class—her grandfather a large landowner, her father a physician—until they lost almost everything in the "enclave era" of the 1960s. After the 1974 partition they moved north as refugees, and Ayshen eventually went off to attend university in London; she returned to the TRNC only a few years ago, a decision she clearly regrets. "Always it is the same here," she says after one particularly long and tedious day of interviews. "The same politics, the same arguments. Sometimes I feel like I am caught in a nightmare and cannot wake up."

Until last year Ayshen had been active in the "bicommunal" talks initiative. Sponsored by the United Nations and international conflict-resolution groups, the talks were designed to bring together small groups of Turkish and Greek Cypriots—businessmen, intellectuals, educators—in hopes that the dialogues might lead to a political opening. Ridiculed by the governments and conservative media of both sides, the effort has largely been abandoned. "It is too bad," Ayshen says, because I felt it was important that we try anything that might change the situation." Now she carries the label of peacenik, which causes her some problems around the office.

Between interviews, Ayshen tries to steer me to the more pleasant places to be found in the TRNC, one being the St. Barnabas Monastery outside Famagusta. In the deserted inner courtyard, she sits on a stone bench beneath a bitter-lemon tree. "This is one of my favorite places in the whole country," she remarks, "this and the Karpas peninsula. Up there, it is so quiet—miles of empty beaches, small villages. It's the best place to go to get away from everything."

I know her well enough by now to know what she means by "everything": politics, the speeches, the Problem.

At St. Barnabas Monastery, we are just three or four miles from the Martyred Villages. In late July 1974, a few days after the first phase of the Turkish Peace Operation, EOKA gunmen seized three Turkish villages, led over eighty residents out into the fields to be shot, then threw their bodies in mass graves. Today the road connecting the villages is called Martyr's Way, and beside it are a couple of nearly identical memorial parks, both centered around a stone wall on which the names of the murdered have been carved, both containing free-standing posterboards displaying the same awful photographs of the mass-grave exhumations. Along Martyr's Way, large yellow signs, helpfully printed in both English and Turkish, point toward the actual mass graves.

When I mention our proximity to the Martyred Villages, Ayshen's mood falls.

"Do you want to go to them?" she asks.

When I say no, that I've already seen them, she seems tremendously relieved.

On my last day in the TRNC, I convince Ayshen to take me to the village of Tashkent, in the hills just north of Lefkosa. I am curious to see Tashkent, both because of the massive Turkish Cypriot flag that has been painted on the mountainside just outside it and because it is known as "the village of widows." The original Tashkent was in the south, and amid the fighting in 1974 nearly all the adult males had been rounded up and murdered by Greek Cypriot gunmen. In the population transfer of 1975, the Tashkent widows were brought north and given the formerly Greek village of Vouno as their new home.

"ALWAYS IT IS THE SAME HERE," MY TRANSLATOR AYSHEN SAYS. "SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE I AM CAUGHT IN A NIGHTMARE AND CANNOT WAKE UP"

Wandering around the village, I spot an old woman in black sitting on her porch on this sunlit day. Her name is Emine Mutallip, and sitting in the sun with her is her ninety-two-year-old father, Mustafa Sadik. Emine graciously brings out chairs for us to sit on and, at my instigation, begins to tell the story of those long-ago killings, the tragedy that took her husband and two brothers. Suddenly both she and her father burst into tears, and then Ayshen does as well.

Afterward, as we wander along Tashkent's main street, Ayshen apologizes for her outburst. "It brings back memories of my own family," she says. "I was just a little girl when I was in the

refugee camp, but I remember that we were very poor and I was always hungry. All my family, we had to flee to different places, and always my father was worried, trying to find the others, trying to learn if they were still alive. Three times in my childhood I was a refugee, but I have not thought about it for a long time."

As we drive down the long hill toward Lefkosa, however, I discover that there's another reason for Ayshen's unhappiness. Some ten days earlier, on the very day I had arrived in the TRNC, Turkish security agents in Nairobi had grabbed Abdullah Ocalan, the leader of the militant Kurdistan Worker's Party, and whisked him back to Turkey. Ocalan, a man the Turkish government holds responsible for the deaths of some 30,000 Turks and whom the United States government has classified as a terrorist, had been harbored in Kenya by the Greek embassy and had been traveling on a doctored Republic of Cyprus passport.

"For me, I think that is the end," Ayshen says in the car. "Before, I think I didn't want to believe how much the Greeks hated us, that maybe there was a way for us to live together again. But for them to support a man like Ocalan just because he kills Turks, now I see how much they hate us. Now I cannot see any way out of this."

As I drive, I think of what a hopeless, bitter place this is. Cyprus is like some boat sunk under a great weight of stones, and while the rest of the world talks of finding some way to refloat it, none of the stones is ever removed. Instead, the Greeks and Turks busy themselves finding more stones to drop onto the wreck: the Dherinia killings, the struggle over European Union membership, the Ocalan affair; tomorrow, no doubt, they'll find another.

So how do you fix it? Both sides in this conflict wield history as a weapon and invoke it as the basis for their own plaintive cry for justice. But if the history of Cyprus—indeed, the history of most of the world—reveals anything, it is that there is no such thing as justice: you live in your house until the day someone comes along and throws you out, and then he lives there until someone else comes along to throw him out. Just where do you pinpoint the moment in this island's history and say, "Here, we will right this wrong," and let all the previous ones go by the wayside? Obviously, you cannot afford to go very far back, because in Cyprus, as everywhere else, there is always a prior victim.

More specifically, how do you fix it when both sides clearly have so little interest in doing so themselves? Start small, I suppose. Point out to them that wallpapering their countryside with grisly photos of those killed by the other side may not be the best way to foster fraternal thoughts. Suggest that it might be imprecise to describe a military offensive in which thousands were killed as a "peace operation," or that there may be a better way to bring one's rivals to the negotiation table than by referring to them as "the so-called ministers of the pseudo-state." Even these baby steps the Cypriots will not take. By steadfastly clinging to the rhetoric of a quarter-century ago, by stoutly refusing to make any concession, you finally have to conclude that it's because they want it this way.

But there is, perhaps, another way to look at all this. In the fifteen years of ethnic violence before the 1974 partition, hundreds of Cypriots on both sides were killed. In the twenty-five years since, there have been a total of sixteen—or about the same number that die on the island's highways in a bad month. At a cost of $90 million a year, the United Nations has brought calm to an intractable conflict zone—about what the recent NATO military operations in Kosovo cost for just two days. Of course, people have suffered and lost a great deal in Cyprus—especially all those uprooted from their homes and forced to start over again—but at least now, kept apart by the buffer, they have been given the chance to start over. That's far better than what usually happens in war zones.

So perhaps what has passed as "The Cyprus Problem" all these years has actually been "The Cyprus Solution," and perhaps the diplomats who periodically wring their hands over the ongoing stalemate on this island should actually be taking notes and trying to export it elsewhere. That would require new thinking among the power brokers of the West, and perhaps especially among those in Washington, embroiled in the latest crisis in the Balkans. Maybe what most needs to end is all the chatter about exit strategies. Those in power must recognize that there is no exit from bad history, and that at certain times and in certain places the best that can be done is to simply stand between the fighters indefinitely and hope that someday they'll get over it and move on—not in a year, not in ten years, but maybe eventually. Until then, the least costly solution, in terms of both blood and money, is to give the Bosnians and Serbs and Kosovars of the planet what the Cypriots already have, a "dead zone" across which they can hurl accusations and threats in safety. At least it will give them something to talk about, and all that the rest of the world will have to suffer is the hearing of it.

Back in Lefkosa I leave Ayshen at the entrance to the Office of Public Information and watch her walk slowly, head bowed in sadness, up the entranceway. It occurs to me that it is the people like her—the earnest, the "peaceniks," the goodhearted and forgiving—who are the last, quiet victims of this place. They are to be found in Bosnia and Serbia and Kosovo as well, of course, those who refuse to believe that a culture once torn apart can't be put back together again, who forever wait for their day to come. ■

BUSTED FLUSH

South Carolina's video-poker operators run a political machine

By David Plotz

"If you're not playing at Treasures, you're taking a chance," warns the billboard towering above Broad River Road on the outskirts of Columbia, South Carolina. I don't like to take chances, so I pull into the parking lot, beneath Treasures' glowing, glowering pirate sign, and find a space next to a black Mustang, license plate: HNG OVR.





Treasures is suburban-strip architecture as funhouse. The building, a low-slung, cheap-looking structure the size of a tennis court, is covered with mirrors from rooftop to asphalt. The walls are mirrors, the roof is mirrors, the doors are mirrored glass. It's as though the building is trying to pretend it doesn't exist. I enter through the mirrored doors and find myself in a fifteen-year-old boy's dream room: floor-to-ceiling mirrors, a carpet the color of dried blood, black lights, a choking fog of cigarette smoke, a plastic bowl filled with Tootsie Rolls, and all the gambling one's heart desires.

David Plotz is the Washington editor of Slate.com.

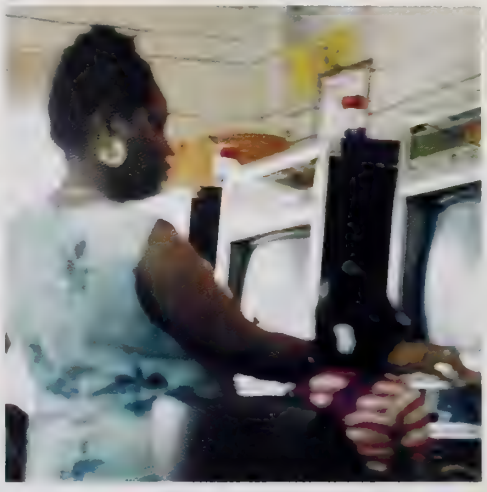
In any other spot on the planet Treasures would be called a casino, but because Treasures is in South Carolina, and because South Carolina likes to make believe it doesn't have legal gambling, Treasures goes by a cheerful euphemism: "video mall," or, if you prefer, "video parlor." Whatever you want to call it, it's a warren. I wander through a dozen "game rooms" sardined back-to-back off a central corridor. Each is a dark narrow cleft the size of a large closet, with just enough space for five stools, the five people perched on those stools, and the five machines those five people are glued to. The machines are "Pot-O-Golds," and they are video-gambling devices. South Carolina, naturally, prefers the euphemism "video games." The game rooms hold about sixty video-poker machines among them, even though South Carolina law states with blinding clarity that no business can have more than five machines. This is possible because Treasures is not one business but many: technically—and only technically—each closet is its own independent enterprise.

It's past eleven P.M. on a Thursday evening. Even so, every machine is occupied. About half the gamblers are elderly white women, about a third are young black women, and there's a smattering of young redneck men. The manufactured good cheer of Las Vegas is absent here. The gamblers gaze transfixed at their terminals and tap the touchscreens with a kind of Stepford intensity. An eerie silence envelops the place: the only noises are the bells ringing on the Pot-O-Golds, signaling gamblers that someone else just won a few bucks, so you will too. I settle into the only empty stool I can find and watch the woman next to me. She is chainsmoking Vantages with her left hand and jabbing the screen rapidly with her right. She's playing Shamrock Sevens, a poker game that rewards

All photographs by Jason Fulford

[illegible] of three sevens with a din of [illegible]ic Irish music, a digital lep[illegible]n who announces, "Aye, a pot o' gold for ye!" and a mingy bonus. She occasionally interrupts poking and puffing long enough to gulp down handfuls of Tootsie Rolls and Styrofoam cups of water. These are the only food and drink Treasures offers, unless you count breath mints as food. I intrude on her during one of these refueling breaks. Her name is Joyce, she tells me, and she's a grandmother in her fifties. She has been playing Shamrock Sevens on this Pot-O-Gold since four P.M., she thinks. Joyce is betting twenty-five cents a hand, six hands a minute, 360 hands an hour. If she is at the odds,* she has lost sixty dollars in her seven and a half hours of wagering.





Treasures is one of more than 7,000 places to gamble in South Carolina, which means that the Palmetto State—which you probably didn't even know had legal gambling—has more places to wager than any state, and about three times as many as Nevada. South Carolina has 36,000 gambling machines, more than any state but Nevada, New Jersey, and Mississippi—and nearly one device for every hundred residents. South Carolina offers gambling without rules: the state collects no taxes, imposes virtually no regulations, does not restrict who can own machines, does not require that the machines be honest, does not forbid children from playing them. South Carolina's video-poker millionaires call this "convenience gaming." (And indeed it must be convenient to gross $2.5 billion annually, net $728 million, pay no taxes, and have your profits climb 20 percent a year.) Gambling experts, on the other hand, call it the worst gambling industry in America, economically useless and socially devastating.

How South Carolina wound up in this mess is a cautionary tale about money and politics, but it's not one of the money-and-politics stories you've heard a thousand times before. It is not a story about how big businesses bent politicians to their will, or a story about how some megacorporation invaded South Carolina and corrupted it, or a story of how an industry lobbied and bribed politicians to lower burdensome taxes and abolish burdensome regulations. No, video poker's conquest of South Carolina is a tale of the sinister power of *small* business. It is a tale of how, in almost no time at all, a bunch of gas-station owners, jukebox operators, and barkeeps used lawsuits, strong-arm lobbying, dead-of-night legislation, and just plain deception to transform a small-time illegal gambling business into a multibillion-dollar legal one; how these folks fought to *increase* regulation and taxation; and how, in the process of all this, they resurrected the state Democratic Party, battered the state legislature, wiggled out of campaign-finance restrictions, made common cause with white supremacists, and, in a remarkable and demoralizing 1998 election, deposed one government and bought themselves a new one. And this, in the grandest euphemism of all, they call just politics.

Video poker is South Carolina's white noise, so pervasive that you stop noticing its ugliness. The first building outside the Columbia airport is a dingy warehouse, dressed up with eight video-poker machines, a fresh carpet, and a sign reading AIRPORT GAMES. Video-poker casinos form a stockade around the state. At the northeast tip the ramshackle fishing village of Little River now has sixteen video-poker casinos and a new nickname, "Little Reno." At the southern tip, the State Line Casino guards the Savannah River crossing from Georgia. (It was here, in the summer of 1997, that Army Sgt. Gail Baker left her ten-day-old baby, Joy, in the car while she went inside to play a few hands. When she exited the casino seven and a half hours later, Joy was dead of dehydration.) In the north the first exit off I-77, even before the state welcome center, delivers you to a strip of shabby double-wides and stucco prefabs, halfheartedly decorated with bunting and hopeful names: Golden Touch, Treasure Chest, Lady Luck, Slots of Fun (CHECK CASHING, CASH ADVANCES, CAR TITLE LOANS, says the sign above the door). Each one is a maze of snaking corridors, sardine closets, and countless Pot-O-Golds.*

Some 339 cities and towns in South Carolina now have video-poker machines. Columbia, a city of barely 100,000, has 483 places to gamble and more than 2,000 machines. "There is not a place in South Carolina where there could be a machine and there isn't one," says Glenn Stanton, who runs the anti-gambling Palmetto Family Council. Vegas has The Strip. South Carolina has the gambling strip mall: Babylon in the shopping center. Almost any business with a steady flow of customers has a machine or two or five in the corner and a red neon GAMES sign in the window. L'il Crick-

** On average, gamblers lose about twice as much—10 percent—on every video-poker bet as they do on every table game or slots bet.*

** Five-card-draw poker is the basic video-gambling game, but "multigame" machines also offer blackjack, bingo, keno, and curiosities such as Pieces of Eight Criss Cross, an inexplicable combination of poker and ticktacktoe.*

et, a convenience-store chain, is among the state's biggest gambling companies. So is R. L. Jordan Oil, which owns gas stations. An astonishing one-quarter of South Carolina's retail businesses offer video poker. Sometimes it feels as if all of them do.

As an experiment, I try driving west out of Columbia on a rural road and stopping at every business I pass. The Locker Room, a down-at-the-heels pool club, has two machines at the back. The Hot Spot, the convenience store next door, owns five machines, a better parked at every one. Half a mile up the road at Kelly's, you can buy pickled pigs' lips, then drop a few bucks in the five poker machines along the side wall. Judy's advertises BEER, POOL, GAMES. Club 76 Game Room is a cinderblock shack: its windows are boarded up, but it's open for gambling. At long last, I pass a building where I can't play video poker: the Prayer Bible Study Church.

How South Carolina got this way—Pot-O-Gold on every corner, a gambler in every home—is a tale that best begins in a handsome office in downtown Columbia with a man known as "Lucifer." His real name is Dick Harpootlian, and he loves his nickname. He loves that the minions of David Beasley—that is, former Republican governor David Beasley, the man whom Harpootlian destroyed in 1998—coined the moniker. "Beasley is an opportunistic, insincere scalawag. An Elmer Gantry," says Harpootlian. "I think his Christianity is his business, but you know it would be very like them to somehow depict an enemy as being sponsored by or somehow inspired by the devil. As a practical matter, my ancestors were worshiping Christ while his people were scraping bark off a tree and worshiping it, okay? So why do they call me Satan or Lucifer? Because it's convenient for them to think of me as being sponsored by the forces of darkness, I suppose. That's how they have to convince themselves that they lost—rather than accepting the fact that they're full of shit and the people finally figured them out!"

Harpootlian unleashes this torrent with undisguised joy. Fiftyish and boyish, he has the air of the Greatest Frat Brother Ever: smarter than you, wittier than you, louder than you, and as much fun as a barrel of monkeys. In the first few minutes of our talk, he fields calls from a lobbyist, a lawyer, and an old friend. All are supplicants. The lobbyist wants to know what happened at an important conference in the statehouse. Can Dick tell him? Hell, yes. The lawyer wants Dick's client to behave himself. Can Dick make it happen? Hell, yes. The old friend wants the new governor to appoint him to a commission. Can Dick arrange a meeting? Hell, yes. When he finally gets off the phone he reaches into his desk, grabs a hazelnut, tosses it to me, and swings into a story about a lawsuit that has something to do with a hazelnut orchard contaminated by runoff from a latex factory. "But these nuts are good! Crack that nut open. You'll be amazed!" he shouts. He grabs the nut, smashes a book on it, brushes away the shattered shell, and reveals a bright pink condom. He laughs uproariously, then pockets the condom.

A BUNCH OF JUKEBOX OPERATORS AND BARKEEPS DEPOSED ONE GOVERNMENT AND BOUGHT THEMSELVES A NEW ONE

Harpootlian has the irrepressible glee of a man who has gotten exactly what he wants. He is the epicenter of South Carolina, the intersection of money and politics, of gambling and the Democratic Party. As the leading lawyer for the video-poker industry, Harpootlian has done more than anyone to make gambling prosperous, legal, and mighty. As the chairman of the state Democratic Party, he has revived an institution long ago left for dead. In 1998, when both video poker and the party seemed to face extinction, Harpootlian married his vocation and his avocation. He harvested the profits of video poker to save his party and harnessed the power of his party to save his industry.

At rock bottom, South Carolina has a gambling mess because it can't decide if it's a puritanical state or a libertarian one. The interior of the state is severe, religious, and conservative, but coastal Carolina is high-spirited and honky-tonk. The state beverage is milk, but the state university mascot is a gamecock. State law frowns on gambling, but law enforcement has long tolerated illegal wagering on cockfights, dogfights, and golf. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, when states and tribes staked their prosperity on lotteries and casinos, puritanical South Carolina resisted. It abjured a lottery and rejected Vegas mogul Steve Wynn's 1994 proposal to build six dockside casinos. Meanwhile, libertarian South Carolina embraced video poker, a form of wagering that seemed innocent, mild-mannered, and hardly to be gambling at all.

Video poker arrived in South Carolina as a fluke, a spinoff of the jukebox-and-pinball business. The father of the industry is Fred Collins, who bought his first pinball machine fifty years ago, when he was thirteen, and then built a "route" operation for distributing jukeboxes, pinball machines, pool tables, and video games to arcades and stores throughout the state. Collins brought the first video-poker game to South Carolina in the early 1970s—a "kit" that he added to the video game Pong. When stand-alone video-poker games were perfected a decade later, Collins and other route operators began installing terminals all over the state, splitting profits with restaurants, shops, and bars.

Here it's worth noting two critical oddities of South Carolina's gambling industry: it is rinky-dink and it is homegrown. Elsewhere in the United States, megacorporations such as Harrah's, Mirage, and IGT monopolize casinos, machine distribution, and lotteries. In South Carolina, there are more than 400 video-poker companies, all are local, and most came to gambling by chance. The names of the state's biggest video-poker companies—Darlington Music, Tim's Amusement, McDonald Amusement, Rosemary Coin Machines, Harrison & King Music—

their origins as jukebox route operations and arcades. (Many still pretend they're in their old business. Collins, who owns 4,000 video-poker machines—more than anyone—and grossed $90 million off of them last year, insists, "I am in the amusement business, not the gambling business.") Most video-poker operators are small-timers with just a handful of employees, local companies knitted into the fabric of South Carolina.

Video poker began as an afterthought, but as profits surged through the 1980s, operators longed for legitimacy. South Carolina law forbade games of chance, so at first the operators relied on linguistic chicanery: Poker, they said, equals pinball. Play pinball well enough and you win a free game. Same thing in video poker. Suppose it costs twenty-five cents to play a game of pinball or poker. Well, then each skillfully won free game must be worth twenty-five cents. And if each game is worth twenty-five cents, surely you ought to be able to collect a quarter for it. And if you can collect a quarter for one free game, surely you should be able to collect 4,000 quarters for drawing a royal flush.

This pinball wizardry was not quite enough to make poker legal, so the industry turned to a more traditional political tactic: backdoor legislation. In 1986, State Senator Jack Lindsay silently dropped a tiny technical amendment into a distant corner of a 1,000-page budget bill that struck the words "or property" from a law banning any game from distributing "money or property to a player." Lindsay did this at the behest of Alan Schafer, owner of the massive roadside attraction South of the Border. At the time, no one except Schafer and Lindsay seemed to notice this picayune change or understand its significance. But in 1988, the state arrested a convenience-store owner and charged him with illegally paying out hundreds of thousands of dollars to video-poker customers. Harpootlian, once a county prosecutor, was hired for the defense, thus beginning his brilliant service to the industry. By striking "or property," Harpootlian argued, the legislature clearly permitted machines to distribute credit slips, which could, in turn, be redeemed for cash. In 1991, the state supreme court agreed. Without a debate, without an open vote, without a public referendum, South Carolina had legalized gambling.

The supreme court decision opened the way for poker's expansion, but it also galvanized poker opponents. Many of the anti-poker activists were conservative Christian Republicans, but perhaps the most fervent was a Democratic state legislator named Jim Hodges. Hodges, serious-minded and liberal, had grown alarmed at poker's explosion in his district and viewed the machines as a scourge on the poor and vulnerable. He lobbied feverishly to ban poker "payouts" (as the credit slips are called), and in 1991 and 1992 the legislature came up just short. When Hodges and his allies went after payouts again, the industry conceded to a county-by-county referendum, and in 1994 twelve counties voted to abolish them. Although the poker industry had agreed to the referendum, it immediately sabotaged it. Operators in those twelve counties hired Harpootlian, who persuaded a court to overturn the ban on the grounds that it violated the state constitution by applying criminal law inconsistently.

In that same 1994 election, South Carolina narrowly elected Republican David Beasley as its new governor. Then a thirty-seven-year-old state legislator, Beasley had abandoned the Democratic Party and shaken a playboy reputation by becoming a born-again Christian. (He had squired around Donna Rice during his days as a ladies' man.) Blow-dried to Ken-doll perfection and oozing ambition, Beasley was elected chairman of the Republican Governors Association and was discussed as a potential vice-presidential candidate for 2000.

Beasley opposed video poker, but he chose a curious way to fight it: he ignored it, believing that if poker were taxed and regulated, the state would get hooked on the gambling revenues. "We felt it was immoral to enter a profit-sharing plan with an industry whose lifeblood was the peril of the unwitting," says former Beasley adviser Larry Huff. Beasley chose anarchy instead, and the industry mushroomed. "We had a governor who would not admit he had a gambling industry," Harpootlian says. "David Beasley was a narcoleptic when it came to gambling."

It's true that Beasley didn't do much to control video poker, but it's equally true that Harpootlian & Co. squelched what few efforts Beasley and others did make. In 1996, when Beasley and the state legislature attempted to reinstate the twelve-county ban by imposing only *civil* penalties, Harpootlian persuaded a judge to stay the new law. When a class-action lawsuit on behalf of compulsive gamblers tried to end video gambling on the grounds that it was a lottery, Harpootlian convinced the supreme court that video poker was not a lottery because it does not "involve a drawing."

A year before Beasley took office, the legislature had managed to pass a few anti-poker laws, regulations limiting one location to eight machines (later five), capping winnings at $125 per day, forbidding most advertising, and banning inducements. The industry spent the Beasley administration ignoring some of these regulations and mangling the rest beyond recognition. Consider the $125 cap, designed to ensure that video poker is played for low stakes. Every machine advertises its jackpot: The smallest I saw was $251.04. The largest was more than $7,000. In 1998 lawyers in a class-action suit against the industry sent a private investigator with a camera hidden in his watch to photograph thousands of poker machines; none of them had a jackpot of less than $125. Operators circumvent the law by long division: if someone hits a $500 jackpot, the machine prints out four $125 slips that players must cash on four different days. "The industry said it would just be low-stakes gambling—$125," says Richard Gergel, the lawsuit's lead attorney. "But these people were criminals. They never obeyed the law. They decided they were going to engage in high-stakes illegal gambling until someone stopped them, and no one did."

When Beasley tried to impose a statewide computer-monitoring program that could automatically prevent payouts of more than $125, Harpootlian went to court and delayed it. As for the advertising ban, you can't drive down a highway in South Carolina without seeing a billboard directing you to VIDEO GAMES. The legislature forbade inducements, but

operators ply gamblers with free food, free booze, free massages, free taxi rides, even free film development.

During Beasley's term, the industry also managed to weasel out of the five-machine limit that legislators had imposed to prevent casinos. A video-poker entrepreneur named Mickey Stacks noticed that the law simply restricted operators to five machines on one "premises." According to the State Department of Revenue, a "premises" has to have fire walls, a business license, a power meter, and an attendant. Stacks realized that as long as he met those specs, he could cram as many "premises" as he wanted into a single building. So in 1995 he built Treasures, the original warren-casino. Soon scores of these subdivided monstrosities were sprouting across the state. Video malls now house 45 percent of the state's poker machines.

What's remarkable about South Carolina is not simply the few (flouted) regulations it does have but the many regulations it doesn't have. Unlike virtually every other state with gambling, South Carolina has no gambling commission and no rules about who can own a gambling license (two of the state's leading video-poker operators are convicted felons). South Carolina does not forbid children from gambling (though an adult must collect their winnings). Nor does the state require that machines be honest or fair, so operators can set poker terminals to pay out as little as they want. The half-dozen other states with video poker harvest up to 50 percent of revenues in taxes. South Carolina collects only a piddling $2,000 annual license fee on each machine. South Carolina, says University of Nevada gambling economist William Thompson, is "the Wild West" of gambling.

On Friday morning, twelve hours after my first visit, I return to Treasures. It is a gorgeous day, 75 degrees in the middle of February, but Treasures is as packed and gloomy as it had been when I left at midnight. I turn into the game room where I played the night before, and Joyce is sitting there, right where I left her. She is still playing Shamrock Sevens. She is still clutching a cigarette in one hand and ping-

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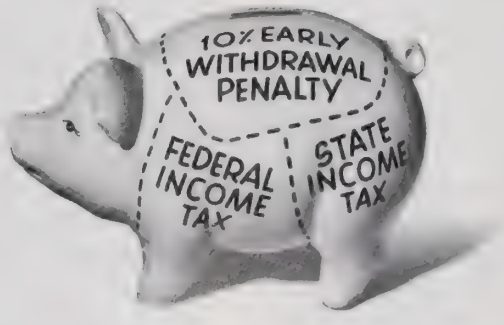
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[illegible] screen with the other. She is wearing the same green sweat suit she had on last night. She claims she went home and has come back "just for an hour" because she won't be able to play all weekend. She'll be too busy babysitting her grandchildren. "Oh, that's going to be a real treat," she told me. "We are going to have a real party."

I play the machine next to her for a few minutes, lose a couple of dollars, then stroll among the game rooms. I spot another woman I had seen playing the night before. She too is wearing the clothes she had on last night. I fall into conversation with Chris, a game-room attendant. He delivers the candy and water to gamblers and wipes down the machines with Windex. For this, Chris makes $5.50 an hour "plus tips," of which there are exactly none. He took the Treasures job three days ago because he got fired from a dog-food factory.

I have gambled in Vegas casinos, Indian casinos, Mississippi dockside casinos, bingo parlors, horse tracks, and dog tracks, but if there is a gambling house one-tenth as depressing as a South Carolina video parlor, I have not seen it. America's vision of gambling is Las Vegas, a fantasyland where the air is—or so goes the myth—perfumed and oxygenated so that customers bet more, where there are cigarette girls and slick dealers and free drinks and sparkling lights. Vegas shellacs gambling with so much glamour that you forget it's gambling. South Carolina has done the reverse. It has distilled gambling to its purest essence: an icy transaction between man and machine. No liquor, no food, no dealers, no glamour, no perfume, no neon, no cigarette girls, only cigarettes. (Forget oxygenated air—there's barely air.) All that remains is the grind: the machine, a few Tootsie Rolls, and a whole lot of people who don't have too much money squandering it.*

"You wouldn't really call it entertainment. It's more like a peep show," says Glenn Stanton. "Why do so many people play it?" he asks. "Why do so few people exercise? People don't do what they should. And on this issue, it is clear that the state has a compelling interest in keeping people from behaving in a way that is detrimental to them."

Video-poker supporters recast Stanton's stop-them-for-their-own-good views as overblown and puritanical. "Are we going to ban Ben & Jerry's?" Harpootlian asks. "I mean, more people are going to die from cardiac arrest stuffing their fat faces with Ben & Jerry's ice cream than they are from the perils of betting. It's a little paternalistic." But there is a flaw in Harpootlian's practiced libertarian creed, and that flaw is video poker. As poker metastacized during Beasley's administration, South Carolinians began to realize that it was not simply an irritant but a menace. Video poker is not Ben & Jerry's. It is the crack cocaine of gambling, gambling at its most addictive and virulent, producing few economic benefits and high social costs. If there were ever a case for government restriction of gambling, South Carolina is it.

Video poker is dangerous for the same reason it is popular. It combines the speed of slots and the skill of table games but avoids their bad features. Gamblers dislike slots because they're dull: a random-number generator determines whether you win or lose. Table games are slow and intimidating to novices. But video poker is as fast as slots: I clocked myself playing eight games of video poker a minute, nearly 500 chances for a jackpot in an hour. And video poker requires (minimal) skill: you *can* make decisions that will improve your likelihood of winning—there's an entire library of books and videos devoted to strategy, such as *Fundamentals of Video Poker, Video Poker Mania! Video Poker for Winners*—though not decisions that will ever let you beat the house. Unlike table games, video poker doesn't scare novices, because "you can sit down and play the games without being worried about other people judging your competence," says Fred Preston, a sociology professor at University of Nevada at Las Vegas. (Preston adds that this makes video poker especially enticing to women, who rarely play table games.) But video poker is devastatingly addictive to the susceptible. According to compulsive-gambling expert Robert Hunter, gamblers hooked on the horses or table games take twenty years from first bet to bottoming out. Video-poker addicts take only two and a half years. Unlike other forms of gambling, video poker does not excite players. It numbs them. "There is an ability to block out external stimuli while you are playing the games. Almost without exception, my video-poker patients report not excitement but anesthetized nothingness. It is a twilight-zone experience for them," says Hunter. In hours and hours of South Carolina gambling, I saw only one display of emotion. A woman dropped to her knees and prayed for four of a kind: "Give me a king," she implored, "a king for my birthday." She drew a jack. More typical was the middle-aged man seated next to me who hit a $208 jackpot on a quarter bet. I heard the celebratory bells and looked over. He was expressionless, already playing his next hand.

South Carolina does not collect data on gambling addiction, but during the Beasley years the number of Gamblers' Anonymous chapters in the state tripled. Last year Columbia psychologist Frank Quinn conducted the first statewide survey of gamblers and found that some 20 percent of the 553 poker players he quizzed met the criteria for a problem-gambling diagnosis—a compulsive gambling rate twice as high as Las Vegas's.

The economics of video poker are just as devastating. University of Nevada at Reno Professor William Eadington ranks different sorts of gambling by their economic benefits. Topping his list are "destination casinos," such as those in Las Vegas, which draw tourists, support hotels, restaurants, shops, and theaters, and provide tons of new jobs, many of them at union wages. Since tourists take their addictions and bankruptcies home with them, destination casinos "export the social impacts of gambling." Next on Eadington's list are rural casinos, such as most Indian casinos, which bring jobs to undeveloped areas, "export" most social impacts, but don't generate much ancillary development. Large urban casi-

** No one has studied the demographics of video-poker players, but a cursory look around any venue reveals that it is an activity for the lower middle class: elderly women, blacks, hicks. No, no single one of the prosperous pro-poker lawyers, lobbyists, politicians, and machine owners I talked to plays video poker. It is a game for other, poorer people.*

nos rank next. They may attract some tourists and spark a little ancillary development, but because most gamblers are local, the surrounding community bears the social costs.

At rock bottom, says Eadington, is the South Carolina model. The low-density, low-glamour gambling draws few tourists and no development. The jobs are McJobs, such as convenience-store clerks and game-room attendants. Most gamblers are locals, so little out-of-state money flows into the economy, and the state absorbs the social costs, which are particularly high, because video poker is so addictive and the machines are so ubiquitous. Other gambling models limit addiction by requiring gamblers to travel some inconvenient distance to bet. But in South Carolina nothing stops the vulnerable from gambling all the time.

"There is no pretense that this is about tourism or this is about a nice night out or that this is entertainment," says Tom Grey, head of the National Coalition Against Gambling Expansion. "This is hard-core, grab-the-paycheck gambling."

For several months last year, this sign greeted drivers crossing from Georgia into South Carolina: GOV. DAVID BEESLAY WELKUMS YOU TOO SOUTH CAROLINA. WE BE GOTS DE WURSTEST SKOOLS IN DE UNITED STATE. WE BEES NUMBUH 50TH.

The sign was the inspiration of Henry Ingram, one of the state's largest video-poker operators, who, like virtually everyone in the industry, detests David Beasley. Ingram detests Beasley so much that he spent his own money last year—no one knows how much, since such expenditures go unreported—attacking Beasley's education record. Ingram detests Beasley so much that he placed a covenant on his own property: it cannot be sold to a Yankee or "anyone named Beasley." Ingram and his fellow video-poker tycoons detest Beasley so much, in fact, that Beasley is no longer governor.

Now, let's make something clear. Beasley is a shameless political opportunist. He wields his religion like a club. He was caught lying to schoolchildren about his athletic exploits. His fellow Republicans don't trust him. South Carolinians, who loathe Bill Clinton, compare Beasley unfavorably to the President. I had to struggle to find anyone in the state who actually likes Beasley. So it is a testament to the crushing power of the video-poker industry that it actually makes people feel sorry for David Beasley.

In early 1998, Beasley was coasting toward reelection. All good Republican things—incomes, prison populations, executions—were way up. All bad things—unemployment, crime, taxes—were way down. The Christian right, which all but owned the state Republican Party, was thriving, and the party coffers were full of cash. The Democratic Party was battered by twelve years of defeat, its treasury empty, its staff skeletal, its poll numbers dismally low. "They appeared," says State Republican Party Chairman Henry McMaster, "headed for extinction." Early polls gave Beasley a twenty-point lead, and no wonder. His Democratic opponent was the anti-gambling legislator Jim Hodges, who seemed a sure loser: little-known, uncharismatic, and a bit gloomy.

Then Beasley did something that was simultaneously incredibly courageous and cravenly opportunistic. He declared video poker a "cancer," and in his January 1998 State of the State address he proposed to ban it immediately. Almost the entire audience, which included all 168 state legislators, rose in a standing ovation. "The industry was gaining political clout, and if they were not stopped then, a couple of years down the road they would have too much political clout to reverse," Beasley says now. "In your heart you know that *this* is the time to do it, no matter the political consequences, no matter the cost."

This kind of talk makes Beasley's critics gag. "He decided that he was going to ratchet himself up to the next level. He could be the Governor That Killed Gambling," mocks Harpootlian. "This was all a calculated move on his part, not sincerely based on a hatred of video poker or gambling but to ratchet himself into a V.P. candidacy in 2000. Huge miscalculation."

The move may have been heartfelt and it may have been calculated, but it was undoubtedly disastrous. Beasley prodded the state legislature to outlaw video gambling, and within weeks of his speech the Republican-controlled house overwhelmingly passed a ban. A majority of the Democratic-controlled senate also favored the ban, but anti-gambling senators successfully filibustered. "I stood on the floor and said video poker owns this senate, and no one disagreed with me," says Senator Wes Hayes, who led the legislative campaign to ban poker.

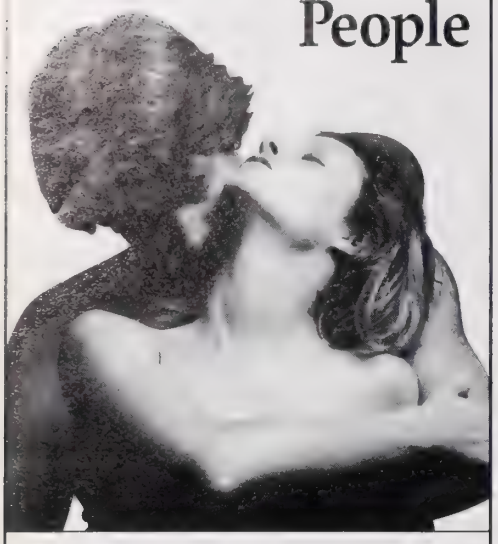
The bill died in April, and in essence so did Beasley. Every machine owner, every owner of a convenience store, truck stop, gas station, bar, or restaurant that depended on video poker, and all their employees were now out for Beasley's scalp. As the new chairman of the Democratic Party, Harpootlian was perfectly positioned to solicit contributions from the disgruntled pokerites.

Harpootlian found a surprisingly cooperative partner in Hodges, who, as the Democratic gubernatorial candidate, conveniently discarded his ferocious anti-poker stance. Hodges says he decided after the 1994 referendum that voters, not politicians, should determine whether poker was to be legal. Republicans contend that he cynically dropped his objections to poker in order to fund his run. In any case, as the gubernatorial race began, Hodges announced that although he disliked video poker personally, he favored a voter referendum to decide whether to keep it. If voters approved poker, he would regulate and tax it. This declaration of neutrality, coupled with Harpootlian's presence in the Democratic Party headquarters, signaled to poker operators that Hodges was their candidate.

"Look, Hodges had a history of being opposed to video poker," says John Crangle, who runs the state's chapter of Common Cause. "But I think he saw an opportunity to knock Beasley off, and he thought the price was worth paying. He thought that as governor, he could do things for education and corrections and race relations that would counterbalance whatever evil video poker was."

In previous elections Democratic gubernatorial candidates had managed to raise only $1–2.5 million, half what

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their Republican opponents collected. But in 1998 the Democratic Party and Hodges's campaign found themselves awash in money. Hodges estimates that "less than 10 percent" of the $3.7 million he raised came from video-poker sources. This is laughable. The Republican Party analyzed Hodges's large donations and concluded that more than 70 percent of his contributions of $1,000 or more came from people tied to video poker. (For example, one video-poker operator told me she gave the $3,500 maximum to Hodges and enlisted family members to give $20,000 more.) And although campaign-disclosure laws don't require parties to report their soft-money receipts, educated guessers hazard that video poker also supplied a million dollars or more to the Democratic Party. "David Beasley is the best friend the South Carolina Democratic Party has had in the last several years. David Beasley, through his own stupidity, funded the statewide Democratic ticket," says Crangle. (If this seems to be an odd statement from a good-government type, it's worth noting that Harpootlian served on Common Cause's board till he became the Democratic Party chairman.)

Harpootlian and Hodges put the money to good use. Hodges, who had also long opposed a state lottery, reversed himself and made the introduction of a lottery the cornerstone of his campaign. He promised to earmark the revenues for public education, as Georgia had done with great success. The lottery notion polled more than 70 percent of voters' support, and it massacred Beasley. The Democratic Party spent a fortune on ads showing a Georgian "Bubba" thanking Beasley for the millions of dollars South Carolinians had contributed to Georgia schools via the Georgia lottery. "Hodges just took the lottery, turned it into a blunt instrument, and clubbed Beasley senseless with it," says Stanton.

The poker moguls were not satisfied with simply writing checks to Hodges and Harpootlian, however. Several launched their own independent anti-Beasley crusades. Fred Collins had loathed Beasley ever since state agents had conducted a Christmastime raid on one of his warehouses in a fruitless search for illegal gambling devices. "What would you do if someone called your business a cancer?!" Collins shouts at me. Collins ran thousands of anti-beasley radio ads; erected 110 BAN BEASLEY billboards; distributed BAN BEASLEY bumper stickers, hats, and T-shirts; and bought full-page ads in twenty-six state newspapers urging an anti-Beasley vote. Collins staffed an anti-Beasley war room in Greenville and funded anti-Beasley phone banks. He refuses to divulge how much he spent, but even the most cautious estimates peg it at more than $500,000; a good guess is more like $1 million.

Meanwhile, Henry Ingram spent thousands on ads in southern South Carolina, and South of the Border's Alan Schafer is estimated to have dropped more than $50,000 on 4,300 radio ads in the northeast of the state. The L'il Cricket chain sponsored its own dump-Beasley campaign. (The private spending of Collins, Ingram, and Schafer so shocked South Carolinians that one of the first bills the general assembly passed in 1999 requires disclosure of independent expenditures.)

Video poker's money also spilled into other strange corners of the campaign. "Republicans for Hodges," a handful of Republicans who detested Beasley for screwing over a local party operative, received more than $35,000 from poker interests; the Black Community Developer Program is thought to have received more than $25,000 for its grass-roots, anti-Beasley work. And in what must be the most peculiar episode of the race, poker operators underwrote the Palmetto League, a coalition of "heritage" groups. These groups—Sons of Confederate Veterans, Heritage Preservation, the Conservative Alliance, and the like—ostensibly espouse "Southern pride." In practice, they are essentially white supremacists with mailing lists and a veneer of mainstream respectability. The Palmetto League's founder, Jerry Creech, used to run South Carolina's chapter of the racist Council of Conservative Citizens. ("We believe America was founded by Christians who believe in Jesus Christ. Not Muslims. Not Hindus," Creech tells me in one of his milder moments.)

The heritage groups constitute a

mall but vocal bloc whose greatest passion is to keep the Confederate battle flag flying over the state capitol. In 1994, Beasley courted the heritage vote by promising to protect the flag, but two years later he announced a revelation: his reading of the Bible convinced him the flag should come down. Beasley fought briefly for his epiphany, the legislature smashed him on it, he dropped the issue, and the flag stayed. But the heritage groups never forgot his betrayal.

Hodges had been one of the few white legislators who opposed the Confederate flag, but when Creech called on Hodges early in the campaign, he said that he wouldn't try to remove it. Satisfied that Hodges wasn't a threat, the Palmetto League set about savaging Beasley, mailing fliers, establishing a "Dump Beasley" Web site, and buying ads on cable TV and country-radio stations. At least half of the money the Palmetto League spent, which by Creech's account was more than $100,000, came from video poker.

Beasley's twenty-point lead narrowed and then vanished under the universal ambush. Everything went sour. He was forced to call a press conference to deny that he had had an affair with his former spokeswoman, a rumor reportedly linked to Harpootlian's opposition research machine. With Hodges killing him on the lottery, Beasley abandoned his resistance to it, infuriating his conservative base. Whenever Beasley complained that video poker was buying the election, Hodges countered effectively by blaming gambling's explosive growth on Beasley's inaction. On election Day, the poker moguls delivered the coup de grace. Collins gave his 370 employees the day off, and they ferried more than 8,000 voters to the polls. Collins's phone banks called 20,000 voters in Columbia and Greenville alone. Other video-poker companies shuttled voters directly from their game rooms to voting booths.

Hodges beat Beasley convincingly, 53–45 percent, and Democrats also snatched four GOP seats in the statehouse and two statewide offices held by Republicans. L'il Cricket celebrated Beasley's defeat by awarding employees a dollar-an-hour raise. Beasley fled to Harvard University's Institute of Politics to teach a seminar about "political figures risking it all."

Hodges and Harpootlian insist that video poker did not win them the election. They note that voters loved Hodges's lottery/education twofer and that Beasley had infuriated his base by flipflopping on the lottery and the Confederate flag. Harpootlian claims that the million-dollar interference by Collins actually harmed Hodges because it was so heavy-handed ("one ignorant schmuck," is what Harpootlian calls Collins).

But it's undeniable that without video-poker money, Hodges wouldn't have reached so many voters with his lottery message. He couldn't have afforded enough TV time, polling, opposition research, and get-out-the-vote drives to overcome Beasley's incumbency. "Democrats have been sucking on the hind tit here for so long. This was the first time in decades Democrats were able to raise money," says Common Cause's Crangle. *USA Today*, which in January made the first systematic attempt to calculate the video-poker contribution, conservatively estimates that the industry spent at least $3 million in its varied efforts to topple Beasley. This translates into about $6 for every Hodges vote.

To which Democrats and video-poker operators say: no big deal. Video poker is just another special interest, $3 million is just free speech, and the gang-tackle of Beasley was just old-fashioned politics. "Are those people equally disturbed by the money David Beasley raised from people who had ties to state government? Were they worried about the health-insurance and life-insurance and auto-insurance companies that gave substantial dollars to David Beasley?" asks Hodges. "The truth is that, sadly, people who have interest in state government contribute to campaigns. . . .That happens to be the way the system works."

But this is a weak rationalization. No special interest gave Beasley anything like what video poker gave Hodges. A "special interest" is an industry whose contributions may total 5 percent of a candidate's war chest or a corporation that spends $25,000 in an election cycle. Put the $3 million in context: In 1997 and 1998 the entire gambling industry, an industry notorious for its muscle, gave $2.8 million in PAC money, soft money, and direct contributions to *all* candidates in *all* congressional elections—less than $3 million for 468 races. And here is video poker spending more than $3 million for a single candidate in a single election in a single state. When 70 percent of your big contributions come from a single industry, when the head of your party is the leading advocate for that industry, when a tycoon from that industry spends $1 million on your behalf, that industry is no longer a special interest, it is a parent company.

"Had the video-poker industry not been involved in my campaign, I probably would have won 65–35 percent," says Beasley. "The video-poker industry is buying the leadership in our state. They have shown they can unduly influence elections and there is no consequence to that. They intimidated the media. And they own the governor's office."

"Own" may be an exaggeration, but you can see Beasley's point. The Democratic Party, which seemed dead and buried, is alive and flourishing. The poker industry, which Beasley tried to kill, is alive and flourishing. And Beasley himself is dead and buried, virtually renounced by his own party. "David Beasley is a non-person," says Harpootlian gleefully. "I am here. And he is not!"

I don't believe in the journalistic trope that the office represents the man, but I'm willing to make an exception for Jim Hodges. Governor Hodges's office is cavernous and dark. Thick curtains block the sunlight. A portrait of a grand old South Carolinian—John C. Calhoun, perhaps—sneers at the far end of the room. The principal illumination is the screen saver on Hodges's computer, an endlessly scrolling message: "It's all about South Carolina schools." This somber atmosphere seems suited to the dolorous Hodges. He suffers from a case of Al Gore disease: too earnest to have a common touch.

It's clear from the moment we meet

[illegible] would rather talk about [illegible] than what I have come to [illegible]. He has spent the first months [illegible] administration deflecting allegation after allegation that video poker bought him. And here he is, compelled to deflect another one. "I certainly wasn't advocating for the business," he says. "I'm sure the people that had connection to the industry looked at the options that they had and felt like they had a choice between a guy who said, 'Look, I don't like the business and I'd vote against it personally if it came up for referendum again, but I think people ought to have a choice,' and a guy who was basically blaming them for everything that was wrong in South Carolina."

"We have the worst of both worlds. We have unregulated and untaxed video gaming," Hodges continues. "I've made it very clear that if I had my druthers, South Carolina would not have video gaming. But up to this point the people in the state have said they do want it, and until the people of the state say they don't want it, then I think our obligation as leaders is to regulate it as effectively as we can and police it as effectively as we can."

As soon as he took office, Hodges and Democratic legislators introduced a regulatory package: drop the $125-a-day winnings cap, which Hodges calls "unenforceable," and impose a $500 "per-sitting" winnings limit instead; bar felons from owning video-poker machines; tighten the advertising ban; place a moratorium on casinos; and tax wagers to raise $200 million a year. As promised, Hodges is also pushing for a statewide referendum on video poker, which is likely to be held this fall.

Hodges is proud of the strictness of these proposed regulations, and he honestly considers himself a foe of the industry. And it's true that video poker did not buy a governor in 1998. Video poker bought something more valuable than a governor. It bought the right to be taxed and regulated; that is, the right to survive forever. Taxation and regulation are anathema to most businesses. But to a rogue industry they are priceless—guaranteed legitimacy. The poker operators are happy to pay $130 million in taxes. They know that once cash starts flowing into the treasury, the state will grow hooked on the money. And poker operators will still have $600 million in profits to take to the bank. (Collins, with a calculation so blatant that it's almost charming, proposes that poker tax funds be spent on college tuition for South Carolina high school graduates. "Palmetto Promise Scholarships," he calls this proposal. What state legislator would dare to cut "Palmetto Promise Scholarships"?)

John Crangle of Common Cause says he doesn't worry about video poker's 1998 flood of political spending, because it will never happen again. "The magnitude of the spending is a one-time thing." He's right. Collins and his poker partners won't spend millions in the 2002 election to reelect Hodges. They won't need to. In slaughtering Beasley, they warned every politician in the state: Challenge us and die. The state Republican Party still officially opposes gambling and is pushing for tougher regulations than the ones Hodges has proposed, but the party has faint hope of winning the statewide referendum. "It's over," one GOP staffer tells me. "You aren't going to do something when you just know you are going to take an old-fashioned butt whipping if you try."

On my last night in South Carolina, a Saturday, I return to Treasures. I am starting to feel like a regular. I immediately see Joyce. She is wearing different clothes than when I saw her on Friday, thank God. And she is betting on a different machine. She's planted at the terminal right next to the one she had been playing for the past two days. The first thing she says to me is, "I hit it. I hit it this afternoon." I don't have to ask what she means: she won the $700 jackpot on the other machine. "My grandkids got sick, so I didn't have to baby-sit. So I came in around three, and I hit it." It is now seven P.M. She says all this matter-of-factly, her eyes still on her machine, one hand clawing for a Vantage, the other automatically tapping the screen.

She has me sit down next to her, but not at the machine she hit. After all, she says, "What are the chances of getting another jackpot on that one?" Joyce believes in clusters: because she hit one machine in this room, she's confident (if not quite sure) that one of us is going to hit a jackpot on another. We play Shamrock Sevens, twenty-five cents a hand. After an hour or so I run out for some dinner. She is still there when I get back. I take my seat next to her, and we keep playing, till nine P.M., ten P.M., eleven P.M.

We don't talk at all, except once when Joyce interrupts the silence to say, "There was a guy down in the other room. He was playing blackjack—300 bucks a hand. I couldn't believe it. He just kept sliding twenties into the bill collector. And he was winning too." We are playing for a quarter a hand, and neither of us is winning much of anything. I am up thirty dollars for a while, then down ten, then back up twenty. A woman ducks her head in, looking for a hot machine. "Any bells ringing in your office tonight?" she asks. We shake our heads no. At about 11:15 my right arm starts to ache from all the tapping. It will hurt for the next three days. I go to the bathroom and see that my eyes have turned bright red, a reaction to the smoke and the screen. When I get back to my machine I notice that Joyce's eyes, too, are bright red. Everyone's eyes, in fact, are bright red.

Joyce asks me for the time. "I have no conception of time when I get in here," she says. I tell her it's 11:30. She laughs. "My dog has probably peed in the house by now. I wouldn't blame him if he did. It's my fault. I left him there." She says she has to go. She ups her bet from twenty-five cents to fifty cents, to lose faster.

Actually we all have to go, because the poker machines go dark at midnight on Saturday and stay dark till Monday morning. This is a tiny nod to South Carolina's churches, and it is just about the only law that video-poker operators always obey. At 11:45, Joyce finally stops in earnest. She has lost all that she was playing. ("Just a twenty," she says.) She grabs her pack of Vantages and wishes me goodnight. Then she turns to the attendant and points at her Pot-O-Gold. "Put that machine aside for me for Monday, would you, honey? Eight-thirty A.M., okay?" ■

My Countryside, Then and Now

A study in American evolution



BY MALCOLM COWLEY

It is not an abstraction for politicians, a capitalized immensity like the Middle West, the South, New England, the Prairie States. My country is tangible, small, immediate: a Pennsylvania valley, or rather a high tableland cut by ravines, lying between Chestnut Ridge on the west and Laurel Hill on the east and south. By climbing to the highest branches of a pine tree on the knob behind our barn, one can survey the whole of my country, from the one steeple of Bethel to the stone house at Nolo, and from the high ground in the north, around Dicktown, to where, in the south, the coke-ovens of Vintondale cut the horizon with a wall of smoke.

Last summer, after twelve years of absence broken by a few hasty visits, I returned to my country to find it the same and not the same. It had changed physically and socially; it had changed in fashions peculiar to itself and in other fashions that were typical of a whole cycle in American rural life.

When I went away, in 1916, it had the look of something ravished and deserted. The Vinton Lumber Company had cut the second-growth pine, the first-growth hemlock, the sugar-maple and, leaving birch and beech as unworthy of attention, had torn up its twenty miles of railroad track and moved into Kentucky. Fires had followed the lumbermen, turning thousands of acres into black meadows where ashes stirred in the breeze like the pollen of infernal flowers. Mine-tipples and culm-banks were toadstools on the bare hills. The poisoned creeks ran orange with sulphur water. It was as if my country had been occupied by an invading army which had wasted the resources of the hills, ravaged the forests with fire and steel, fouled the waters, and now was slowly retiring, without booty.

For one by one, the settlers were drifting away. Young men, the flower of their generation, tramped off to Pittsburgh or Johnstown to look for work in the mills. Some of them went farther west. They helped to open the new mines of West Virginia; they followed the harvest northward, week by week, from Oklahoma into Saskatchewan; they toiled in Oregon sawmills or Michigan factories, and grew into landless men, trees without roots—the homeless peasants of the machine.

My country was becoming a region of old people and children. The minority of young men who stayed behind had yielded to the yoke of women and the past; or rather, their future had been decided in a fashion somewhat more casual. There were, during the summer, barn dances, hay rides, church festivals (pronounced "festibbles"), and picnics. In winter there were husking bees and sociables. Chaperons were unknown. Boys and girls drove home together, wrapped in lap robes, pressed body to body in narrow sleighs. Early in these essentially puritan lives there had come one or two years of candid paganism. Soon they ended; Vida or Irma was "in trouble"; there was generally a marriage; and a boy of nineteen, kept from migration, settled down to his father's life of plowing for rye in September, for buckwheat in June; of cutting mine-props in winter and, as time went on, of driving his family to church, with his six or eight children crowded in a surrey, on the circuit-rider's alternate Sundays. What magnificent families they raised in my country! And how sallow and toothless the women were at thirty!

Life there was hard and in its essentials tragic. Youth was a hurried episode.

Malcolm Cowley (1898–1989) was The New Republic*'s literary editor and chief book reviewer throughout the 1930s and for decades one of America's greatest essayists. "My Countryside, Then and Now" appeared in the January 1929 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

The new distractions of manhood were there, seriously: a keg of beer, a few obscene songs, a fight; soon a man went down; the victor knelt over him, swinging his great arms rhythmically, like a reaper; somewhere in the crowd a woman was screaming. In the morning all the drinkers except one would return to their battle against starvation.

It was a battle in which there were many casualties. Men died in accidents; men died in the mines, under a hundred tons of rock, or in the woods under a fallen tree; there were women who had outlived four husbands. There were men who had killed three wives with milking, child-bearing, housework. And each of these tragedies was purely a family affair. Social feeling was almost lacking; each man worked alone, for his own salvation; and the lack of responsibility to the community was shown in bad roads, in primitive schools, in trout streams poisoned by sawmills, in churches that were never painted or reshingled, in forest fires that no one bothered to fight.

My country blossomed a little in its old men. Those who survived the hardships and accidents of middle age acquired a sort of exhausted calm, a faded whiteness like that of rain-washed lilacs. They sat in the sun, whittling and chewing tobacco with an air of unalterable dignity. They talked, choosing their words slowly, in the drawling singsong of the Pennsylvania mountains. My country has no dialect of its own, but it has a verbal melody which is unmistakable; and the speech of these old men was a sort of chant that rose and fell like the slow Allegheny ridges. They spoke of the days when the hills were covered with first-growth pine, when water grist mills hummed in all the valleys, when panthers slunk after white-tailed deer, when every creek and run (there are no brooks in western Pennsylvania) was full of shadowy trout.

My country, for all its unsocial harshness, for all its emigrants, had then, and still preserves, a fund of local patriotism which is symbolized by trout, white pine, and deer. The old men used to say, "Them days we alluz come home with a string of trout as heavy as a ham. . . . I c'n mind when every pine we cut would saw two thousand foot of boards. . . . It was nice, I tell ye, to go huntin' atter deer." They tried to hide their enthusiasm under these practical judgments, but it was obvious that these fish, these trees, these beasts had more than a practical value: they were the totems of a tribe. To catch a trout, to cut a virgin pine, or to shoot a twelve-tined buck was almost a ritual act: it was like sacrificing a white bull to the god Mithra.

There were no longer any deer in my country. The white pines which once had covered it were reduced to a few weevily saplings. The trout had been poisoned by sawmills or sulphur from the mines. The young men were dispersing, the farms were neglected, and soon my country would be a fire-blackened wilderness with a few old houses crumbling in the midst of overgrown fields. So at least it seemed to me in the summer of 1916.

I was to see many deserted countrysides during the next twelve years. In Vermont, on the wooded slopes of the Green Mountains, I would find stone fences precisely marking the boundaries of non-existent fields, and clumps of lilacs to show where villages had stood. In tidewater Virginia I would see whole townships abandoned to scrub pine and sassafras. There, thinking of General Sheridan's boast that after he left the Shenandoah Valley a crow flying through it would have to carry his own provisions, I reflected that peace was often no less destructive than war. That year an old Pennsylvania farmer had told me of driving for twenty miles in Armstrong County, through what had been a prosperous farming district, and of finding not so much as a forkful of hay to feed his horses.

When I returned to my country last summer I half expected to encounter the same condition. Instead, the population had increased. The nearest village was crowded with new houses. The farms, though few of them seemed prosperous, at least were occupied. The roads were admirable. It was obvious that the women had improved their own position; they looked somehow less weary, less indifferent, and even the boys who played by the roadside were rather less unkempt. A new brick high school was rising near the site of the little building where sixty of us children, a turbulent roomful divided into five classes, had recited turn by turn to the same discouraged teacher.

However, the change in my country was not confined to its physical appearance: the social attitude of our neighbors had developed like their roads and schools. I soon discovered that the old individualism of life on lonely farms had almost disappeared. People there, as elsewhere in the country, had come to regard themselves as members of a collectivity: village, a township, a lodge, a church. They judged actions by their social effects, and spoke of a successful man as being "a credit to the town." Formerly they would have said, with the same note of admiration, "Milt knows how to take care of hisself."

It was this new collectivism which smoothed the way for the organizers of the Ku Klux Klan when they appeared in my country five years ago last summer. They were aided also by a sort of particularism, a regional pride; for there was hardly a man of twenty-one in the upland villages—as distinguished from the mining towns of the valley—who was not white, Protestant, and for three generations a native. There was hardly a man who did not take the Klan oath; and the local sentiment was so unanimous that there was practically no attempt at concealment. Everybody knew that Squire Adam Diffenbaugh had been the first to join, and that Preacher Cameron, who was almost the last, had become the most fanatical member. In the Hemphill family there were seven Klansmen. If washday happened to follow a Klan meeting, all seven robes would hang on the Hemphill line, in full view of every automobile that passed along the state highway.

The robes hang there no longer. By the summer of 1928 the Klan was practically dead in my country. It had died in a series of quarrels over money, in the defalcation of a treasurer, in a feud between the Diffenbaughs and Preacher Cameron, and also to some extent in the growth of rival orders. The force



hich produced the Klan were per-aps as strong as ever, but fortunately he group instinct and the spirit of re-ionalism were being directed toward ss questionable ends.

They were directed toward the build-g of new schools, the resurfacing of he roads, the better enforcement of he forest and game laws. Local pride, expressed in these improvements, as raised the taxes nearly two hun-red per cent. Government and law e beginning to play a vaster part in he life of the community. In my day ey were represented almost solely by constable and a squire; now, in addi-on, I found game wardens, fire war-ens, state troopers, prohibition agents, spectors of various sorts, forest ngers. . . . And the effects of all this pervision were beginning to be seen.

There have been no forest fires in my country this year or last, for the first time in three decades. Deer have become so plentiful that in some places they have stripped the underbrush of bark and leaves to the height of a man's head. Stray dogs and cats, the most dangerous enemies of game, are exterminated systematically. Sawmills are almost violently encouraged not to pollute the waters. A fishing club of farmers and miners, formed three years ago, has stocked several streams, and in these one can catch nearly as many trout as in my grandfather's day. Even the white pines are coming back, though more slowly: they are creeping into the deserted fields; the edge of the forest shows a line of deeper green.

And my country, now that its local symbols have been restored, no longer lives in the past. It has found salvation of a sort, even though its economic problems remain unsolved. Migration to the cities has almost ceased; perhaps, in this era of collectivism, it has come to be regarded as desertion, as a guilty form of disloyalty. At any rate, the young men are staying at home.

I do not mean to suggest that all these changes are typical of the whole United States. Our nation is much less standardized than its critics like to believe; they generally overlook the importance of our regionalistic forces, not all of which are losing their power. Each county, each township, has an individuality of its own; it grows or decays; it loses or retains its inhabitants. Emigration to manufacturing centers is still a feature

ndscape with Garage Lights, 1932, by Stuart Davis
urtesy Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester, Marion Stratton Gould Fund

...national life, but it is by no ... universal; and there are thou... of scattered districts which, like my birthplace, are holding the loyalty of their own people.

I am thinking particularly of the wide regions in which general farming has ceased to be profitable. Some of these, but not many, have been given back to the forest; vast as is the number of abandoned farms, it is not so vast as we might expect. One district after another has found means of sustaining its separate life. In central New York hundreds of communities that might otherwise cease to exist are supported by dairy farming; others, in the Hudson Valley, have turned to growing fruits; the lumber industry has become stabilized, permanent, in many parts of Maine; Aroostook County depends on its potato crop; Cape Cod derives more revenue from tourists than it ever had from whaling. . . . All these are cases in which the solution was economic. There is a striking example, however, of a town that refused to die—of a district that found salvation almost in spite of economic laws.

In the autumn of 1918, while our troops were hammering at the Kriemhilde Line, ten thousand square miles in northeastern Minnesota were laid waste by forest fires. The property damage was nearly a hundred millions—I am quoting the newspapers of the day—and over a thousand lives were lost. Cellars and wells in the devastated area were choked with the bodies of those who had tried to find refuge from the flames.

Cloquet, a town almost in the center of this region, suffered even more than its neighbors. When the inhabitants straggled back from Duluth a few days later they found that their houses were so many heaps of ashes. The lumber mills on which their livelihood depended had disappeared. The forests that fed the mills were forests no longer. There was talk among the lumbermen of abandoning the site and moving to the Pacific Coast. Economically, it seemed that Cloquet had no further reason for existence.

However, the inhabitants showed a stubborn loyalty that can only be admired: they refused to desert the town. The lumber companies, with the same sort of loyalty, began seeking for new resources; they rebuilt the mills; they embarked on the manufacture of new products. With not a tree standing in the neighborhood, as I am told is the case at present, Cloquet must be a very curious lumber town; but it has tapped new forests at a distance; its industries are thriving. Evidently, if the will exists, the economic problems of a rural community can very often be solved.

In my own country this solution is still to be found. "Times is hard," our neighbors say: the few mines that are working pay a non-union scale of wages; potatoes this autumn brought less than they have for two decades; buckwheat and rye scarcely repay the cost of raising them; there is no market for hay; timber has been cut so rapidly since the chestnut blight that the local market is glutted, and "a man c'n har'ly earn wages in his own woods"; but, nevertheless, the young men are no longer drifting to the cities or the West; they are doing their pioneering at home.

For most of them the problem of finding work has proved none too easy. They are compensated, however, by the privilege of living in their own country, among friends; and a few have even made opportunities for themselves which might have been closed to them in a city. Elmer Moody, at thirty-five, has just retired with a comfortable fortune after fifteen years of selling automobiles. Merton Ward, whom I remember as the bad boy of the second-reader class, is one of the few rural storekeepers who have adjusted themselves to new conditions; his business is growing. Milt Peters has become a lumberman. Starting after the War with no capital except his government bonus, he has acquired a sawmill, two motor trucks, a reputation for thoroughness, and several valuable tracts of timber. He leaves no waste behind him; he is bent on making a fortune out of tops and branches which the Vinton Lumber Company would have left to rot. And he is employing nearly a dozen men of his own age and his own locality.

To-day, as in other country districts, it is the aged who are leaving their homes. Old J. L. Edwards, the only man of wealth in the township, has bought a farm in Georgia where the winters are less severe. Bill George, formerly a sergeant in the Army of the West, wounded at Chickamauga, prisoner at Andersonville, has gone to live with his eldest son, a clerk in the War Department. He returned last summer for a brief visit, but it may be his last. I hear that in his eighty-seventh year he is looking "purty dauncy."

With the young men working at home and the old men moving away my country has become what America is always supposed to be, and very seldom is—a land of youth.

On the second day of my visit I went to the swimming hole in Blacklick Creek, a hundred yards below the White Mill Dam.

I remembered it as a pool in the deep woods, black and still, with a school of minnows floating at the surface of the water, in the sunlight, and hummingbirds moving from flower to flower along the bank. Usually it was the haunt of silence. At infrequent intervals it was invaded by half a dozen boys who stood shivering and naked in the water, one or two of them able to venture a few strokes and all of them splashing and shouting as if the stillness were an enemy to be conjured away.

This time the swimming hole was crowded with young men, children, girls in their teens, and middle-aged women who had never worn a bathing suit before. All of the boys could swim and a few were really skilful. However, it was the presence of women that astonished me. No one familiar with the position of farm wives in my country could fail to gasp at finding them here in the water, under the trees, at a time when there were socks to mend and dewberries to preserve.

Their right to the swimming hole—a right significant of all the little revolutions by which the life of American country women is being transformed—had not been won without a struggle. I heard that Preacher Cameron had declaimed against it on three successive Sundays.

Reverend Elisha Cameron, as he

igned his letters, was a powerful fig-
re, the father, by two wives, of fif-
een children, twelve of whom were
ving. He was known throughout the
ownship for his deer-stalking and his
kill in catching trout. To the im-
rovement of roads and schools, to
ne rights of women, and the com-
rts of life he was hostile or indiffer-
nt: he was an individualist, drawing
personal inspiration from the Bible;
unting, fishing, damning, and ex-
orting with the same vehemence,
ne same lonely fire. In some ways he
pified the older standards of the
ountry.

He was envied for his bags of game.
le was respected for his fecundity no
ss than for his picturesque faith.
here had always been many to follow
im even when, as in the dispute over
ne swimming hole, he was opposing
opular new customs. But his prestige
as threatened by a series of minor
isagreements; it was seriously com-
romised by his failure to repay a loan;
nd it finally disappeared in a curious
fair which brought two instincts of
y country into opposition.

Milt Diffenbaugh, killed in a mine
ccident, had married the preacher's
cond daughter. He was buried with
me pomp in the graveyard over-
oking the valley of the Blacklick.
here was a quarrel, however, be-
veen the Diffenbaugh clan and
lilt's young widow, in which Preach-
Cameron took his daughter's side.
lilt's body was exhumed from the
iffenbaugh plot, with the preacher
elping the undertaker, and carried to
lonely burying ground in Centre
ounty. From that day the preacher's
fluence disappeared. He, the official
presentative of Protestantism in my
untry, the local head of what was
most an Established Church, had
utraged our instinctive reverence
r the dead, had committed a sacri-
ge. And, in Preacher Cameron's de-
at, the causes he supported were
ompromised: the Klan lost other
embers; card parties and dances
ere held for high school students;
rt of the past was swept away. The
imming hole was opened to coun-
y wives.

Standing knee-deep in the muddy water that afternoon was Millie Armstrong, the preacher's eldest daughter, the mother of six children at twenty-nine, and a rebel against his patriarchal standards.

The new pastor arrived a few days later. He was a young man: brisk, tolerant, rather sententious, and eager to work for what he called "the spiritual and moral welfare of the community." Obviously he would lead no crusade against the swimming hole. After a short conversation he invited me to a picnic and conference at which plans for community service would be discussed.

I liked the young pastor for his easy enthusiasms, but strangely I regretted old Cameron's lean shoulders, his bitter faith, his blue eyes quick to spy out a deer or a sinner. I was glad to see the village improved; I admired the new spirit of collectivism less for itself than for its effects; but still I could not help looking backwards. My country had once possessed a tragic power, a sort of cold majesty that was melting in this more genial age. I felt like seeking the past. And so on the morning of the picnic, which fell on the day before my visit ended, I did not drive to town; instead, I went rambling through the pasture-lot. After a time I reached the top of the knob and climbed the old pine tree from which all my country is visible.

It stands some distance behind the farmhouse, alone in a bare field, with its branches twisted northward in the direction of the prevailing winds. Branch after branch they spread like Egyptian fans of ostrich feathers or separate terraces of moss, hiding the ground from the watcher who has climbed to the top. There, a perpetual breeze creeps through the needles, exhaling the odor of dried herbs and a rustle of heavy silk.

Perched on the highest branch, I looked southward to the road, once known as the Clay Pike and now transformed into the Benjamin Franklin Highway. It rippled with an unbroken stream of motor cars, bound east to the mines of Nant-y-glo, bound for the picnic, bound west beyond the ridges, bound nowhere in particular. South of the highway was the deep ravine where the Blacklick flowed, its orange water sometimes visible between the trees. The horizon west of the valley was closed by Duncan's Knob, the limit of the lands that my great-great-uncle had claimed. South and southeast was a file of parallel mountains, ridge on ridge, growing bluer and fainter as they marched into the sky. Bands of lightning were playing over the last ridge.

In the nearer distance I began to distinguish familiar sites. A crumbling chimney in a pasture lot was all that remained of the cabin which James Duncan, the deerslayer and pine-butcher, had hewn from the forest log by log. He lay buried near-by, under a blasted tree. It was his son Thomas who built the White Mill, first of the water grist mills along our streams, now standing idle as a memorial to the days of more prosperous farming. Empty also was the clearing where the Vinton sawmills had devoured the hardwood and hemlock of twenty thousand acres. A rash on a distant hillside, lividly gleaming in an island of sunlight among the clouds, was the culm-bank and abandoned tipple of what had been Mine No. 6.

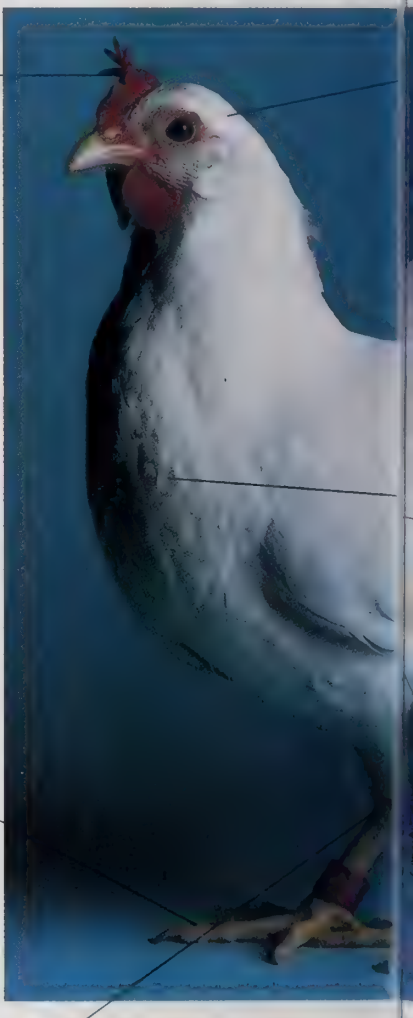
The history of my country, like that of so many American districts, and perhaps like that of the nation as a whole, had been a slow exhausting of resources. The men in coonskin caps, the fierce Scotch-Irish of the frontier, had driven away the larger game. Their sons, who cleared the fields, had cut almost the last of the virgin forest, and the next two generations had worn out the arable soil. My country to-day was fed with minerals, but the coal in time would be exhausted, and then? . . . I had no fear for what would come. The hills had shown a power of recuperation; the trees were creeping back into the desolate choppings where fire had raged; the fields were resting for other tasks under a blanket of white-top and goldenrod. The people, too, were preparing for the future; they felt a common aim; they would find other resources inevitably.

Out of the village, borne by the low winds that precede a storm, came the ring of hammers from the carpenters at work on the new school.

FOWL

In the nation's poultry plants, brutality

This seemingly harmless broiler chicken may in fact be the most dangerous animal in North America. Although this 3½-pound bird has a brain the size of a raisin and will live no longer than six weeks, its popularity with consumers (who now spend $40 billion a year on chicken products) has ensured that it and its peers will injure 40,000 workers this year in America's 175 poultry-processing plants. Owing to a health-conscious culture that increasingly chooses grilled chicken over red meat, annual chicken consumption per capita has risen from 40 pounds in 1970 to 75 pounds today. And as demand has increased, so have line speeds in processing plants: in 1979 the USDA limit was 70 birds per minute; today it stands at 91 birds per minute, a figure based not on how quickly workers can safely do their jobs but on how quickly USDA meat inspectors can examine the carcasses. Eight billion chickens will be sacrificed this year to our desire for cheap, versatile meals and slimmer hips, but they will have their revenge: cumulative-trauma disorders among poultry workers are 16 times the national average, and there is little hope that the line will be slowing down anytime soon.

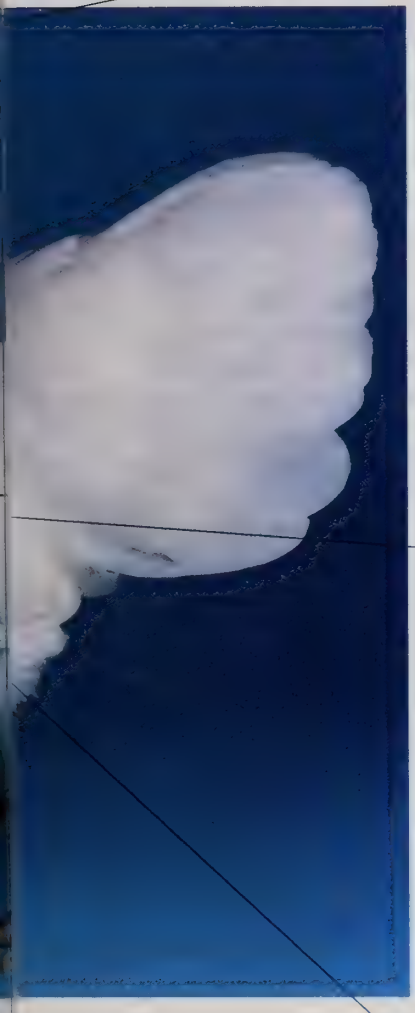


Amid clouds of ammonia and fecal matter carrying salmonella and other harmful bacteria, workers called "catchers" wade into 100-degree holding pens crowded with angry fowl. Braving sharp beaks and claws, they grasp the birds by their feet and hurl them into containers bound on trucks for the processing plant. A catcher generally handles 8,000 birds a day, many of which urinate on him. At the plant, "hangers" fasten the feet of up to 50 birds a minute (more than 20,000 a day) into metal shackles so that the dangling heads may most efficiently be lopped off by the razor-sharp wire just down the line. A typical plant can in one eight-hour shift turn 144,000 chickens into packages of ready-to-eat meat, but the human cost even early on in the process is high: rotator-cuff and other repetitive-motion injuries abound among hangers; catchers are prey to cuts, eye infections, and respiratory ailments.

Most plants now automate the process by which the chicken, after being scalded and plucked, is eviscerated, but a few still perform "evisc" by hand, and manual labor is employed in automated plants whenever the machines break down. Evisc workers must twist and pull the innards from 35 to 100 chickens per minute. Although they face the prospect of crippling carpal tunnel syndrome and tendonitis, many stay on the job because they lack other prospects and because their welfare benefits are limited, nationwide, to just five years. The situation is even bleaker for Missouri residents. In 1995 the meat-processing industry persuaded officials in that state to create a program that sends welfare recipients to work in chicken and hog factories. If they refuse an interview or a job, their benefits are severely reduced; if they take a job and then quit, they face the same penalty.

UBLE

well as to bird, *by Christopher D. Cook*



"Inedibles" such as the head are transported by auger to the "offal room," where they are ground up and then poured into a gigantic vat to cook. The few unlucky souls who tend this room must endure sweltering heat and remain ever mindful that the horrible fumes released by the decomposing blood can, in rare cases, become poisonous in a confined space. Of more immediate concern are the augers, mixers, and blenders that crowd the room: workers must avoid getting caught in the machinery and dismembered. What comes out of this room? Chicken feed.

Boneless chicken breast is by far the most popular chicken product on the market; it is also the most labor-intensive. Workers in "debone" stand shoulder-to-shoulder, slicing and chopping their way through joints, tendons, and tough gristle, a process that requires 20 to 30 hard twisting motions per minute. Scissors and knives quickly dull, and workers often lacerate themselves or their neighbors when blades slip off the slimy carcasses. Investigators for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) found that 49 percent of the deboners in one plant had upper-body disorders, yet proposals within NIOSH to study the health impacts of work speed and pressure have been on hold for ten years. As debris piles up on counters and floors, even walking becomes dangerous. A 1997 Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) study of 51 plants found that 40 percent of injuries were back ailments from slips and falls. OSHA also found that most employees in the plants it surveyed were required to buy their own protective boots, gloves, and aprons, necessities that many poultry workers—who typically earn only $6.50 an hour—simply did without. Some plants, OSHA learned, failed even to provide cleanup workers with eye protection from the ammonia used on plant floors, exposure to which has caused vision damage and, in a few cases, blindness.

More and more Americans are saying no to jobs in the chicken plants, and today 50 percent of the nation's 245,000 poultry workers are immigrants. In response to chronic worker turnover and labor shortages, Congress has proposed setting up a government-run "guest worker" program that would employ immigrant poultry laborers for up to two years (about as long as even the most determined worker is likely to last) before sending them home, perhaps without fingernails—a common reaction to the bacteria in chicken carcasses. That these workers could also lose the use of their hands is of little concern to those who profit from our bottomless appetite for cheap chicken. Injured foreigners aren't eligible for welfare or disability benefits, after all, and impoverished replacements will not hesitate to head north, seeking a better life on the killing line.

stopher D. Cook is an investigative journalist d in San Francisco. He has written for the Chris- Science Monitor, The Nation, *and* The Pro- sive. *This is his first piece for* Harper's Magazine.

UNLIKELY STORIES

The quiet renaissance of American short fiction

By Vince Passaro

Books discussed in this essay:

Self-Help, by Lorrie Moore. Knopf, 1985. Paperback: Warner Books, 1995. 163 pages. $11.99.
Birds of America, by Lorrie Moore. Knopf, 1998. 291 pages. $23.
Break It Down, by Lydia Davis. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1986. Paperback: Serpents Tail, 1996. 177 pages. $12.99.
Girl with Curious Hair, by David Foster Wallace. Norton, 1989. Paperback: Norton, 1996. 376 pages. $12.
Brief Interviews with Hideous Men, by David Foster Wallace. Little, Brown, 1999. 320 pages. $24.
Jesus' Son, by Denis Johnson. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1992. Paperback: HarperCollins, 1993. 176 pages. $12.
The Things They Carried, by Tim O'Brien. Houghton Mifflin, 1990. Paperback: Viking Penguin, 1991. 288 pages. $11.95.
The Ring of Brightest Angels Around Heaven, by Rick Moody. Little, Brown, 1995. Paperback: Warner Books, 1996. 256 pages. $11.99.
The KGB Bar Reader, edited by Ken Foster. William Morrow, 1998. 336 pages. $14 (paper).

The American short story—an expression we can use with some degree of domestic pride, as when referring to jazz or liberty—has entered a strange phase in its history. To examine the record of story collections published over this last decade, of money paid for them, of reviews received by them, and, most particularly, of magazine outlets for them, is to conclude that the form is in a long twilight, that it has descended sharply from the flash, the good money, and the cultural regard it had under the influence of Hemingway and Fitzgerald in the 1930s, again in *The New Yorker*–dominated period of the 1950s, and finally in what you might call the second Hemingway period—the "minimalist" days—of the first half of the 1980s, when stories by Raymond Carver, Bobbie Ann Mason, Jayne Anne Phillips, Susan Minot, Richard Ford, and Tobias Wolff were all the rage. How young and glamorous and well paid the story business seemed in the neon-margarita glow of that last period; how mild and unassuming it looks now, quiescent in its waning days, destined for that condition of benign disregard and deadly subsidy that afflicts watercolor painting, quilt making, and, alas, American poetry.

The problem,* in part, is built into the history of the American short story. The closer it adheres to realism, as in the 1930s and again in the 1950s and 1980s, the more its popular prospects rise, but this happens only periodically. Born of Irving, Poe, and Hawthorne, the American story was from the first experimental, always open to a greater range of formal expressions than stories in the classical French and Russian traditions, such as those by Flaubert, Maupassant, and Turgenev. The original American story was *the tale*—a brief, halogen-bright lesson in the ways of sin, crime, madness, and decline. Later, Stephen Crane, Jack London, and Sherwood Anderson brought a harsh, native, reportorial sense to American fiction in stories that ranged from slice-of-life to near fairy tale. Henry James painted a European sensibility onto the American scene; his own brand of formal innovation was in taking the highly unusual step in American letters of insisting that there is such a thing as form at all. Yet even James experimented; he wrote ghost stories, and in 1903 he wrote a story, "The Beast in the Jungle," that spans several decades but has only two or three relatively brief physical scenes and few physical details—a story that is made entirely of spiritual, psychological, and verbal play and is about a thing that in effect never happens. In other words, even James wrote variously, with his feet in two centuries and across several styles. To get a sense of the range of the story in America, consider that during the latter part of James's career he was working at the same time as Mark Twain, Stephen Crane, Bret Harte, Willa Cather, Frank Norris,

Vince Passaro is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine. His essay "Who'll Stop the Drain? Reflections on the Art of Going Broke" appeared in the August 1998 issue.

** There are occasional anomalies, of course. Recently, two writers, Nathan Englander and Melissa Bank, received substantial advances (Bank's was $275,000) and publicity for their first collections. They are moderately talented, good-looking, young, and Englander, at least, a former Orthodox Jew now gone secular, has an interesting life story to tell on his book tour. There is always room in the marketing machine for these kinds of writers. At the same time, a different kind of collection recently has made it into the popular consciousness and, momentarily, onto the bestseller lists: Houghton Mifflin's anthology of its anthologies, The Best American Short Stories of the Century, edited by éminence grise John Updike and timed for end-of-the-century considerations. On the whole, though, the short story as such, with no additional marketing angles, still usually fails to generate much commercial interest.*

Kate Chopin, Theodore Dreiser, and ack London, to name only a few—a ist that represents just a portion of he range of formal and stylistic ap-roaches then current among Amer-can story writers.

Since the turn of the centu-y, however, the American hort story has managed to fun-el itself down, at least in the ollege-trained reader's mind, o a fairly strict, quite unex-erimental idea of what a lit-rary story ought to be. Rough-speaking, it ought to be what Henry James thought at times was, what the commercial ction of Hemingway and itzgerald made it into, and hat was later written by John O'Hara and John Updike—a iece of narrative prose fiction horter than a novella, eaturing a single "conscious-ess" that directs the narrative ye and evokes events and sen-ments that are grounded in he five senses and other phys-al realities. This fiction ought o be something between fif-en and fifty pages long, large-if not entirely realistic, with forceful and prescriptive pening, a revelatory conclu-on, and a plot hung on one or vo or, at most, three dense notional turns.

Hemingway, in this sce-ario, stands as the exemplary merican story writer. Think the opening of "A Clean /ell-Lighted Place" or the nding of "The Snows of Kili-anjaro." Hemingway's crisp, reti-nt stories became the templates om which American fiction writers ere supposed to work. One of the asons the short story now has less npact and less commercial appeal an a decade and a half ago is be-use today's best short-fiction writ-s have turned away from his sto-al, serious, pared-down approach. oday's short fiction tends to be nart, and wit is an aspect of the lit-ary art form that Hemingway uldn't master and that his follow-s, consciously or unconsciously, t aside. (His anti-intellectualism, erfectly American and perfectly tuned to the needs of an ever-less-educated reading public, meshed well with his own marked lack of intelligence.) He had a painterly sensibility, a mimic's talents, and an intermittently fashionable attitude; he amalgamated these, under the heavy influences of Gertrude Stein and Sherwood Anderson, into a style that in its earliest expressions had considerable power and grace. His worldview, though, was so steeped in sentimentality and vanity that it made him blind to what you might call "the richer possibilities" of life, to the wide swatch of moral and emotional subtleties in which life is actually lived and with which it is most powerfully depicted. This lack makes itself felt in the tinny aftertaste that even his best fiction can leave: Jake and Brett in Madrid at the end of *The Sun Also Rises* ("Oh, Jake," Brett said, "we could have had such a damned good time together"), or the father with the boy in "Indian Camp" ("Is dying hard, Daddy?" "No, I think it's pretty easy, Nick. It all depends"). Hemingway was almost never funny, and he was almost never right—never right, that is, about what we might call the full nuances of human relations, human frailty, and, in the face of that frailty, human morality. Writers like Samuel Beckett or William Burroughs, to name very different examples, changed the way we see the world; Hemingway changed the way we see Pamplona.



Today's American short fiction is more various, more successfully experimental, more urbane, funnier, and more bitingly ironic than that written in the Hemingway tradition. It is also more idiosyncratic in its voices, less commercial, and more expansive in its approach to the requirements of art. To appreciate the work of today's best story writers—Lorrie Moore, for example, or Denis Johnson, or David Foster Wallace—is to recognize that the 1990s have been not at all a waning moment of the story but an innovative and rich one. This decade has seen the publication of remarkable volumes of short fiction by such talents as the aforementioned Wallace, Johnson, and Moore as well as by writers of equal or nearly equal talent, such as Lydia Davis, Steven Millhauser, Joanna Scott, Mary Gaitskill, Thom Jones, William T. Vollmann, Rick Moody, and George Saunders. Quietly—indeed, almost invisibly, with little popular or critical recognition—the 1990s have presented us with some of the best and formally most innovative short fiction in our literature.

That so few venues publish these writers regularly and that so few readers get to happen upon stories by them are circumstances that contribute to the

Illustration by Hadley Hooper

[illegible]ness of this moment. Over the last two decades, writing short stories has passed from being a very tough way to make a living to being an impossible one. The magazines that regularly publish short fiction for a national audience (roughly in order of how well they pay) are *The New Yorker*, *Esquire*, GQ, *Playboy*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, and *Harper's Magazine*. The so-called women's magazines, such as *Cosmopolitan*, *Redbook*, and a few others, publish fiction also, but not regularly, and little of what they do publish turns out to have significant literary value. *The New Yorker*, which in the 1950s published three stories each week and which as recently as the 1980s published two stories a week, has given up its leadership role as the defining venue for short fiction in the United States. Since the coming and going of its glam-editor Tina Brown,* the magazine, even with its special "Fiction" issues, including its recent, highly derivative "Future of American Fiction" issue, has reduced the number of stories by perhaps a third, to approximately fifty pieces per year. *The New Yorker* once supported five fiction editors; now no editors at the magazine attend to fiction full time.

* *Ms. Brown is to fiction as William Tecumseh Sherman was to Georgia. In the early 1980s,* Vanity Fair *under Richard Locke and, later, Leo Lerman published, among other works of outstanding new fiction, the entirety of Gabriel García Márquez's short masterpiece* Chronicle of a Death Foretold. *When Ms. Brown took over the magazine, however, fiction was minimized for a time, then essentially eliminated. She then moved on to* The New Yorker, *with its long tradition as the nation's premier venue for fiction. Prior to her arrival,* The New Yorker *had been not only publishing its reliably good two stories per week but featuring such extraordinary occasional events as Max Frisch's* Man in the Holocene, *which appeared in full in the early 1980s. Brown eventually hired as* The New Yorker*'s fiction editor Bill Buford, an American anglophile and the former editor of* Granta, *who, if his publishing record is any indication, often seems to prefer to slip excerpts from memoirs and letters into the magazine in places where you'd expect to see short fiction. With Brown's recent departure (Buford remains) and the ascendance of editor David Remnick, it remains to be seen whether guest the short story in* The New Yorker.

The fiction that the magazine does publish is too often excerpted from novels or imminently forthcoming collections, making the magazine seem more a flack for publishers than a site of editorial strength and vision. In addition to *The New Yorker*'s fifty, *Esquire*'s twenty, and *Playboy*'s fifteen to seventeen, GQ, *Harper's Magazine*, and *The Atlantic Monthly* are responsible for, say, a dozen stories each per year, this latter group (plus *Esquire*) more reliably preferring short stories to book excerpts that have been pre-sanctioned for mass appeal by book publishers and their publicists.

At best then, roughly 120 pieces of literary fiction appear in widely circulated magazines each year. Prices paid for this work range anywhere from an unusual $10,000 (with a very rare story by a well-known author garnering more) to a more common $1,500 or $2,000 per story.* To guess that on average the authors are making $5,000 per story is to guess very generously in the authors' favor, and to notice that no more (and likely fewer) than a dozen or so of today's best story writers are publishing in these "well paying" magazines more than once a year is to get a sense of how little money there is to be made from writing stories these days. The time is long gone when writers like Hemingway and Fitzgerald "ruined" their talents writing stories on commission for large paychecks, pumping out narratives for the dozen or more commercial magazines that sought anything that came off their typewriters. Even during the Depression, these writers could make $3,000 or more per story, the equivalent of $36,000 per story in today's economy.

So in the late 1980s, while minimalism, after a decade of popular success and artistic dominance, began to play out and while

* *In the best literary journals*—The Paris Review, The Georgia Review, The Threepenny Review, Doubletake, Ploughshares, *and so on, where there's sometimes more room for fiction and somewhat more of a commitment to avant-garde work—writers are paid even less, and in some cases not at all.*

the high-profile outlets for short sto[illegible] ries continued to diminish, the firs[illegible] of the more complex and intellectu[illegible] ally sophisticated stories now preva[illegible] lent began to appear.

The earliest of these "new" work[illegible] might have been Lorrie Moore's firs[illegible] collection, *Self-Help*, which wa[illegible] published in 1985. Two particula[illegible] features, in retrospect, make her sto[illegible] ries look fundamentally differen[illegible] from the mainstream books of sho[illegible] fiction then being published: he[illegible] caustic humor, which almost non[illegible] of her contemporaries shared, an[illegible] her book's central, structural con[illegible] ceit—that this was a self-help bool[illegible] The first story in the volume, "Ho[illegible] to Be an Other Woman," stands as[illegible] clear example. It is written in th[illegible] imperative:

> Meet in expensive beige raincoat[illegible] on a pea-soupy night. Like a detectiv[illegible] movie. First, stand in front of Flo[illegible] sheim's Fifty-seventh Street windo[illegible] press your face close to the glas[illegible] watch the fake velvet Hummels insi[illegible] revolving around the wing tips; son[illegible] white shoes, like your father wears, a[illegible] propped up with garlands on a sma[illegible] mound of chemical snow. All th[illegible] stores have closed. You can see yo[illegible] breath on the glass. Draw a peac[illegible] sign. You are waiting for a bus. . . .
>
> After four movies, three concer[illegible] and two-and-a-half museums, y[illegible] sleep with him. It seems the rig[illegible] number of cultural events. On th[illegible] stereo you play your favorite harp a[illegible] oboe music. He tells you his wif[illegible] name. It is Patricia. She is an inte[illegible] lectual property lawyer. He tells y[illegible] he likes you a lot. You lie on yo[illegible] stomach, naked and still too war[illegible] When he says, "How do you fe[illegible] about that?" don't say "Ridiculous" [illegible] "Get the hell out of my apartmen[illegible] Prop your head up with one hand a[illegible] say: "It depends. What is intellect[illegible] property law?"...
>
> When you were six you thoug[illegible] *mistress* meant to put your shoes [illegible] the wrong feet. Now you are older a[illegible] know it can mean many things, b[illegible] essentially it means to put your sh[illegible] on the wrong feet. . . .
>
> Cut up an old calendar into wee[illegible] long strips. Place them around y[illegible] kitchen floor, a sort of bar graph [illegible] the linoleum, representing the nu[illegible] ber of weeks you have been a mistre[illegible] thirteen. Put X's through all the [illegible] tional holidays.

Go out for a walk in the cold. Three little girls hanging out on the stoop are laughing and calling to strange men on the street. "Hi! Hi, Mister!" Step around them. Think: they have never had orgasms.

A blonde woman in barrettes passes you in stockinged feet, holding her shoes.

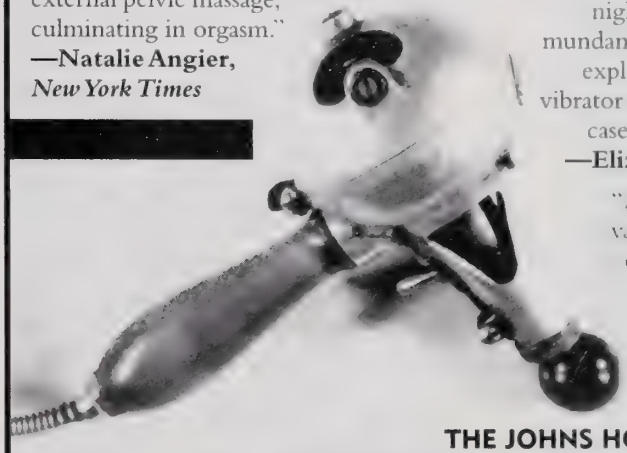
Even in this story, published hen she was still in her twenties, oore could form a surprisingly as- red interplay between symbol and mic voice: in this story, you can e it in the return, time and again, images of shoes, awkward, absurd, d slightly obscene. Since then she s grown as a writer, matured in r mastery of style and in her vi- n. Many of her stories are fairly ditional in structure, but there is ways that quickness of movement, at slightly skewed narrative per- ective that keeps you alert and a tle uneasy—she could pull some- ing anytime, and you don't want miss it. In her latest collection, t year's *Birds of America*, which, ockingly, made it onto *The New rk Times Book Review* bestseller t for three brief but, for story fans, rious weeks shortly after it came t, Moore pushes her fiction fur- er and deeper, in terms of lan- age and emotion, than she has be- re. She also pulls off many ments of structural wizardry, such the strange, disorienting, and werful last page of "Agnes of wa," when she suddenly switches int of view from a wife, who has en the central intelligence of the ry, to her husband, watching her dness overwhelm her, her head king, at a table in a New York er. The pillar of *Birds of America*, tory already much talked about d certain to be much anthologized the decades to come, is "People ke That Are the Only People re." It is a small masterpiece, a nsciously genre-confusing first- rson account of motherhood and gravely ill child, which was pub- ed to a good deal of attention in *e New Yorker* two and a half years . The editors of the magazine ly implied on the contents page t this piece of fiction was really a moir, and they compounded this

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[illegible] by illustrating the first [illegible] the story with a photograph of Moore.

Nevertheless, and no matter how truthful to real events, "People Like That. . . " remains a short story: crafted from a narrative voice and from selected fragments of believable emotion and physical details, each arranged to achieve maximum dramatic effect, and owing no allegiance to facts and everything to felt reality. Moore, who has acknowledged that the piece fictionalizes something that did in fact happen to her son, purposefully plays on the whole notion of a story's autobiographical truth, making the narrator into a writer: "Take notes," her husband tells her. "We're going to need the money." Later, she addresses this rather postmodern bit of financial planning. The husband asks:

> "Are you taking notes for this?"
> "No."
> "You're not?"
> "No. I can't. Not this! I write fiction. This isn't fiction."
> "Then write nonfiction. Do a piece of journalism. Get two dollars a word."
> "Then it has to be true and full of information. I'm not trained. I'm not that skilled. Plus, I have a convenient personal principle about artists not abandoning art. One should never turn one's back on a vivid imagination. Even the whole memoir thing annoys me."
> "Well, make things up, but pretend they're real."
> "I'm not that insured."
> "You're making me nervous."
> "Sweetie, darling, I'm not that good. I can't *do this*. I can do—what can I do? I can do quasi-amusing phone dialogue. I can do succinct descriptions of weather. I can do screwball outings with the family pet. Sometimes I can do those. Honey, I only do what I can. I do *the careful ironies of daydream*. I do *the marshy ideas upon which intimate life is built*. But this? Our baby with cancer? I'm sorry. My stop was two stations back. This is irony at its most gaudy and careless. This is a Hieronymus Bosch of facts and figures and blood and graphs. This is a nightmare of narrative slop. This cannot be designed. This cannot even be noted in preparation for a design. . . ."

If the newer fictional movement I've described here catches on enough to deserve a name, the name might well come from this last soliloquy: call it narrative slop—but archly and happily. It is slop in a newly minted, best sense of the word—an almost reckless irony and an adamant refusal to bow to the more precious aspects of what in writing classes is called "craft." An amusing example from the passage just noted: within the metafiction that is this story there appears the meta-meta-fictional discussion with the husband about writing the story, within which come those italicized quotes describing Moore's earlier fiction. Are they real quotes from some gushy reviews, or did she make them up? Voyeuristically, and in a fully mean spirit, I'm hoping they're real. And thus are we dropped, as is so often and intriguingly the case in contemporary fiction, into the DMZ between narrative and reality.

As unusual as Moore's first collection was, and as astonishing as the stories in Moore's more recent *Birds of America* are, she does not often depart from the poses of standard storytelling. A year after *Self-Help*, however, a collection came along that did mark a radical turn. It was Lydia Davis's 1986 *Break It Down*, a book of very short, notably more experimental, more intellectual,* and more cuttingly ironic stories than were prominent at the time. Davis's influences appeared to be European, which was unusual, for it seemed in the 1980s that the exposure to literature of other popular young writers went no farther east than Montauk or Martha's Vineyard. Davis once made the bulk of her living as a teacher and translator of French cultural philosophers such as Maurice Blanchot and Michel Foucault. Unlike most American readers, she sees the humor and ironic play within th intellectual maze such writers creat and she is able to import them wit an elegant ease to the distinctly mor American landscape of her storie Davis and Moore are unlikely to lea to mind as similar stylists, until yo actually look at the prose of eac beside the other—the reference in Davis's "French Lesson I: L Meurtre," for example, come fro another place entirely than those i Moore's "How to Be an Oth Woman"—but the stories share strikingly similar faux-instruction tone. Here is the opening of Davis "French Lesson I":

> See the *vaches* ambling up the hil head to rump, head to rump. Lear what a *vache* is. A *vache* is milked i the morning, and milked again in th evening, twitching her dung-soake tail, her head in a stanchion. Alwa start learning your foreign langua with the names of farm animals. R member that one animal is an *anim* but more than one are *animaux*, en ing in *a u x*. Do not pronounce the These *animaux* live on a *ferme*. The is not much difference between th word, *ferme*, and our own word for th place where wisps of straw cov everything, the barnyard is deep i mud, and a hot dunghill steams by th barn door on a winter morning, so should be easy to learn. *Ferme*.

The story goes on to imply a *sca dale*, with the farmer missing, th wife of the farmer anxious in h kitchen, and the farmhand standi about looking guilty by the bar "Now the hired man swings open *barrière* and *les vaches* amble acro the barnyard, udders swaying, up their hocks in *la boue*, nodding the heads and switching their tails. . . But where is *le fermier*? And why, fact, is the chopping block cover with *sang* that is still sticky, eve though *le fermier* has not killed a *poulet* in days?" The story ends:

> The whereabouts of *le fermier* more of a problem, but in the ne lesson we may be able to follow hi into *la ville*. Before going on to *la vil* however, do study the list of additio al vocabulary:
> *le sac*: bag
> *la grive*: thrush
> *l'alouette*: lark

* *"Intellectual" is something of a naughty word in the United States, perceived by many people, even reading people, as a perjorative term, but I attach to it a great and romantic sense of beaming approval. My use of it in application to writers and their work is meant to connote that the writers are well read and intelligent, that they have a range of serious and surprising things to say, and that they are artists of the most thoughtful and lasting kind.*

l'aile: wing
la plume: feather
la hachette: hatchet
le manche: handle
l'anxiété: anxiety
le meurtre: murder

The story here, as the collection's tle hints, is "broken down." Key in- ormation, facts that collect them- elves as if by an accident of random prinkling, comes through to the onsciousness of the reader not in ne direct narrative preferred by the inimalist writers (he said, she said, e did, she did) but afloat, just de- ectable, like dust in the lamplight, alling upon an apparently innocu- us, if not to say absurd and inexplic- ble, other narrative, such as the rimer for French. This is the way *reak It Down* works. Everything avis wanted to say she said from a vere angle and in elegant whispers, a voice hidden but always alluring.

Davis has since then published an ntellectually complex and sinuous ovel, a woman's history of love and ss called *The End of the Story*, and, 1997, a new collection of fiction, *lmost No Memory*, with stories that ill have the nerve and narrative in- ovativeness of her earlier works but e also more quiet, elegiac, and emingly autobiographical. In this mbination of allusiveness, quick mbol, and memoirish tone, found stories by such writers as Davis, loore, Amy Hempel, and others, ou can feel strongly the presence of race Paley, an innovator who be- in publishing in the mid-1950s and hose influence seems to have been rminating in writers' minds, work, nd conversations until it suddenly came quite tangible in the prose of e middle 1980s and after.

Another story collection that felt on first reading as if it opened the door to a whole w approach to American short tion was David Foster Wallace's *irl with Curious Hair* (1989). mong Wallace's stories is a "mem- r" by a fictional aide to Lyndon hnson; the story of a lesbian love fair between a researcher for *Jeop- dy!* and the show's most prodigious hampion; another about a ointdexter-type of rich boy who hangs out doing drugs with and receiving Monica-like sexual favors from murderous punk rockers, and whose narrative voice in telling these adventures takes on the formal, post-Edwardian style of an English public school man, giving the piece a *Remains-of-the-Day*-meets-*Clockwork-Orange* kind of effect. The stories are brilliant, wildly imaginative, and had a strong impact on many younger writers when they were first published.

In June, Wallace's new book of stories, *Brief Interviews with Hideous Men*, arrived in bookstores, representing yet another turn, a new valley and imposing palisade, in the landscape of American short fiction. Between *Girl with Curious Hair* and *Brief Interviews with Hideous Men*, Wallace has made himself ever more the master of voices, a writer whose sense of history and politics and morality makes itself felt in repeated, almost compulsive, acts of mimicry and impersonation. He captures the historical undergirdings of a character faster than any writer I know of. He does a young boy at a pool, a middle-aged man in an abject sexual situation; he brings us a dictionary from the future and a Central European refugee from the past. He gives us his now notorious "depressed person,"* who unbearably narrates her pathologies in an exaggerated vocabulary of healing and therapy. The opening of "The Depressed Person" shows Wallace's remarkable ability to establish a voice utterly foreign to the fictional universe:

> Despairing, then, of describing [her] emotional pain or expressing its utterness to those around her, the depressed person instead described circumstances, both past and ongoing, which were somehow related to the pain, to its etiology and cause, hoping at least to be able to express to others something of the pain's context, its—as it were—shape and texture. The depressed person's parents, for example, who had divorced when she was a child, had used her as a pawn in the sick games they played. The de-

* *Both "The Depressed Person" and an excerpt from "Brief Interviews with Hideous Men" originally appeared in* Harper's Magazine.

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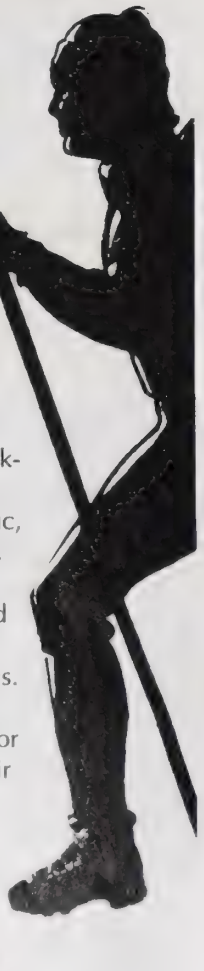
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pressed person had, as a child, required orthodonture, and each parent had claimed—not without some cause, given the Medicean legal ambiguities of the divorce settlement, the depressed person always inserted when she described the painful struggle between her parents over the expense of her orthodonture—that the other should be required to pay for it. And the venomous rage of each parent over the other's petty, selfish refusal to pay was vented on their daughter, who had to hear over and over again from each parent how the other was unloving and selfish. . . . And the depressed person always took care, when as an adult she attempted to describe to a trusted friend the circumstances of the struggle over the cost of her orthodonture and that struggle's legacy of emotional pain for her, to concede that it may very well truly have appeared to each parent to have been, in fact, just that (i.e., a matter of "principle"), though unfortunately not a "principle" that took into account their daughter's needs or her feelings at receiving the emotional message that scoring petty points off each other was more important to her parents than her own maxillofacial health and thus constituted, if considered from a certain perspective, a form of parental neglect or abandonment or even outright abuse, an abuse clearly connected—here the depressed person nearly always inserted that her therapist concurred with this assessment—to the bottomless, chronic adult despair she suffered every day and felt hopelessly trapped in.

Perhaps most extraordinary among the voices in *Brief Interviews* are those captured explicitly and exclusively *as* voices, in the pieces that give the collection its title. The "Brief Interviews" appear throughout the book. Marked simply as B.I. 19 or B.I. 42, they are meant to be clinical documents, fragments of interviews with certain unpleasant men whose dysfunctional reminiscences, sexual and otherwise, resemble selections from some sort of psychiatric exit interview or massive sociological study. They are presented in a question-and-answer format, with the "Q" lines left intriguingly blank. Without the examiner's presence and the frame it might provide, Wallace thrusts the reader into a world without the soothing presenc of authority, without what is norm and explanatory. We are immerse in the warped reality of late-twent eth-century life in its purest sens entirely free of context, reduced language and vocal impersonation.

In one "interview," Wallace pr sents a highly damaged middle-ag man of what one guesses is East Ge man birth recounting his earlie masturbation fantasies. Other inte views include what seems to be overheard conversation between tw lecherous traveling salesmen, and surprisingly tender reminiscence by man of his father's life as a men room attendant in a fancy hotel. Y might call these pieces tours c force, but you might as easily s them as entirely new ways of crea ing fiction.

When volumes like those fro Lorrie Moore, Lydia Davis, ar David Foster Wallace began appea ing in the late 1980s, a new kind work stepped out onto the Ame can literary landscape, more ps chologically rich and confront tional than that of the minimalis and, though less obviously realisti more disturbing in its outbreaks violence, more disturbing even th the guns-n-denim stories of write like Tom McGuane and Richa Ford. Among the collections th followed in the early 1990s we Tim O'Brien's complex and beau ful Vietnam soldiers' tales *T Things They Carried* and Den Johnson's *Jesus' Son*, a raw, lyric (at a time when lyricism was n encouraged, was felt to be but e cess) evocation of a drugged-o Iowan's search for meaning. In *T Things They Carried*, O'Brien pla with the embattled terrain of a s dier's memory, with his embellis ments of memories in conscious constructions—stories told, th corrected—to startling and intrig ing effects in narrative and la guage. In Johnson's book, every st ry is an abrupt entrance into t middle of a far-gone conversatio Both story collections gain their e ergy in part from a constant sit mering undertone of rageful a confused violence, violence th breaks through and becomes expli

t with enough regularity to keep he reader physically tense with ectation and not a little dread. O'Brien and Johnson are, first, fine ovelists, but the stories in these olumes, brief and affecting, stand longside anything either of them as written. Here, for example, is art of the hallucinatory drive-in in blizzard scene from Johnson's Emergency":

We bumped softly down a hill toward an open field that seemed to be a military graveyard, filled with rows and rows of austere, identical markers over soldiers' graves. I'd never before come across this cemetery. On the far side of the field, just beyond the curtains of snow, the sky was torn away and the angels were descending out of a brilliant blue summer, their huge faces streaked with light and full of pity. The sight of them cut through my heart and down the knuckles of my spine, and if there'd been anything in my bowels I would have messed my pants from fear.

Georgie opened his arms and cried out, "It's the drive-in, man!"

"The drive-in . . ." I wasn't sure what these words meant.

"They're showing movies in a fucking blizzard!" Georgie screamed.

"I see. I thought it was something else," I said.

ll of these writers, but particularly Lydia Davis and David Foster Wallace, are mfortable with surrealism, which ad, prior to their arrival, been the le province of the by-then-unshionable "postmodernists"—obert Coover, John Hawkes, Guy avenport, John Barth, and the ost frequently and glossily pubshed and, to my taste, most talnted of the group, Donald arthelme. Through Davis, Moore, nd Wallace, fiction reoccupied the lls of irony, sex, blood, history, nd, perhaps most important of all, e shifting gray tones of autobiogphy.

Rick Moody's 1995 collection, *he Ring of Brightest Angels Around eaven*, contains an emblematic ece, "Primary Sources," which is n eclectic bibliography, a bare list books, records, a videotape, and n online chatroom, unadorned but

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NOTES FOR "GREMLINS":

The word in the clue containing the misprinted letter is included with each answer. Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).

ACROSS: 1. * (over); 7. a(to)p[hilosophical] (over); 10. * (messed); 11. a-Ph.(I)D. (house); 13. up(rev.)-RR (pet); 14. * (money); 17. a-sh(r)am (there); 19. late-M (rev.) (last); 20. la-l-bit(rev.) (bone); 21. sen(I)or (dean); 23. c.-rim-p (make); 25. form-a-l (fine); 26. * (drug); 30. hidden (sight); 31. can-al (hear); 32. two meanings (name); 33. Shiv(a) (hard); 34. C.(leans-E)S. (bathes).

DOWN: 1. pun (bra) (bore); 2. en-dive (dressing); 3. air-liner (plane); 4. * (concert); 5. na(B.O.)bs (brass); 6. O-M.I.T. (to); 7. anni(hi)lation* (leveling); 8. two meanings (set); 9. par-snips (nix); 12. pa's-try (tart); 15. * (poles); 16. hidden (bird); 18. s(ail)ings (trips); 22. * (sound); 24. can(in)e (bitch); 27. homonym (EZ) (lax); 28. M-lo(rev.)-d (die); 29. T.H.I.'s (hand).

[illegible] its notes* that provide the piece's skeletal narrative. [illegible] note is to the title. It reads: "[illegible] 12.18.61 in NYC. Childhood [illegible] uneventful. We moved to the suburbs. I always read a lot. I did [illegible] kid stuff, but mostly I read. So this sketchy and selective bibliography—this list of some of the books I have around the house now—is really an autobiography." Autobiographical as it might be, the list of titles is also characteristic of a sensibility, a literary aesthetic, that has moved to the forefront of contemporary fiction: intellectually well fed but not epicurean; religious in idiosyncratic ways (in that sense, reminiscent of Blake); fond of the swollen, the purple, the bruised side of life; emotionally rent between disdain and longing; and formally balanced between offhandedness and careful innovation. The list of books reveals a certain canon that I would wager a number of other writers Moody's age or slightly older either share or can identify: Roland Barthes, Thomas Bernhard, Jorge Luis Borges, André Breton, Angela Carter, John Cheever (specifically, Moody cites *The Journals of John Cheever*, an absolutely astonishing work of fragmentary and lyrical autobiography), Robert Coover, Lydia Davis's previously discussed *Break It Down*, Stanley Elkin, F. Scott Fitzgerald (here the book is *The Crack-Up*, which is, as were Cheever's *Journals* for that writer, the most sophisticated and formally ambiguous of Fitzgerald's books), William Gaddis, Jean Genet, John Hawkes, Denis Johnson, Grace Paley, and Bruno Schulz. The sensibility is postmodern, anti-narrative, politically leftist, and East Coast and/or European in its points of reference. The prevailing sentiment in these books inclines to the spiritually jagged, the comic, the criminal, and the apocalyptic. A footnote to the entry for Schulz's *Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass* reads: "Angela Carter assigned this book to us in sophomore year. I was taking a lot of quaaludes that spring. One night I stayed up all night on Methadone and wrote a story, cribbed from Bruno Schulz, about a guy who lives in a house that *is actually his grandmother*. Later, when I told Angela that I'd written the story high, she said, 'Quaaludes, the aardvark of the drug world.'"

The combined comic-intellectual bent in Moody's work is notable, and dominates many of the major novels of the 1990s as well. Not one of the well-known figures of the fiction boom of the early 1980s would be called—or want to be called—an intellectual. Very few were funny. Most of the best writers working in the form now are both.

Another story of Moody's to consider, perhaps the best thing he's written, is "Demonology," which came out after his *Ring of Brightest Angels* was published. It appeared first in *Conjunctions* and was reprinted in *The KGB Bar Reader*, one of the strongest collections of new writing available (contributors besides Moody include Lydia Davis, Kathryn Harrison, A. M. Homes, Junot Díaz, Helen Schulman, and Jennifer Egan). The opening sentence/paragraph not only shows Moody's reach but essentially captures what many younger writers want to get at now: autobiography, story, social commentary, and the irony to see them all as a single source of pain:

> They came in twos and threes, dressed in the fashionable Disney costumes of the year, Lion King, Pocahontas, Beauty and the Beast, or in the costumes of televised superheroes, Protean, shape-shifting, thus arrayed, in twos and threes, complaining it was too hot with the mask on, *Hey, I'm really hot!*, lugging those orange plastic buckets, bartering, haggling with one another, *Gimme your Smarties, please?* as their parents tarried behind, grownups following after, grownups bantering about the schools, or about movies, about local sports, about their marriages, about the difficulties of long marriages, kids sprinting up the next driveway, kids decked out as demons or superheroes or dinosaurs or as advertisements for our multinational entertainment-providers, beating back the restless souls of the dead, in search of sweets.

This is a story, it turns out, about the death of Moody's sister, a moving, elliptical elegy for a lost sibling, but he begins it with a miniature treatise on suburbia, not taken from experience really (there is, for instance, really only one fashionable Disney character in a given year though favorites from other years do hold on) but from his own imagining of that American crucible where every dose of received cultural wisdom is small and where at every turn you see the demonstrable success of marketing over thoughtful taste and truth. The sister enters later. By the end, with small children watching, with a boyfriend struggling to revive her, she dies suddenly of heart failure. You never quite forget that the present suburban town and the other suburban towns of her past and the lives led there have played their part in her sadness and her demise.

Moody tells the death with a quick-cutting, brutal cinematography. Then he ends the piece with an encapsulation and indictment:

> I should fictionalize it more, I should conceal myself. I should consider the responsibilities of characterization, I should conflate her two children into one, or reverse their genders, or otherwise alter them, I should make her boyfriend a husband. I should explicate all the tributaries of my extended family (its remarriages, its internecine politics), I should novelize the whole thing, I should make it multigenerational, I should work in my forefathers (stonemasons and newspapermen), I should let artifice create an elegant surface, I should make the events orderly, I should wait and write about it later, I should wait until I'm not angry, I shouldn't clutter a narrative with fragments, with memory recollections of good times, or with regrets, I should make Meredith's death shapely and persuasive, not blunt and disjunctive, I shouldn't have to think the unthinkable, I shouldn't have to suffer, I should address her here directly (these are the ways I miss you), I should write only of affection, I should make our travels in this earthly landscape safe and se-

* *There are seemingly endless footnotes in the fiction of university-suckled younger writers today, a trend that may have begun with* [illegible] *Wilson Baker's novel* The Mezzanine, *a wonderfully pedantic take on five minutes of normal life, but a trend that probably also owes much to the popularity among graduate writing students of Nabokov's* Pale i

cure, I should have a better ending, I shouldn't say her life was short and often sad, I shouldn't say she had her demons, as I do too.

This is the paradigmatic ending for ne contemporary story, addressing ne formal decisions that have been ade by a writer who has specifically jected the production of what most aders think fiction is, yet fulfilled l the requirements of narrative art.

In looking now not only at the short story but at the novel as well, it is easy to feel that we are on the erge of something, a change in the ading public's relationship to fiction. seems impossible, in a society so limed in its number of book buyers, to stain the life's work that literature ust be for so many intense and talnted younger writers. Some teach for living. A few are working in film and levision. With the Internet comes ne possibility of such an inexpensive stribution system for large blocks of nguage that writing essentially will come volunteer work, akin to Docrs Without Borders, and similarly iented toward triage, not for victims war but for victims of our culture. ommercially speaking, fiction—even ne well-written, well-published ook—already stands in many editors' nd agents' minds as the proposal and velopment stage in the "content" siness, some temporary pre-film tranional format of the narrative condion. It is tempting to think, too, that e further writers remove themselves m the ether of commercial success, e better they might become. One s trouble believing that the possilities or fantasies or fever dreams of ardom that swam before the eyes of unger writers in the highly imitave Odeon era of the early 1980s did t interfere with their artistic develment and the autonomy of their aginations. Now that the commerial landscape is shrinking, shrinking, rinking, and there is no longer mon in literary prose for any but a handl of practitioners, American fiction ight be free enough to muster one ore golden age—but if golden, then e shall make it a hidden gold, doubloons in a mollusk-coated trunk at e bottom of the sea. ■

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FORTY-MINUTE LUNCH

By Jennifer Egan

Movie stars always look small the first time you see them, and Kitty Jackson is no exception, exceptional though she may be in every other way.

Actually, small isn't the word; she's minute—a human bonsai in a white sleeveless dress, seated at a back table of a Madison Avenue restaurant, talking on a cell phone. She smiles at me as I take my seat and rolls her eyes at the phone. Her hair is that blond you see everywhere, "highlighted," my ex-fiancée calls it, though on Kitty Jackson this tousled commingling of blond and brown appears both more untouched and more costly than it did on Janet Green. Her face (Kitty's) is one you can imagine looking merely pretty among the other faces in, say, a high school classroom: upturned nose, full mouth, big green eyes. Yet on Kitty Jackson, for reasons I can't pinpoint exactly—the same reasons, I suppose, that her highlighted hair looks superior to ordinary (Janet Green's) highlighted hair—this unexceptional face registers as extraordinary.

She's still on the phone, and five minutes have passed.

Finally she signs off, folds her phone into a disk the size of an after-dinner mint, and stows it in a small, white patent-leather purse. Then she starts to apologize. It is instantly clear that Kitty belongs in the category of nice stars (Matt Damon) rather than of difficult stars (Ralph Fiennes). Stars in the nice category act as if they're just like you (i.e., me) so that you will like them and write flattering things about them, a strategy that is almost universally successful despite every writer's belief that he's far too jaded to fantasize that the *Vanity Fair* cover is incidental to Brad Pitt's desire to give him a tour of his house. Kitty is sorry for the twelve flaming hoops I've had to jump through and the several miles of piping hot coals I've sprinted across for the privilege of spending forty minutes in her company. She's sorry for having just spent the first six of those minutes talking to somebody else. Her welter of apologies reminds me of why I prefer difficult stars, the ones who barricade themselves inside their stardom and spit through the cracks. There is something out of control about a star who cannot be nice, and the erosion of a subject's self-control is the sine qua non of celebrity reporting.

The waiter takes our order. Perhaps this is the moment to add, in the footnote-ish fashion that injects a whiff of cracked leather bindings into pop-cultural observation, that when you're a young movie star with blondish hair and a highly recognizable face from that recent movi whose grosses can only be explaine by the conjecture that every perso in America saw it at least twice people treat you in a manner that somewhat different, in fact is entire ly different, from the way they treat say, a balding, stoop-shouldered slightly eczematous guy approachin middle age. On the surface it's th same—"May I take your order?" etc.—but pulsing just beneath tha surface is the waiter's hysterica recognition of my subject's fame And with a simultaneity that ca only be explained using principles o quantum mechanics (specifically, th properties of so-called entangled par ticles; see Appendix A), that sam pulse of recognition reaches ever part of the restaurant at once, ever tables so distant from ours that then is simply no way they can see u Everywhere, people are swiveling craning, straining, and contortin levitating inadvertently from chai as they grapple with the urge t lunge at Kitty and seize tufts of he hair and clothing.

I ask Kitty how it feels to alway be the center of attention.

"Weird," she says. "It's so all of sudden. You feel like there's no wa you deserve it."

See? Nice.

"Oh, come now," I say, and lo her a compliment on her perfor mance as the homeless junkie turne

Jennifer Egan is the author of The Invisible Circus, *a novel, and* Emerald City, *a collection of stories.*

I gunslinger/acrobat in *Oh Baby* —the sort of shameless bit of wning that makes me wonder nether I might prefer death by hal injection to my present voca- n as a celebrity reporter. Wasn't proud?

"I was proud," she says. "But in a y, I didn't even know what I was ing yet. With my new movie, el more—"

"Hold that thought!" I cry, ough the waiter has not yet ched our table, and the tray bears aloft is probably not n ours. Because I don't want hear about Kitty's new vie; I couldn't care less and ther could you, I know; her ttle about the challenging e and the trusting relation- p she had with her director d what an honor it was to rk opposite such a seasoned as Tom Cruise is the bitter l we both must swallow in change for the privilege of nding some collective time Kitty's company. But let's put ff as long as possible!

Luckily, it *is* our tray (food ives faster if you're dining h a star): a Cobb salad for ty; a cheeseburger, fries, and esar salad for me.

A bit of theory as we settle wn to lunch: the waiter's atment of Kitty is actually a d of sandwich, with the bot- n bread being the bored and htly effete way he normally s with customers, the middle ng the crazed and abnormal he feels around this famous nine- n-year-old girl, and the top bread ng his attempt to contain and ceal this alien middle layer with e mode of behavior that at least proximates the bottom layer of edom and effeteness that is his m. In the same way, Kitty Jackson some sort of bottom bread that is, sumably, "her," that is, the way ty Jackson once behaved in subur- Des Moines, where she grew up, e a bike, attended proms, earned ent grades, and, most intriguingly, ped horses, thereby winning a stantial number of ribbons and hies and, at least briefly, entertaining thoughts of becoming a jockey. On top of that is her extraordinary and possibly slightly psychotic reaction to her newfound fame—the middle of the sandwich—and on top of that is her own attempt to approximate layer number one with a simulation of her normal, or former, self.

Sixteen minutes have passed.



"Rumor has it," I say, my mouth full of half-masticated hamburger in a calculated effort to disgust my subject, thus puncturing her prophylactic shield of niceness and commencing the painstaking attrition of her self-control, "that you've become involved with your co-star."

That gets her attention. I've rather sprung this on her, having learned the hard way that sidling up to the personal questions gives difficult subjects too much time to get their hackles up and nice ones too much time to gently and blushingly sidestep.

"That's absolutely not true!" Kitty cries. "Tom and I have a wonderful friendship. I love Nicole. She's been a role model for me. I've even babysat their children."

I unsheathe my Big Fat Grin, a meaningless tactic intended purely to unnerve and fluster my subject. If my methods seem unnecessarily harsh, I invite you to recall that I have been allotted forty minutes, nearly twenty of which have now elapsed, and let me add, on a personal note, that if the piece stinks—i.e., if it fails to unveil some aspect of Kitty that you haven't seen before (as have, I'm told, my pieces on hunting elk with Leonardo DiCaprio, reading Homer with Sharon Stone, and digging for clams with Jeremy Irons)—it might very well be killed, thus reducing my stock in New York and Los Angeles and prolonging the "bizarre string of failures you've been having, buddy" (—Atticus Levi, my friend and editor, over lunch last month).

"Why are you smiling like that?" Kitty asks, with hostility.

See? No more nice.

"Was I smiling?"

She turns her attention to her Cobb salad. And so do I. Because I have so little to go on, so few ports of entry to the inner sanctum of Kitty Jackson, that I'm reduced to observing and now reporting the fact that over the course of lunch, she eats all of her lettuce, approximately two and a half bites of chicken, and several tomato wedges. She ignores: olives, blue cheese, boiled eggs, bacon, and avocado—in other words, all of the parts of the Cobb salad that, technically speaking, *make it a Cobb salad*. As for the dressing, which she has requested "on the side," she doesn't touch it except to dip in the end of her index finger, once, and suck the dressing off (see Appendix B).

"I'll tell you what I'm thinking," I finally say, relieving the vibrato of tension that has been building at our table. "I'm thinking, nineteen years old. Mega-grossing movie behind her, half the world doing a rain dance at her window, and where can she possibly go next? What can she possibly do?"

ration by Victoria Kann

In Kitty's face I see a number of [illegible] relief that I haven't said something worse, something about Tom Cruise, and mingled with that relief (and partly because of it) a fleeting desire to see me as more than yet another crank with a tape recorder—to see me as someone who understands the incredible strangeness of her world. And I do. I've slept with young actresses (before Janet Green took me out of circulation), and I plan to resume doing so as soon as possible, to immerse myself in the musty, sweet chaos of the world of a girl who chews gum, sleeps with a doll, and earns in the seven figures.

Why do I keep mentioning—"inserting," as it may seem—myself into this story? Because I'm trying to wrest readable material from a nineteen-year-old who is very, very nice; I'm trying to build a story that not only unlocks the velveteen secrets of her teenager's heart but also contains action, development, along with—God help me—some intimation of meaning. But my problem is this: Kitty's a snooze. The most interesting thing about her is the effect she has upon others, and since the "other" whose inner life is most readily available for our collective inspection happens to be myself, it is only natural—indeed, it is required ("I'm begging you: Please make this work so I don't look like an asshole for assigning it to you"—Atticus Levi, during a recent phone conversation in which I expressed to him my despair of writing further celebrity profiles)—that the alleged story of my lunch with Kitty Jackson actually be the story of the myriad effects Kitty Jackson has upon me during the course of said lunch. And for those effects to be remotely comprehensible, you must bear in mind that Janet Green, my girlfriend of three years and my fiancée for one month and thirteen days, dumped me two weeks ago for a male memoirist whose recent book details his adolescent penchant for masturbating into the family fish tank ("At least he's working on himself!"—Janet Green, during a recent phone conversation in which I tried to point out what a colossal error she'd made).

"I wonder that all the time—what will happen next," Kitty says. "Sometimes I imagine myself looking back on right now, and I think, like, where will I be standing when I look back? Will right now look like the beginning of a great life or . . . or what?"

And how exactly is "great life" defined in Kitty Jackson's lexicon?

"Oh, you know." Giggle. Blush. We're back to nice, but a different nice than before. We've had a tiff, and now we're making up.

"Fame and fortune?" I prod.

"Somewhat. But also just—happiness. I want to find true love, I don't care how corny that sounds. I want children. That's why, in this new movie, I bond so strongly with my surrogate mother . . ."

But my Pavlovian efforts to suppress the PR component of our lunch have succeeded, and Kitty falls silent. No sooner have I congratulated myself on this triumph, however, than I catch her glancing, sidelong, at her watch (Hermès). How does this gesture affect me? Well, I feel slopping within me a volatile brew of anger, fear, and lust; anger because this naïf has, for reasons that are patently unjustifiable, far more power than I will ever have, and once my forty minutes are up, nothing short of criminal stalking could force the intersection of my subterranean path with her lofty one; fear because, having glanced at my own watch (Timex), I've discovered that thirty of those fory minutes have elapsed, and I have, as yet, no "event" to form the centerpiece of my profile; lust because her neck is very long, with a thin, nearly translucent gold necklace around it. Her shoulders, exposed by the white halter top of her sundress, are small and tan and very delicate, like two little squabs. But that makes them sound unappealing, and they were phenomenally appealing! By "squabs" I mean that they looked so good (her shoulders) that I could briefly imagine pulling apart all those little bones and sucking the meat off them one by one (see Appendix C).

I ask her how it feels to be a sex goddess.

"It doesn't feel like anything," she says, bored and annoyed. "That's something other people feel."

"Men, you mean." I swab the bottom of my salad plate with a va[illegible] hunk of bread and jam it into m[illegible] mouth like a dentist packing a toot[illegible] And just then—wouldn't yo[illegible] know?—I feel the niggling onset of [illegible] sneeze; here it comes, oh yes, bre[illegible] or no bread, nothing can halt th[illegible] shouting simultaneous eruption [illegible] every cavity in my head. Kitty loo[illegible] terrified; she shrinks from me while [illegible] sort out the mess.

"You know," I say, when final[illegible] I've managed to swallow my bre[illegible] and blow my nose at the cost [illegible] nearly three minutes. "I'd love t[illegible] take a walk. What do you say?"

Kitty jumps from her chair at th[illegible] prospect of escaping into the ope[illegible] air. It's a lovely day, after all, sun[illegible] light leaping through the restaurant[illegible] windows. But her excitement is im[illegible] mediately tempered by an equal an[illegible] opposite degree of caution. "Ho[illegible] will Jake find us?" she asks, referrin[illegible] to her publicist, who will appe[illegible] when our forty minutes are up an[illegible] wave his wand to turn me back int[illegible] a pumpkin.

"Oh, we can take a quick spin an[illegible] meet him back here," I say.

"Okay," she says, doing her best [illegible] simulate the first wave of genuin[illegible] enthusiasm she felt, despite the mi[illegible] dle layer of wariness that has intru[illegible] ed, along with something else—fa[illegible] tigue, I'd say. "Sure, let's go."

I hastily pay the bill. Now, I've o[illegible] chestrated our debouch for seven[illegible] reasons: one, I want to filch a few e[illegible] tra minutes off Kitty in an attem[illegible] to salvage this assignment and, in[illegible] larger sense, my once promisin[illegible] now dwindling literary reputation [illegible] think she was maybe disappointe[illegible] that you didn't try writing anoth[illegible] novel after the first one failed . . ."—[illegible] Beatrice Green, over hot tea, after[illegible] threw myself sobbing upon h[illegible] Scarsdale doorstep, pleading for i[illegible] sights into her daughter's defection[illegible] Two, I want to see Kitty Jackso[illegible] erect and in motion. To this end, [illegible] follow behind as she leads the wa[illegible] out of the restaurant, weavin[illegible] among tables with her head down [illegible] the manner of both exceptionall[illegible] beautiful women and also famou[illegible] people (not to mention those, lik[illegible]

tty, who are both). Here's a rough nslation of her posture and gait to English: "I know I'm famous d irresistible—a combination ose properties closely resemble ra- activity—and I know that you in s room are helpless against me. s embarrassing for both of us to k at each other and see our mutu- knowledge of my radioactivity and ur helplessness, so I'll keep my ad down and let you watch me in ace." While all this is happening, taking in Kitty's legs, which are g, considering her modest height, well as brown, and not that ngy brown of tanning salons but a h, tawny chestnut that makes me nk of—well, of horses.

Central Park is one block away. e time elapsed, for those who are erested, is forty-one minutes and unting. We enter the park. It is een and splashy with light and adow, giving the impression that 've dived together into a deep, l pond. "I forget when we start- ." Kitty says, looking at her watch. ow much more time do we have?"

"Oh, we're okay," I mumble. I'm ling kind of dreamy. I'm looking at ty's legs as we walk (as much as I without crawling beside her on ground—a thought that crosses mind) and discovering that above knee they are flecked with hairs of est gold. Because Kitty is so young l well nourished, so sheltered from gratuitous cruelty of others, so un- are as yet that she will reach mid- age and eventually die (possibly ne); because she has not yet disap- nted herself, merely startled herself l the world with her own prema- e accomplishments, Kitty's skin— t smooth, plump, sweetly fragrant upon which life scrawls the record ur failures and exhaustion—is per- t. And by "perfect" I mean that hing hangs or sags or snaps or nkles or ripples or bunches—I an that her skin is like the skin of a f, except it's not green. I can't gine such skin having an unpleas- odor or texture or taste—ever be- for example (it is frankly incon- able), even mildly eczematous.

We sit together on a grassy slope. ty has resumed talking dutifully ut her new movie, the specter of her returning publicist doubtless having reminded her that the promotion of said movie is the sole reason she is in my company.

"Oh Kitty," I say. "Forget the movie. We're out here in the park, it's a beautiful day. Let's leave those other two people behind. Let's talk about . . . about horses."

What a look! What a gaze! Every cheesy metaphor you can fathom comes to mind: sun breaking through clouds, flowers yawning into bloom, the sudden and mystical appearance of a rainbow. It's done. I've reached behind or around or within—I've touched the real Kitty. And for reasons I cannot understand, reasons that surely must be ranked among the most mysterious of quantum mechanical mysteries, I experience this contact as revelatory, urgent, as if, in bridging the crevasse between myself and this young actress, I am being lifted above an encroaching darkness.

Kitty opens her small white purse and takes out a picture. A picture of a horse! With a white starburst on its nose. His name is Nixon. "Like the president?" I ask, but Kitty looks disturbingly blank at this reference. "I just liked the sound of that name," she says, and describes the sensation of feeding Nixon an apple—how he takes it between his horsy jaws and smashes it all at once with a cascade of milky, steaming juice. "I hardly ever get to see him," she says, with genuine sadness. "I have to hire someone else to ride him because I'm never home."

"He must be lonely without you," I say.

Kitty turns to me, sweetly. I believe she's forgotten who I am. I have an impulse to push her backward onto the grass, and I do.

"Hey!" my subject cries, her voice muffled and startled but not yet frightened, exactly.

"Pretend you're riding Nixon," I say.

"HEY!" she shrieks, and I cover her mouth with my hand. Kitty is writhing beneath me, but her writhing is stymied by my height—six foot three—and my weight, 260 pounds, approximately one third of which is concentrated in my "spare

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—Janet Green, during our [illegible]ted, sexual encounter) gut, [illegible] pinions her like a sandbag. I [illegible] her mouth with one hand and worm the other hand between our two squirming bodies until finally—yes!—I manage to seize hold of my zipper. How is all this affecting me? Well, we're lying on a hill in Central Park, a somewhat secluded spot that is still, technically speaking, in plain sight. So I feel anxious, dully aware that I'm placing my career and reputation at some risk with this caper. But more than that, I feel this crazy—what?—rage, it must be; what else could account for my longing to slit Kitty open like a fish and let her guts slip out, or my separate, corollary urge to break her in half and plunge my arms into whatever pure, perfumed liquid swirls within her. I want to rub it onto my raw, "scrofulous" (ibid.), parched skin in hopes that it will finally be healed. I want to fuck her (obviously) and then kill her, or possibly kill her in the act of fucking her ("fuck her to death" and "fuck her brains out" being acceptable variations on this basic goal). I have no interest whatsoever in killing her and then fucking her, though, because it's her life—the inner life of Kitty Jackson—that I so desperately long to reach.

As it turns out, I do neither.

Let us return to the moment: one hand covering Kitty's mouth and doing its best to anchor her rather spirited head, the other fumbling with my zipper, which I'm having some trouble depressing, possibly because of the flailing motions of my subject beneath me. What I have no control over, unfortunately, are Kitty's hands, one of which has found its way into her white purse, where a number of items are sequestered: the picture of the horse, the aforementioned cell phone, which has been ringing nonstop for the past several minutes, and a canister of something that I'd have to surmise is mace, or perhaps some form of tear gas, judging by the impact it has when sprayed directly into my face: a hot, blinding sensation in my eye area accompanied by gushing tears, a strangling sensation in my throat, spastic choking, and severe nausea, all of which prompt me to leap to my feet and double over in a swoon of agony (still pinning Kitty to the ground with one foot), at which point she avails herself of yet another item in said purse: a set of keys with a small Swiss Army knife attached, whose diminutive and rather dull blade she nevertheless manages to plunge through my khakis and into my calf.

By now I'm bellowing and honking like a besieged buffalo, and Kitty is running away, her tawny limbs no doubt dappled with light falling through the trees, though I'm too distressed even to look.

I think I'd have to call that the end of our lunch. I got twenty extra minutes, easy.

The end of lunch, yes, but the beginning of so much else: a presentation before the grand jury followed by my indictment for attempted rape; my present incarceration (despite the heroic efforts of Atticus Levi to raise my $500,000 bail); and my impending trial, which is to begin this month—on the very day, as luck would have it, that Kitty's new movie, *Whippoorwill Falls*, opens nationally.

Kitty sent me a letter in jail. "I apologize for whatever part I played in your emotional breakdown," she wrote, "And also for stabing [sic] you." There was a circle over each "i" and a smiley face at the end.

What did I tell you? *Nice*.

Of course, our little contretemps has been enormously helpful to Kitty. Front-page headlines, followed by a flurry of hand-wringing follow-up articles, editorials, and op-ed pieces addressing an array of related topics: the "increasing vulnerability of celebrities" (*New York Times*); the "violent inability of some men to cope with feelings of rejection" (*USA Today*); the imperative that magazine editors vet their freelance writers more thoroughly (*The New Republic*); and the lack of adequate daytime security in Central Park (see Appendix D). Kitty, the martyrish figurehead of this juggernaut, is already being touted as the Marilyn Monroe of her generation, and she isn't even dead.

Her new movie looks to be a hit, whatever it's about.

APPENDIX A

I've engaged in a bit of sophist here, suggesting that entangled par cles can explain anything when, date, they themselves have not be satisfactorily explained. Entangl particles are subatomic "twins": ph tons created by splitting a single ph ton in half with a crystal, which co tinue to react to stimuli applied only one of them, even when separ ed from each other by many mil How, puzzled physicists ask, can o particle possibly "know" what is ha pening to the other? How, when t people occupying tables nearest Kitty Jackson inevitably recogni her, do people outside the line of sion of Kitty Jackson, who could n conceivably have had the experien of *seeing* Kitty Jackson, recognize h simultaneously?

Theoretical explanations:

1. The particles are communic ing.

Impossible, because they wou have to do so at a speed faster th the speed of light, thus violating r ativity theory. In other words, in der for an awareness of Kitty's pr ence to sweep the restaura simultaneously, the diners at tab nearest to her would have to conv through words or gestures, the fact her presence to diners farther aw who cannot see her—all at a spe faster than the speed of light. A that is impossible.

2. The two photons are respon ing to "local" factors engendered their former status as a single ph ton. (This was Einstein's explan tion for the phenomenon of ent gled particles, which he term "spooky action at a distance.")

Nope. Because we've already tablished that they're *not* respondi to each other; they're all respondi simultaneously to Kitty Jacks whom only a small fraction of th can actually see!

3. It's one of those quantum m chanical mysteries.

Apparently so. All that can be s for sure is that in the presence of Ki Jackson the rest of us become ent gled by our sheer awareness that ourselves are *not* Kitty Jackson, a f so brutally unifying that it tempora

ipes out all distinctions between —our tendency to cry inexplicably ıring parades, or the fact that we ever learned French, or have a fear insects that we do our best to con-eal around women, or liked to eat onstruction paper as a child—in the resence of Kitty Jackson, we no nger are in possession of these traits; ıdeed, so indistinguishable are we om every other non-Kitty Jackson in ır vicinity that when one of us sees er, the rest simultaneously react.

APPENDIX B

Occasionally, life affords you the me, the repose, the *dolce far niente* ask the sorts of questions that go rgely unexamined in the brisk ourse of ordinary life: How well do ou recall the mechanics of photo-nthesis? Have you ever managed to e the word "ontology" in a conver-tion? What was the precise mo-ent when you tipped just slightly ıt of alignment with the relatively ormal life you had been enjoying eretofore, canted infinitesimally to e left or the right, and thus em-ırked upon the trajectory that ulti-ately delivered you to your present hereabouts—in my case, Attica orrectional Facility?

After several months of subjecting ch filament and nanosecond of my nch with Kitty Jackson to a level analysis that would make Talmu-c scholars look hasty in their ap-aisal of the Sabbath, I have con-uded that my own subtle yet cisive realignment occurred at the oment when Kitty Jackson dipped r finger into the bowl of salad essing "on the side" and sucked the essing off.

Here, carefully teased apart and stored to chronological order, is a construction of the mash of oughts and impulses that I now be-ve pumped through my mind at at time:

Thought 1. (At the sight of Kitty pping her finger and sucking it) n it possibly be that this beautiful ung girl is *coming on to me?*

Thought 2. No, that's out of the estion.

Thought 3. But why is it out of e question?

Arabian Fables (I)

How the Arabs soften up world opinion with fanciful myths.

Josef Goebbels, the infamous propaganda minister of the Nazis, had it right. Just tell people big lies often enough and they'll believe them. The Arabs have learned that lesson well. They have swayed world opinion by myths and lies that have no basis in fact.

What are some of these myths?

The "Palestinians". The concept of "Palestinians" did not exist until about 1948. Until then, the Jews were the Palestinians. There was the Palestinian Brigade of Jewish volunteers in the British World War II Army (at a time when the Palestinian Arabs were in Berlin hatching plans with Adolf Hitler for world conquest and how to kill all the Jews); there was the Palestinian Symphony Orchestra (all Jews, of course); there was *The Palestine Post*; and so much more.

The Arabs who now call themselves "Palestinians" do so in order to persuade a misinformed world that they are a distinct nationality and that "Palestine" is their ancestral homeland. But they are no distinct nationality at all. They are the same as the Arabs of Syria, Jordan, and beyond. There is no more difference between the "Palestinians" and the other Arabs of those countries than there is between, say, the citizens of Minnesota and those of Wisconsin. What's more, many of the "Palestinians", or their immediate ancestors, came to the area attracted by the prosperity created by the Jews, in what previously had been pretty much of a wasteland. The nationhood of the "Palestinians" is a myth.

The "West Bank". Again, this is a concept that did not exist until 1948, when six Arab armies invaded the Jewish state of Israel, on the very day of its creation. Miraculously, the ragtag Jewish forces defeated the combined Arab might. But Transjordan stayed in possession of Judea and Samaria and eastern Jerusalem. The Jordanians expelled all the Jews, destroyed all Jewish houses of worship, and renamed as "West Bank" the territories that had been Judea and Samaria since time immemorial. The attempt, quite successful, was to persuade an uninformed world that these were ancestral parts of the Jordanian Arab Kingdom.

Even after the total rout of the Arabs in the 1967 Six-Day War, in which the Jordanians were driven out of Judea/Samaria and of Jerusalem, they and the world continued to call this territory the "West Bank", a geographical and political concept that cannot be found on any except the most recent maps.

The concept of the "West Bank" is a myth.

"The web of lies and myths that the Arab propaganda machine has created plays an important role in the unrelenting quest to destroy the State of Israel. What a shame that the world has accepted most of it!"

The "Occupied Territories". After the victorious Six-Day War, during which the Israeli army defeated the same cabal of Arabs that had invaded the country in 1948, Israel regained possession of Judea/Samaria, the Gaza Strip, which had been occupied by the Egyptians, and of the Golan Heights, a plateau the size of Queens, which, though originally part of Palestine, had been assigned to Syria by British-French agreement.

The last sovereign in Judea/Samaria and in Gaza was the British mandatory power — and before it was the Ottoman Empire. All of Palestine, including what is now the Kingdom of Jordan, was, by the Balfour Declaration, destined to be the Jewish National Home. How then could the Israelis possibly be "occupiers" in their own territory? Who would be the sovereign and who the rightful inhabitants?

The concept of "occupied territories" is an Arab propaganda myth.

Unable so far to destroy Israel on the battlefield — though they are feverishly preparing for their next assault — the Arabs are now trying to overcome and destroy Israel by their acknowledged "policy of stages". That policy is to get as much land as possible carved out of Israel "by peaceful and diplomatic" means, so as to make Israel indefensible and softened up for the final assault. The web of lies and myths that the Arab propaganda machine has created plays an important role in the unrelenting quest to destroy the State of Israel. What a shame that the world has accepted most of it!

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Thought 4. Because she's a famous and beautiful nineteen-year-old movie [illegible] and you're "heavier all of a sudden—or am I just noticing it more?" (—Janet Green during our last, failed, sexual encounter) and have a skin problem and no worldly clout.

Thought 5. But she just dipped her finger into a bowl of salad dressing and sucked it off in my presence! What else can that possibly mean?

Thought 6. It means you're so far outside the field of Kitty's sexual consideration that her internal sensors, which normally stifle behavior that might be construed as overly encouraging, or possibly incendiary, such as dipping a finger into salad dressing and sucking it off in the company of a man who might interpret it as a sign of sexual interest, are not operative.

Thought 7: Why not?

Thought 8: Because you do not register as a "man" on Kitty Jackson's radar screen, and so being around you makes her no more self-conscious than would the presence of a dachshund.

APPENDIX C

For those who will inevitably interpret this impulse as further evidence that I am, indeed, a "numb nuts," a "creepazoid," or a "sick puppy" (—excerpts from correspondence received from strangers while in jail), I can offer only the following: On a spring day three years ago, I noticed a girl with short thick legs and a long narrow torso, wearing a pink tie-dyed T-shirt, picking up dog shit with a Duane Reade bag. She was one of those muscley girls who turns out to have been a swimmer or a diver in high school (though I later learned she'd been neither), and her dog was a mangy, wet-looking little terrier of the sort that seems, even by the most neutral and objective standards, unlovable. But she loved it. "Here, Whiskers," she cooed. "Come on, girl." Watching her, I saw it all: the small overheated apartment strewn with running shoes and leotards, the biweekly dinners at her parents', the soft dark fuzz on her upper lip that she bleached each week with a tart-smelling white cream. And the feeling I had was not of wanting her so much as being surrounded by her, blundering inside her life without having moved.

"May I help you with that?" I asked, stepping into the sunlight where she and Whiskers stood and slipping the Duane Reade bag full of poop from her hand.

Janet grinned. It was like someone waving a flag. "Are you insane?" she said.

APPENDIX D

To the Editor:

In the earnest spirit of your recent editorial ("Vulnerability in Our Public Spaces," Aug. 9), and as the living embodiment, if you will, of the "mentally unstable or otherwise threatening people" you so yearn to eradicate from the public domain in the wake of my "brutal attack" on that "too trusting young star," allow me to make a suggestion that is sure to appeal to our mayor, at the very least: Why not simply erect checkpoints at the entrances to Central Park and demand identification from those who wish to enter?

Because then, and only then, will you be able to call up their records and evaluate the relative success or failure of their lives: marriage or lack thereof, children or lack thereof, professional success or lack thereof, healthy bank account or lack thereof, contact with childhood friends or lack thereof, ability to sleep peacefully at night or lack thereof, fulfillment of sprawling, loopy youthful ambitions or lack thereof, ability to fight off bouts of terror and despair or lack thereof; and using these facts, you can then assign people rankings based on the likelihood that their "personal failures will occasion jealous explosions directed at those more accomplished."

The rest is easy: simply encode each person's ranking into an electronic bracelet and affix it to his wrist as he enters the park, and then monitor those encoded points of light on a radar screen, with personnel at the ready to intervene, of course, should the perambulations of low-ranking nonfamous people begin to encroach upon the "safety and peace of mind that celebrities de[illegible] serve as much as anyone else."

I ask only this: that in keepin[illegible] with our hallowed cultural traditio[illegible] you rank infamy equally with fam[illegible] so that when my public excoriatio[illegible] is complete—when the *Vanity Fa*[illegible] reporter I entertained in prison tw[illegible] days ago (following her intervie[illegible] with my chiropractor and buildi[illegible] superintendent) has done her wor[illegible] along with the TV "news" mag[illegible] zines; when my trial and senten[illegible] are concluded and I'm allowed at la[illegible] to return to the world, to stand b[illegible] neath a public tree and touch i[illegible] scraggly back—then I, like Kitt[illegible] will be afforded some protection.

Who knows? I might even glimp[illegible] her one day as we both promenade[illegible] Central Park. I doubt we would act[illegible] ally speak. I'd prefer to stand at a di[illegible] tance next time, and wave.

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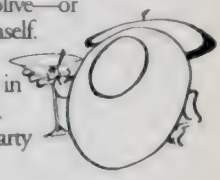
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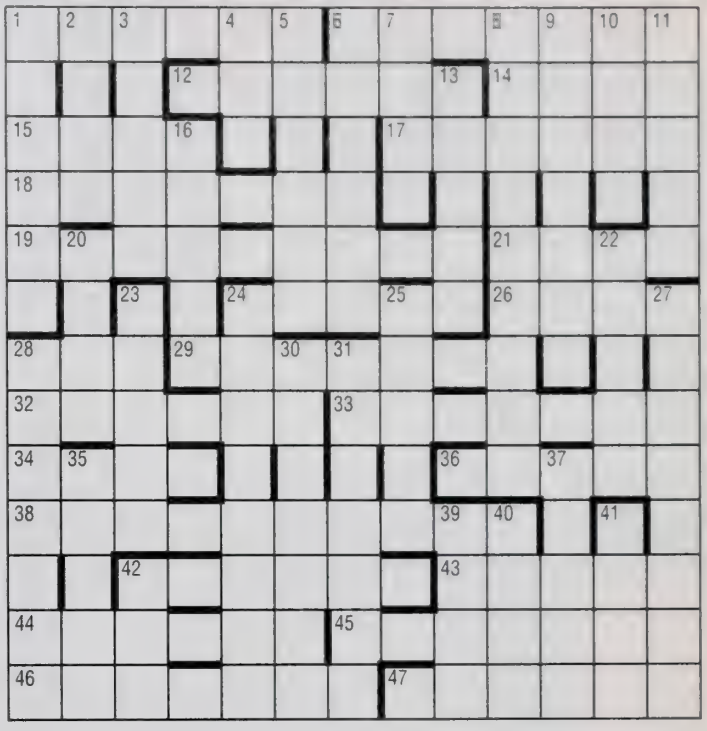
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Puzzle About Nothing

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.
(with acknowledgments to Dan Asimov)

Clues in italics are not standard clues and their answers will not fit in the blank spaces provided in the diagram. (Thus their word lengths are omitted.) These clues each contain a definition of a complete answer, plus a subsidiary portion (anagram, reversal, second definition, etc.) that describes only the part of the answer that is actually to be entered into the blank spaces. Well, into some of the blank spaces. Parenthetical indications (3 words, hyphenated, etc.) refer to the complete answer.

Clue answers include five proper names and four common foreign words. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 87.



ACROSS

1. *Put a little zip into a glass of ale—that's one way to get fired!* (hyphenated)
6. *Turning over a lawn, comes up with nothing* (3 words)
12. Delight in holding a show (6)
14. Ride doesn't start—that's relative (4)
15. What's in us, mysterious as one in France (4)
17. Groom is a nob in a sad state (6)
18. Because right end is open (7)
19. Blue sculptures are kitsch (9)
21. Someone just arrived in Paris "to live! To live!" (4)
24. *Torn, yet darned* (hyphenated)
26. Guinness, e.g.—clear-headed Guinness, e.g. (4)
28. Letter from Europe for small Midwest city? (3)
29. *Killjoys with alien aliens* (2 words)
32. Bull put away in circle (6)
33. Automobile I purchased half-used—it has a horn (7)
34. A Jewish shrug is heard again (4)
36. Chewed up in backing name computer pioneer (5)
38. *I'd gotten into US golf tournaments—that's the lure of the West* (3 words)
42. Choose to be leaderless, still choose! (6)
43. Exercise with me outside the Louvre, e.g. (5)
44. *In a Mel Brooks movie, nonsense subsumes everything*
45. Knight and fisherman meet in a kind of bower? (7)
46. They think nothing of women athletes finally having lives (7)
47. *Provide ground cover for place between the lines?*

DOWN

1. Forward guards left—that's rich (6)
2. Mantra turns in everything when in front! (4)
3. One of three sisters living in the Quirinal (5)
4. "Catch-up"—it's rated X (3)
5. *Process-serve in the words of Hamlet, perhaps* (2 words)
6. Lying down, i.e., etc., in a way (6)
7. "Broccoli" playwright (4)
8. Sink inside after bash was crashed (9)
9. Where people wear a leisure suit with tan sock (7)
10. Very blue, almost like an old woman (4)
11. *Start to copy new cassette* (2 words)
13. *Show no emotion raising a cigarette* (2 words)
16. Propeller boat racing, after taking a turn-off (5)
20. Tech operator makes use of repetition (4)
22. Feel blue and relatively depressed! (5)
23. Given a decoration located on the ear (5)
24. *Almost strolled off with hiking gear* (2 words)
25. Being old, you got a superior to nurse ache (5)
27. *Retort: something you want in your kitchen* (2 words)
28. *Parts of foundations that give little credit to things that can get you through*
30. Blow up the opera house—not a good step (7)
31. *Free reigns—sounds like middle Europeans* (2 words)
35. Mythical cry-baby turns in English decoration (5)
37. Passage to a place in the sound, perhaps (5)
39. *They might take a shuttle after one—so be it*
40. Fat Tuesday—take the day off and play around (4)
41. Does perhaps make the sound of pet (4)
42. I'm definitely horny! (Sex changes a character) (3)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Puzzle About Nothing," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by August 9. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the October issue. Winners of the June puzzle, "The 1 Across," are Ruth Herbert, Palo Alto, California; David Strauch, Pacific Palisades, California; and Elliott Zuckerman, Annapolis, Maryland.

The predicament of former Chilean president Augusto Pinochet—under house arrest in Britain, awaiting trial for crim against humanity—represents a marked departure from the benign retirement plans the world's despots have come to e pect. Although, according to Amnesty International, many of the twenty-nine former officials shown below are implicat in greater atrocities than those ascribed to Pinochet, none is in prison. Most are elderly and living comfortably in their ov countries. For the rest, the destination of choice had less to do with culture and climate than with personal and politic connections. Several men, such as Haiti's "Baby Doc" Duvalier, have successfully disappeared, and are shown here at their last known l cations. Like Pinochet, many of the twenty-nine may be eligible for prosecution under 1984's International Convention Against Tortu though the agreement's parameters are still in dispute. In an effort to streamline such cases, 120 U.N. members last year approved the creation of an International Criminal Court, whose establishment would depend on a majority of these countries incorporating its tenets into their national laws. Seven members opposed it, including the United States, China, Iraq, and Israel.



Map by Jared Schneidman. Research by Michael Ste



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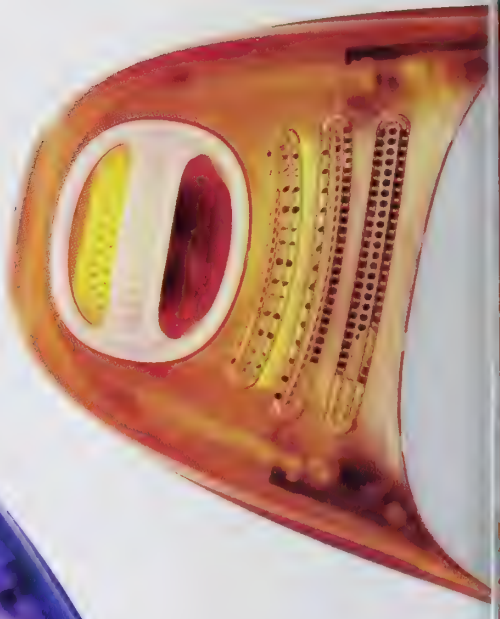
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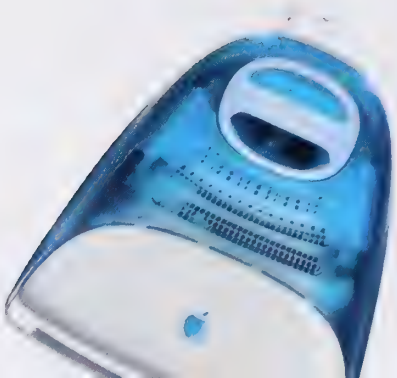


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By JoAnn Wypijewski

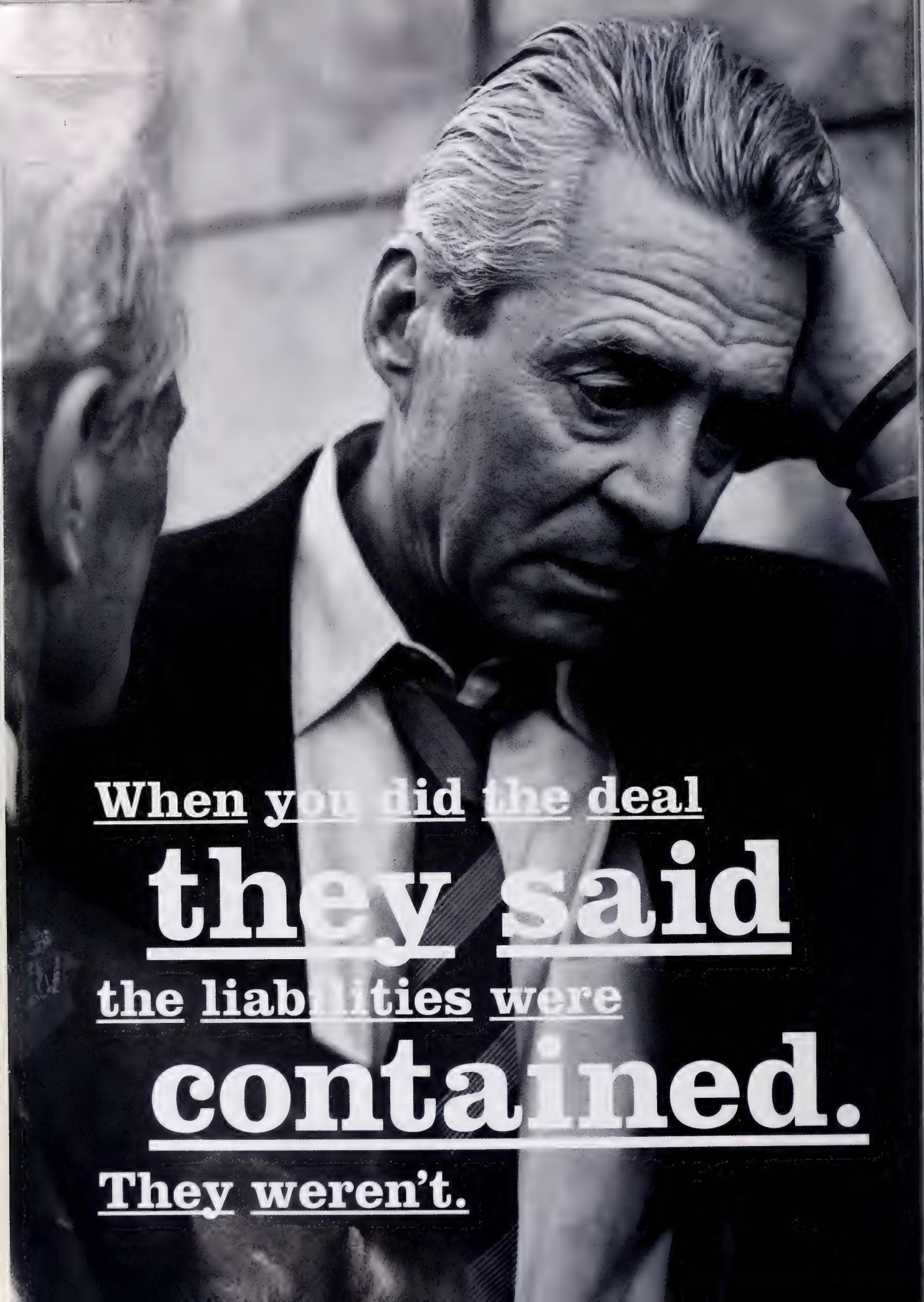
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How American High School Students Learn to Loathe Literature

By Francine Prose

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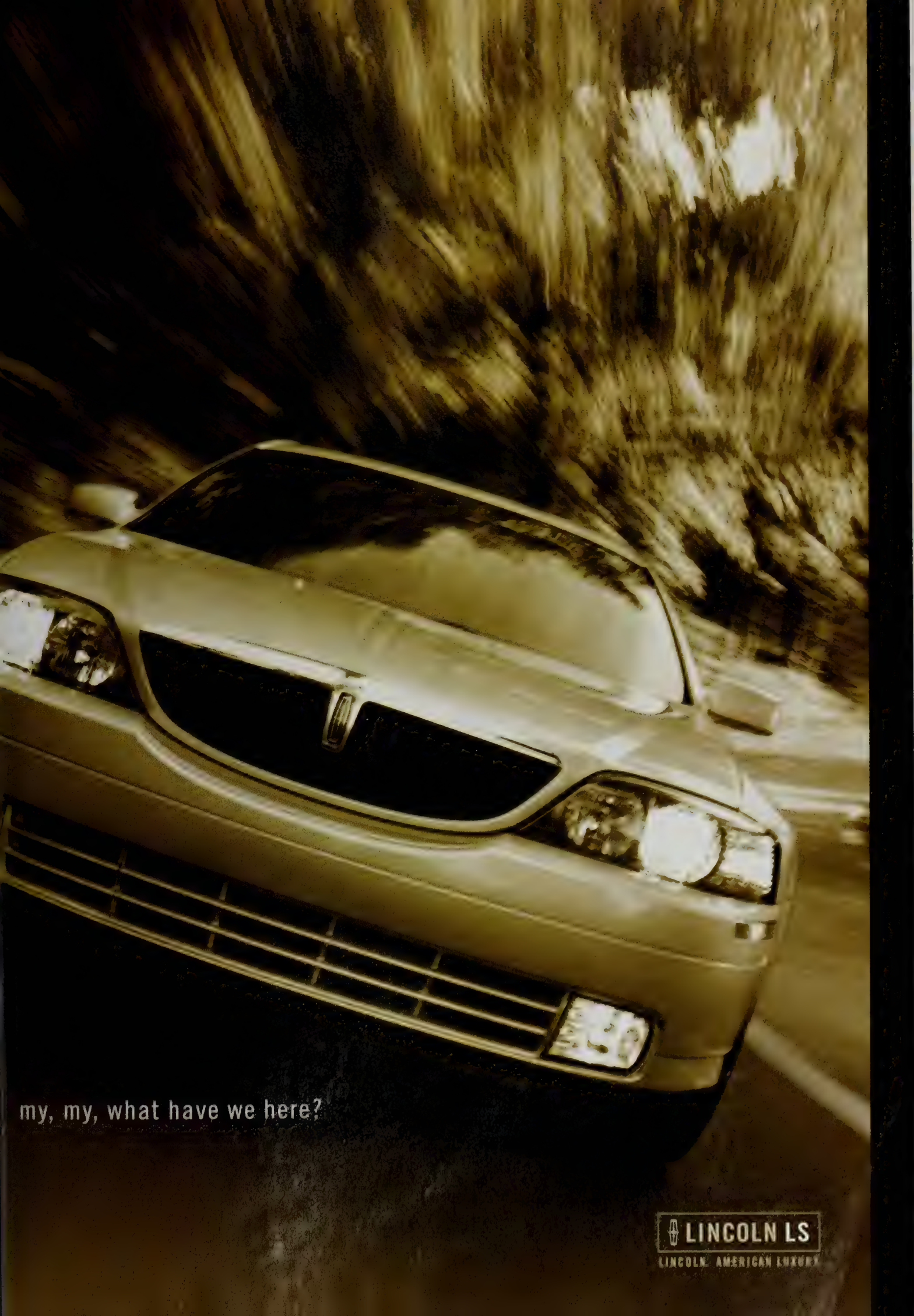
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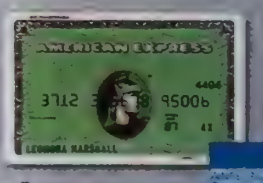
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LETTERS

No-Man's-Land?

The conversation between Lionel Tiger and Barbara Ehrenreich ["Who Needs Men?" Forum, June] was remarkable. I compliment both Ehrenreich and Tiger for their willingness to embark on a discussion of the difficult matters of gender, knowing full well that they were likely to please no one.

I especially admire the way in which Tiger insisted on the point that "the species has always faced the question of what to do with the young males." As he pointed out, and evidenced by the appalling percentage of young men in prison or growing up without a clear sense of purpose, that problem remains.

The "decline of men" has a number of causes, including the disappearance of physical work. It seems fair to assert that men were already in decline before the emergence of feminism, as the flight of fathers (many of whom had not benefited from decent fathering themselves) in the Sixties made clear. But the legacy of the feminist movement does play a part.

We know that the intent of feminism was not to attack men but to defend women's intelligence and abilities against the denigration that had been common practice over the past two thousand years. But in the course of seeking equality, a considerable effort was invested in weakening the competitor. Universities had something to do with this shift. A few valuable insights quickly turned into an ideology. Very soon anyone not agreeing with that ideology became an enemy, whether man or woman. By then, the aim of many theorists was not to humanize men by reminding them of their dark sides but to reduce them to nothing.

Their insults fell on willing ears. Men were described as murderers and rapists, or, at least, bad communicators. These routine assaults on males had a strong cumulative effect. High school girls can usually rattle off any number of reasons to feel pride in their gender, but most young men are hard put to identify any good quality of masculinity, and that is sad indeed.

Robert Bly
Minneapolis

Lionel Tiger and Barbara Ehrenreich did acknowledge that even in prehistoric hunter-gatherer societies there must have been men who could not hunt and women who could, but so much of our cultural conversation focuses on who did the hunting that few realize that everyone, nursing mothers in

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d, was active in seeking, and
ually planting and harvesting,
ltural crops.
fact, the sexual division of la-
as never been a simple split be-
those who provide and those
nurture. In early-modern ports
Europe's North Atlantic coast,
stance, where the majority of
were fishermen or sailors, often
t for weeks or years at a time,
n raised animals and farmed
plots of land. In cities, the
of sailors ran shops. Absentee
s are no new phenomenon, nor
e notion of a dual-income
hold. That they are now more
orm and less exceptions does
ugur an unproductive age for
The modern division of labor is
crisis but a shift, and should be
ed as such.

L. Locklin
es, France

ould like to second Barbara
reich's point that many men
e not to go to college because
'suspect that they can make a
just as well without a college
tion," an argument that Lionel
quickly dismisses. As a woman
as worked in construction for
ars, I can testify from experi-
hat the building industry is an
mely well-paying job market
nated by men, in which fre-
social and sexual harassment
akes it difficult for women to
e. Master carpenters, masons,
echanical tradespeople can
and over $50 an hour, and de-
for skilled tradespeople out-
supply.
if to emphasize my point, my
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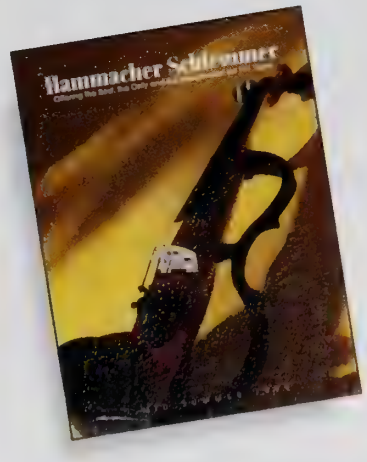
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combination of the genes, but with the outcome always being a male baby. It is thus possible that men will be obsolete by the end of the twenty-first century, but for a few specimens kept, as we currently keep precious samples of the smallpox virus, in case they are needed for specialized genetic study. Of course a stock of testosterone-based people might be useful to an all-female society for social or emotional purposes, or for amusement. But my guess is that instead, they won't, and that social and biological evolution will result in few, if any, men.

Paul Geisert
Sacramento, Calif.

Apparently in America's ivory towers, academics and their students sling around terms such as "parasites" to describe women who choose to actually raise the children they have given birth to and believe that men must be "coerced" into supporting them and their offspring. Only in such an insular and unrealistic environment as a modern college campus would female students be insulted by the notion that a man would want to take care of his wife and child ("taking care of" ostensibly ranking right after "beating" and "starving") and would self-defeating male students seek partners capable of "pulling their own weight." It would appear that none of these young people or their teachers have any idea that throughout this country, there are millions of us happily living the sentimentalized idea of family that is eulogized in the forum.

Perhaps academics choose to have children in order to fulfill some sense of historical or sociological or biblical imperative, but most of us conceive because we love each other, believe ourselves to be good moral people who are capable of the sacrifices required to be parents, and because we desire the intimacy a family brings. There are still many places in this country, including where I live, where working mothers without paychecks are viewed as functional contributing family members and fathers voluntarily leave work early to coach basketball.

According to Barbara Ehrenreich, the only difference between men and women is the sexual "doohickey." The fact that we share certain qualities, such as competitiveness and athleticism, doesn't mean that men and women are the same. And what's wrong with that?

Cathy M. Sidlowski
Baltimore

We confess we were thrilled at the June cover's promise of a matrilinear millennium. We looked forward to earning $1.31 to the man's dollar and Monday night women's soccer. We prepared to stockpile nostalgic tokens of patriarchal culture, including a poster of the forty-two white men who have been our presidents and Modern Library's list of the one hundred best books of the century, ninety-one of which were written in English by male authors.

But then we read the debate. The most obvious indication that we won't be enjoying matrilinealism soon is that mediator Colin Harrison directed most questions to Lionel Tiger. Barbara Ehrenreich, brilliant as usual, was nonetheless forced into a classic "feminine inferior" position of responding and defending rather than setting the terms of the conversation. In fact, nothing about the issue supported the prospect of a female-dominated future—not even *Harper's* own masthead. Of thirty contributing editors, only five are women.

Jennifer Baumgardner
Amy Richards
New York City

I extend my sympathies to Lionel Tiger, who was forced into repeated tangents in order to assuage the unwarranted outrage behind Barbara Ehrenreich's haughty and irrational interjections. ("Are you saying my son is a no-good, a deadbeat?" No, Tiger neither said nor implied any such thing.) Her approach to the debate reflects the strategy of modern feminism: remain on the offensive to conceal the lack of a coherent ideology.

Eric Iannelli
Boston

I purchased the June issue hoping for an intellectual discussion of how to use technology and science to enjoy a happier life without men. You can imagine my disappointment. Instead of useful household tips, I got whining and nagging from Lionel Tiger. To wit: "I deserve power and dominance because I am a man. I should be a CEO because I have a penis. Housewives are money-sucking organisms."

After reading the forum, I would like to suggest that Lionel Tiger hunt something far, far away.

Lucia Perri
Guthrie, Okla.

Barbara Ehrenreich's comments demonstrate to me exactly why a sustained intellectual conversation about masculinity and gender roles is impossible these days. Instead of relying on a straightforward approach to the issue of masculinity's decline, Ehrenreich's commentary devolves into the worst sort of predictable psychobabble. She pushed Lionel Tiger to explore his feelings, virtually blamed him for the cultural perpetuation of "macho fantasies," made sweeping generalizations about the history of humanity, and, most offensively, consistently drove the conversation away from masculinity toward yet another overwrought and sentimentalized discussion of the historical oppression of women. She repeatedly prevented Tiger from making his points about masculinity in a fashion that I, as a feminist and an academic, found both frustrating and angering. Until feminist public intellectuals such as Ehrenreich allow for the fact that a meaningful discussion of gender roles must include a serious look at the construction of masculinity—and not simply as a means of oppressing women—the sort of dialogue that the forum claims to support will never be realized.

Elizabeth Fekete
Chicago

The debate on the responsibilities of contemporary parenthood failed to consider a critical point. Motherhood is an automatic impulse in pa



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because a mother can be completely certain that a child is hers. Fatherhood is predicated on the certainty of paternity. There are huge evolutionary costs for a man who dedicates his life's resources to the raising of children not his own. A woman can help assure the survival of her children by convincing the father to help raise them. Thus the core bargain of human society: the assurance of paternity in exchange for a commitment of resources. The less certainty has been available to men, the less willing they have been to commit resources to the raising of children.

Barbara Ehrenreich seems to wish for a future of statutory enforcement of a one-way bargain, in which spouses come and go and the marriage contract is replaced by child-support requirements. Men will still be obliged to commit their resources individually through "deadbeat-dad" provisions or collectively through welfare payments, yet they can have no reasonable expectations for the fidelity of a lifelong partner. This is a radical agenda, not a benign vision of the coming matriarchy.

O. Von Huten
St. Louis, Mo.

The Ehrenreich–Tiger discussion was essentially a competition for the mantle of victimhood. I am half of a team that concentrated instead on the collective success of our family. Tasks were performed by whoever could do them best: I changed diapers; he changed oil, tires, and storm windows. I only hope that somewhere lurks a brilliant scholar who will discover and propagate that concept for a new generation.

Jean Linton
Adell, Wisc.

Blood on Our Hands

Kate Doyle's report on the evidence of systematic torture and abuse of citizens during Guatemala's civil war ["Death Squad Diary," Annotation, June] was thoughtful and well-researched, but I was dismayed to see not a single word about the pivotal role played by the U.S. Army's School of the Americas, which has

training Latin American sol-
in combat, counterinsurgency,
counternarcotics since 1946. No
iduals have been excluded be-
of personal histories of abduc-
torture, murder, or rape. Gradu-
return to their own countries
ly prepared and outfitted to si-
any democratic opposition.
e existence of the School of the
ricas (known to some as "School
e Assassins") in Fort Benning,
gia, is common knowledge in
ral America, but not so on its
e soil. Bills that would defund
nfamous school have recently
considered by Congress and
been defeated—last year, by on-
even votes. The next such bill
s before Congress this month.

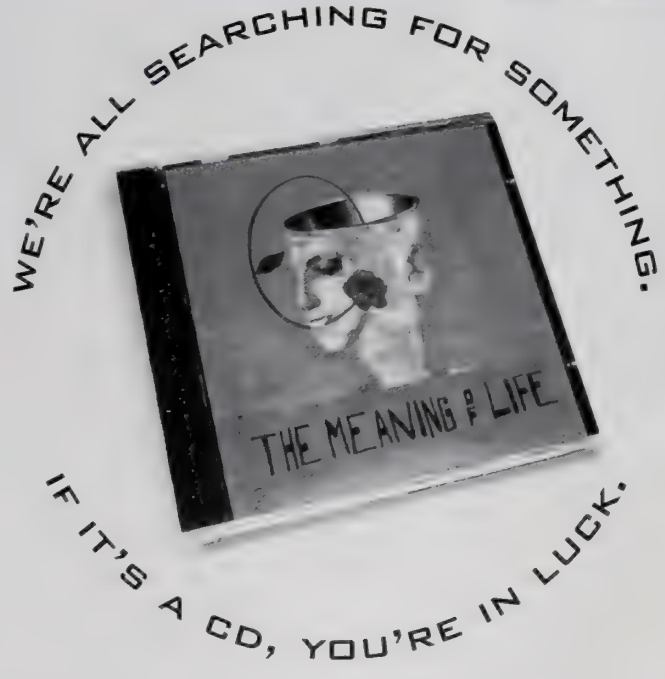
J. Murphy
erties, N.Y.

ved in highland Guatemala from
to 1996, during the last stage of
ivil war there. Survivors and wit-
s have told me innumerable sto-
ike those recounted by Kate
. The grisly "death-squad diary"
gues business as usual for a state-
ioned killing machine, but what
s not convey is the fear still felt
e families of the disappeared.
Doyle notes, a United Na-
truth commission has asked
emala to review the civil war
uct of its army officials, but to
very few have been prosecuted.
commission also highlighted
support for the right-wing mil-
governments that committed
atrocities. A pending Human
ts Information Act would re-
from U.S. government files
ands of documents pertaining
uman-rights violations in
emala and Honduras, which
d aid in punishing the offend-
nd bringing some measure of
lation to survivors.

ra Bocek
esty International
, Wash.

r's Note: The photograph on
78 and 79 of the August issue
d have been credited to Tama-
ples. We regret the omission.





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NOTEBOOK

Shadowboxing

By Lewis H. Lapham

Secrecy is as essential to Intelligence as vestments and incense to a Mass, or darkness to a Spiritualist seance, and must at all costs be maintained, quite irrespective of whether or not it serves any purpose.

—Malcolm Muggeridge

No topic of conversation in New York these days moves more quickly to the margins of paranoia than the one about the invasions of privacy, and whether voiced by film directors at a screening in Tribeca or by bankers at dinner on Madison Avenue, the stirrings of alarm dwell on the improved means of surveillance—optic, genetic, electronic—available to the seekers-out of human weakness and moral error. The hostess describes the investigation of her first marriage by her second husband's divorce lawyers; a partner at Bear Stearns says he never carries a cell phone because of its uses as a tracking device; an apprentice celebrity mentions a rude encounter with a bald photographer. All present then proceed to further observations borrowed from their nervous reading of the news—reports of private detectives rummaging through hospital and credit-card records, references to Special Prosecutor Kenneth Starr (ominously recalled and unanimously deplored), stories about political candidates compiling "opposition research" (i.e., anthologies of campaign slander), about computer hackers breaking into the Pentagon's communications systems, corporate executives stealing data from their associates as well as from their competitors, insurance companies requiring prospective policy holders to submit samples of their DNA.

Although I never fail to sympathize with the general concern, I doubt that it's possible to engineer a happy return to a world in which secrets could be kept. I once began to count the surveillance cameras in which I make cameo appearances during the course of an ordinary day (cameras in restaurants and stores, cameras in office buildings, hotel lobbies, freight elevators, and public parks), and when by three o'clock in the afternoon I reached the number nineteen, I knew that I might as well be counting gargoyles on a medieval cathedral. Given the sophistication of the technology apt to become more sophisticated with every new generation of the microchip, the condition of privacy begins to resemble the state of Christian grace. Nobody knows for certain where, or at what moment in time, it can be said to exist.

Various government and commercial entities routinely intercept much of the daily telephone traffic traveling in and out of New York and Washington (or on any other circuit deemed worthy of notice and inspection); together with the multinational corporation in Stuttgart transferring credit to a bank in Miami, the movie star in Los Angeles relaying instructions to her dressmaker in Milan exposes nominally privileged information to peer review and public broadcast. Internet services assemble profiles of their subscribers (what they read, who they know, where they travel); satellite cameras drifting in orbit at an altitude of 1,000 miles piece together photographs of yacht basins and soccer matches, of solitary poets walking Irish roads, and of schoolchildren rolling hoops on the Ringstrasse.

How then does one learn to live in a glass house—in a world where everybody can see everybody else, if not "live and in person" at least in the pages of *People* magazine and the lighted window of *Entertainment Tonight*? I don't know of any good answer to the question, but aside from the possibilities suggested in satirical novels (among them Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*), I remember coming across three responses over the last twenty-odd years that I thought instructive.

First and probably foremost, the cautionary tale told by Melor Sturua, a Washington correspondent for the Soviet newspaper *Izvestia*, with whom I was briefly acquainted in the early 1980s. The Cold War was still in progress, Moscow still the seat of evil empire, and Sturua simply assumed that the KGB was keeping track of his phone calls, that men in raincoats were busy composing a dossier, taking clandestine photographs, adding documents to the file. If he made an important mistake, the authorities wouldn't be at a loss for a reason to send him to Siberia. In the meantime he was free to do as he pleased, and he didn't allow "the idiocy of politics" to censor his appreciation of the "superfluous luxuries" that he sometimes characterized for his readers as the proofs of "decadent capitalism." He bought

[illegible] and his ties in [illegible] a hot tub and a [illegible] convertible, delighted in [illegible] sets. Among the authors to [illegible] he was [illegible] fond of quoting Talleyrand and Thomas Jefferson. Once or twice a year we met for lunch in the Madison Hotel on M Street, and Sturua took pleasure in pointing out the prominent American journalists seated in the dining room—a *New York Times* columnist, the editor of the *Washington Post*, a White House correspondent for CBS. He knew them all, not only by name but also by the sum of their indiscretions—their extramarital affairs, the sources to whom they were indebted, the confidences they had betrayed. It amused him that the American journalists didn't return the courtesy.

"Your colleagues see only celebrities," he said. "Gagarin, Brezhnev, maybe Yevtushenko."

What amused him even more was the joylessness of American tycoons, their fear of publicity and their pallid inhibitions. Here they were in the great American department store, their hands full of money and their weekends bright with toys, but they didn't know how to have a good time—plutocrats afraid of their own desires, thinking of their reputations as tablecloths on which they didn't wish to spill the soup. People in power in Russia didn't worry so much about their reputations. If they could pass the Sunday school test, they wouldn't be in power.

"Suppose a member of the Politburo gets drunk in a restaurant," Sturua once said, "so drunk that he insults a general and smashes the chandeliers. It's okay. The incident comes to the attention of the men in raincoats, but nobody tells Ted Koppel. Same thing if the general spends a week in Yalta with four dancers from the Bolshoi. More proof of bad character, but no sheepish confession to Barbara Walters."

I said something about the oppressiveness of a regime held hostage to a system of communal blackmail. Sturua shrugged and considered the choice between the caviar and the smoked salmon.

"Like everywhere else," he said. "No society is duty-free. At the airport, yes; on earth, no."

Before Sturua returned to the Soviet Union in August of 1982, we had a last lunch together at a French restaurant on West Fifty-fifth Street, and on my way back to the office I hailed an ancient Checker cab moving cautiously south on Fifth Avenue, a tall clump of radio aerials sprouting from its roof like the antennae of an overgrown insect. The driver, heavyset and suspicious, was crowded into the front seat with enough electronic equipment to furnish a recording studio, and he didn't unlock the rear doors until he had removed his headphones and looked closely at my hands and shoes. The taxi license gave his name as Forrester, Templeton B., and before we had traveled five blocks together, he informed me that we were surrounded by enemies. New York was a dangerous city, swarming with liberals and pornographers, also with corrupt police officials, angry black people, and espionage agents headquartered at the United Nations.

Unlike Sturua, Forrester had assimilated the ethos of the Cold War, and as a defense against the spies watching his every move he sought the vast and mysterious powers of an impregnable omniscience. He wore a baseball jacket stamped with the shield of the National Rifle Association, and he had arranged his radio receivers in what I took to be some sort of military sequence. Naming each of them in turn (police, hospital, airports, outer boroughs, etc.) he brought up the volume on the different frequencies and explained what was meant by the various call signs and code numbers—". . . robbery in progress . . . four ambulances . . . fog." Two scanning devices randomly acquired nearby telephone conversations, and while we waited for the light to change at Forty-second Street, we listened to a man (older, uneasy, name unknown) arranging to meet Jessica (younger, bored, demanding "a suite, not a room") later that same afternoon at the St. Regis Hotel.

"Some days it gets real interesting," Forrester said. "Some days the fare recognizes one of the voices. Soap-opera stuff, right there in the back seat."

The soap-opera stuff nowadays appears right there on the front page of the *New York Times*, updated every three hours on the Drudge Report, and sold the next day to HBO, but I like to think of Forrester still driving his Checker cab in hostile territory (possibly on an Indian reservation or somewhere in his native Tennessee), a heroic American paranoid in the great tradition that encompasses the whispering in Richard Nixon's White House, Ronald Reagan's theory of a "Star Wars" missile defense, Oliver Stone's movies, the citizens of the Aryan Nations in Idaho, and the confidentiality agreement that Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman require of their servants (the cook, the gardener, the secretaries) as a condition of their employment. The legal document runs to seventeen paragraphs of small print obliging the servants (on pain of swift and certain impoverishment) to keep their mouths wide shut about anything seen or heard while bringing hair dryers to the dressing tables of the entity defined as "collectively 'Cruise.'" For disclosures that appear in a newspaper or magazine, "$20 for each copy printed, with a minimum of $1,000,000 per publication"; for disclosures published in books, "$250 for each copy printed with a minimum of $1,000,000 for publication"; for disclosures on U.S. network television, "$5,000,000 per broadcast," etc. The list proceeds through the several tiers of ancillary exhibition, including (but not limited to) video cassettes, audio records and tapes, non-network and foreign television broadcasts.

Not everyone, of course, can afford to live in the grand paranoid manner of "collectively 'Cruise,'" and although I meet a fair number of people who might wish to do so (people who refuse to own credit cards or answer any question put to them on a printed form, people who brush their teeth with bottled water, avoid the Internet, dust their windowsills for fingerprints, and test new hunting rifles by shooting at the blimps overhanging golf tournaments), few of them travel with fourteen radios. They resign themselv

nstead to an accommodation with hat earlier centuries would have ecognized as "the world at court," nd for the most part they spy on nemselves—careful to strike attrac- ve poses and say nothing that might ive offense. The genius of modern chnology substitutes the settings of ne television studio, the gossip col- mn, and the fashion magazine for hat were once the palaces at Whitehall and Versailles, and in the oyal apartments of celebrity, one ust watch one's tongue.

The acute sense of anxiety reduces ne conversation to an exchange of ommonplaces both bland and small, circumstance to which I was intro- uced in the early 1990s, when I con- ucted a television show meant to rompt lively discussion of newly ublished books. The show invited ne author and two other guests to ursue any line of argument that ame readily to mind, even to the oint of strong opinion and blunt ob- ction. The guests seldom availed emselves of the opportunity. Some- mes they made loud or churlish oises before walking onto the set, ut as soon as the camera light linked red, they spoke as calmly as neral directors, excessively polite, as ell behaved as circus dogs sitting rimly erect on little wooden chairs. imilar codes of etiquette regulate ost of the country's public speaking, nd the general atmosphere of suffo- ating conformity matches the por- aits of the life at court drawn by hakespeare and Molière. The para- oia turns inward, and the courtiers ho hang like acrobats from the apeze of their connections never es- ape the feeling of weightlessness and ead, would-be persons of note or onsequence smiling in all directions, ad to say or do whatever is required return for a camera angle or a con- ibution to the alumni fund, for a ge of advertising, a letter of credit, a word of praise.

Maybe we can learn a lesson from ne Russians. The recent news re- orts from Moscow suggest that the oviet practice of communal black- ail has been modified to fit the new rms of free enterprise, the KGB ossiers changed into what is known "kompromat," compromising ma- terial that everybody holds in escrow for everybody else. The Russian press makes extravagant use of the currency, and every week yet another high-ranking government official fails to pass the tests of conduct and deportment—Boris Yeltsin falling down drunk on the steps of the Kremlin, Prosecutor General Yuri Skuratov filmed in bed with two prostitutes, miscellaneous finance ministers found to have been transferring public money to their private accounts in Switzerland. But nobody goes to prison or Siberia.

If the Russians can domesticate their paranoia, conceivably we could do the same. Remove the Christmas wrappings of Puritan inhibition and Victorian restraint, and the invasions of privacy might reveal the American spirit of adventure that so many of our social critics have given up for lost—actors recounting scenes of barbarian depravity, politicians speaking golden truths, corporation presidents carrying sword canes and pillaging Caribbean sugar islands. No longer pressed to invent their material, the authors of celebrity profiles might discover stories worth the telling. The tabloids would never lack for genuinely sensational headlines, and as a society we might crawl out from under the blanket of warm and welcome lies.

The hypothesis succeeds in theory but probably not in fact. As both Tocqueville and Sturua noticed on their tours of the United States, the Americans don't have much of a talent for living large and dramatic lives, a timid people disinclined to exercise their well-advertised freedoms of speech, too many of them too afraid of not being asked to dance. Open the national vault of sexual and financial secrets, and most of them would prove worthless and dull, as harmless as the Wizard of Oz, embarrassingly empty of the power to sell papers, inspire awe, attract photographers, instill fear. Which is possibly why we prefer the fanciful conspiracy theory to the plain and disappointingly unblemished fact. Our beloved paranoia protects us from the awful news that we might not be as interesting as we like to think. ■

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HARPER'S INDEX

Change since last fall in the number of network sitcoms whose main characters are members of the same family : –25
Points by which the national Nielsen rating of the 1999 Women's World Cup exceeded that of the NBA Finals : 2
Number of channels offered when TV came to Fiji's Nadroga province in 1995 : 1
Percentage change since then in the incidence of self-induced vomiting among girls there : +300
Chance that an American murdered at school in the last two years was a girl : 1 in 4
Chance of this between 1992 and 1994 : 1 in 20 (see page 100)
Estimated rounds of ammunition bought by the City University of New York since 1995 to train its security force : 110,000
Number of U.S. high schools that have hired a Massachusetts firm to test students' hair for evidence of drug use : 80
Chance that a Wyoming inmate under the age of 18 has used crystal meth more than once : 1 in 2 (see page 73)
Average number of different drug prescriptions filled each year by an American over the age of 74 : 12
Percentage change since 1995 in the number of heroin overdoses in greater Orlando, Florida : +107
Maximum amount of time that a suspect in Florida can be held in jail without being assigned a lawyer, in hours : 24
Maximum amount of time that a recent Texas bill proposed holding suspects before assigning a lawyer, in days : 20
Number of death sentences upheld by Texas courts since 1990 for men whose lawyers slept during their trials : 3
Number of Texas and California counties colonized by African "killer" bees since 1994 : 51
Number of millennia before humans first farmed that farmer ants were farming the spongy fungus on which they feed : 50,000
Maximum fine to which a British grocer will be subject next year for using anything other than the metric system : £5,000
Hours of helicopter lessons required for the new "Super Butler" degree at London's most expensive butler school : 60
Pages of the British royal family's medical records found in a folder lying by the side of a Scottish road last March : 70
Percentage of the proceeds of an AIDS fund-raising bike ride across Texas last fall used to cover "production costs" : 85
Percentage of its AIDS drugs that a 1997 agreement requires South Africa to buy from U.S. companies : 100
Ratio of the price in South Africa of a month's worth of U.S. AIDS drugs to what Indian-made drugs would cost : 7:1
Minimum estimated number of Sierra Leoneans whose limbs, ears, or lips were chopped off last year by rebel forces : 4,000
Portion of all U.S. arms sales abroad between 1993 and 1997 that were brokered by the Pentagon : 1/2
Number of years this century in which Taiwan has been directly controlled by mainland China : 4
Amount for which Cuba has announced it will sue the U.S. over casualties caused by the trade embargo : $181,100,000,000
Average number of full-time surgeons on call in East Timor : 1
Factor by which "a cynical view" and an "aggressive" personality may increase arterial calcium deposits : 2
Number of years since an elected New York City mayor went on to win higher office : 131
Percentage of white Pennsylvania men denied gun ownership between 1778 and 1789 for refusing a state loyalty oath : 40
Number of U.S. presidents besides Bill Clinton who have made an official visit to an Indian reservation since 1937 : 0
Amount the Bush campaign spent for one day's use of a plot of land near the entrance to last month's Iowa straw poll : $43,500
Amount that Florida governor Jeb Bush's wife spent on a 5-day shopping trip to Paris last June : $19,000
Amount she declared to U.S. Customs : $500
Percentage of Americans who say Hillary Clinton's campaign will be more successful if her husband doesn't try to help : 69
Speed at which an Iowa state trooper clocked a car last July in which Pat Buchanan was on the phone with Oliver North : 66
Price of the ticket that North, via cell phone, charmed the trooper out of writing : $54
Number of CDs of inspirational and patriotic music for which Senator Orrin Hatch has composed the lyrics : 6
Length in minutes of Newt Gingrich's monthly head massage at the Bubbles hair salon in Washington, D.C. : 5

Figures cited have been adjusted for inflation and are the latest available as of July 1999. Sources are listed on page 96.
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READINGS

[Essay]

WHY JOHNNY CAN'T FAIL

From an essay by Jerry Jesness in the July issue of Reason. *Jesness currently teaches special education in a Texas elementary school.*

I confess. I am a grade-inflating teacher guilty of "social promotion." I have given passing grades to students who failed all of their tests, to students who refused to read their assignments, to students who were absent as often as not, to students who were not even functionally literate. I have turned a blind eye to cheating and outright plagiarism, and have given As and Bs to students whose performances were at best mediocre. Like others of my ilk, I have sent students to higher grades, to higher education, and to the workplace unprepared for the demands that would be made of them.

I am, in short, a servant of the force that thwarts nearly every effort to reform American education. I am a servant of the floating standard.

I was introduced to the floating standard in 1979, while teaching for the Bureau of Indian Affairs on a reservation in western South Dakota. My predecessor, considered a capable if imprudent instructor by his former students and peers, had been forced to resign after failing nearly half of his students. In his absence, the failing grades were changed and his students were promoted to the next grade.

Even though I knew my predecessor's fate, I gave some failing grades the first term. After a few warnings, however, I fell into line. There was no point in doing otherwise. The students already knew that failing grades would mysteriously self-correct over the summer. I opted for self-preservation.

A few years later I moved to Texas's lower Rio Grande Valley. Since I now was more experienced, I was confident that I would be able to grade fairly. Besides, my future principal spoke movingly at my interview about the need to push our students to their limits. In the first grading period, I boldly flunked a number of students, including the daughter of an administrator of a local elementary school and a star fullback who was also the nephew of a schoolboard member.

Shortly thereafter I was called in to meet with my principal and the aggrieved parents. Such was my naïveté that I actually bothered to bring evidence. I showed the administrator her daughter's plagiarized book report and the book from which it had been copied, and I showed the fullback's father homework bearing his son's name but written in another person's handwriting. The parents offered weak apologies but maintained that I had not treated their children fairly.

My principal suddenly discovered a number of problems with my teaching. For the next few weeks he was in my class almost daily. Every spitball, every chattering student, every bit of graffiti, was noted. When there were discipline

[illegible], my superiors sided with the offending students. Teaching became impossible.

So again I learned to turn a blind eye to cheating and plagiarism, and to give students, especially athletes, extra credit for everything from reading orally in class to remembering to bring their pencils. Along the way, I gained the cooperation of my students and the respect and support of my superiors.

But not until my fifth year of teaching did I finally accept that my only choices were to embrace the floating standard or to abandon public education. That year my assignment was to teach English as a second language and lower-level language arts. My principal was particularly adamant about having all the students pass.

In language arts, no test was to be graded below 50, even one that was turned in blank. Daily assignments were to be graded according to the number of questions answered, even if all of the answers were wrong. If eight of ten questions were answered, the grade was to be 80, regardless of the quality of the answers. Those who still were failing at the end of the grading period were to be offered the opportunity to do reports or projects for extra credit. My neighbor, another lower-group teacher who was held up to me as a mentor, boasted that he left the week's spelling words on the blackboard during spelling tests and recommended that I do the same. I pulled in my horns too late to save myself that year. The principal recommended that my contract not be renewed.

That job and its $17,000 annual salary were hardly worth fighting for, so I left quietly. After a year as a salesperson and graduate student, however, I began to miss the classroom and decided to give teaching one more try. I returned to the district where I had flunked the star fullback. My superiors correctly assumed that I had learned my lesson and welcomed the return of the prodigal teacher. Just as Orwell's Winston Smith was finally able to achieve victory over himself and love Big Brother, I was ready to embrace the floating standard.

In the ensuing seven years, only two of my students failed. My evaluations were "above expectations" twice and "clearly outstanding" five times. By my fifth year I had climbed to the top of the Texas teachers' career ladder and earned an annual bonus of $3,300.

The funny thing is that I really did become a better teacher after my reincarnation, if only because my students and superiors were now cooperative. My classes were better behaved once I stopped trying to force students to learn more than they cared to. I no longer met with hostility when I sent students to the principal's office. I tried to be as honest as possible with my charges. All of my students and any parents who bothered to visit my classroom or return my phone calls understood that grades above 80 honestly reflected performance, while those in the 70 range were fluffed up with extra credit. I explained to the parents of my immigrant students that here in America passing grades may be given for attendance and minimal effort and do not necessarily reflect mastery of the course material. Students who needed to be pushed lost out, but that was the price of harmony.

[Haiku]

WHAT OFT WAS THOUGHT

From the July 1 broadcast of The Connection, *a call-in radio show produced by WBUR in Boston and distributed by Public Radio International. The show's host, Christopher Lydon, invited listeners to read original haikus, which they discussed with the show's guest, Robert Hass, the U.S. poet laureate from 1995 to 1997.*

CHRISTOPHER LYDON: Nick is on the line.

NICK: Hello?

LYDON: Hello, Nick, thanks for being here.

NICK: So, I just read my haiku?

LYDON: Please.

NICK: Okay. Terrible lizard made of tiny plastic parts. He is broken. Drats.

ROBERT HASS: Can we hear it again, Nick?

NICK: Oh, sure. Terrible lizard made of tiny plastic parts. He is broken. Drats.

LYDON: Okay, Robert Hass.

HASS: I'm trying to get—I'm trying—what I like about it is that I don't know if it's about a lizard that looks like plastic or a toy plastic lizard.

NICK: Mm-hmm.

HASS: So . . . So that one metaphor—one thing that happens for me is, "Oh, maybe a lizard looks like a broken lizard toy," and the other thing that happens for me is, "Maybe a broken lizard toy looks like a dead lizard." So, I like it. I don't know what you had in mind. What did you have in mind, Nick?

NICK: Oh, I actually had a toy dinosaur in mind.

HASS: Uhhhm.

LYDON: Well, that'll do. Nick, thank you!



Densified Oil Drums #4," by Toronto photographer Edward Burtynsky. His work is currently on display at the Marché Bonsecours in Montreal.

It does not matter what changes we make in curricula. The floating standard guarantees the reign of mediocrity. If standards are set high but students lack the skills or motivation to meet them, the standards will inevitably change. If a number of students in a given class take part-time jobs, homework will be reduced. If drugs sweep through a school, lower expectations will compensate for weakened ability. Americans want quality education, but when lower grades and higher failure rates reach their own children's classes, they rebel and schools relent. Americans hate public education because standards are low but love their local schools because their children perform so well there.

Schools have their own reasons to play along. Flexible standards mean fewer complaints. When parents are happy, there are fewer lawsuits; when students are happy, there are fewer discipline problems. What's more, schools that fail students assume the expensive and unpopular obligation of retaining them.

In the short term, floating standards make everybody a winner. Students build self-esteem, parents gain peace of mind, and schools save money. By giving high grades and class credit to anyone willing to occupy space in a classroom, schools create the illusion that their students are learning. Only after leaving school and facing work or college do the students discover that they are ignorant and ill prepared.

Imagine that you are required to teach *Hamlet* to a group of students who are either unwilling or unable to read such a work. If you demand that your charges read and understand the play, most will fail and you will be blamed. If you drop *Hamlet* and convert the class into a remedial reading course, you will be out of compliance with the curriculum. If you complain that your students are not up to the mandated task, you will be labeled insensitive and uncaring.

Fear not: The floating standard will save you. If the students will not or cannot read the play, read it to them. If they will not sit still long enough to hear the whole play, consider an abridged or comic-book version, or let them watch the movie. If they cannot pass a multiple-choice test, try a true-or-false or a fill-in-the-blank test that mirrors the previous day's study sheet. If they still have not passed,

allow them to do an art project. They could make a model of the Globe Theatre with Popsicle sticks or draw a picture of a Danish prince, or Prince Charles, or even the Artist Formerly Known As Prince. Those not artistically inclined could make copies of Shakespearean sonnets with macaroni letters on construction paper. If all else fails, try group projects. That way you can give passing grades to all the students, even if only one in five produces anything.

Keep dropping the standard, and sooner or later everyone will meet it. If anyone asks, you taught *Hamlet* in a nonconventional way, one that took into account your students' individual differences and needs.

For three decades, dismayed Americans have watched their children's test scores slip relative to those of children in other industrialized nations. Our leaders have responded with hollow excuses. Too many American children live in poverty, they say. But so do many Koreans. Many American children are raised in single-parent homes. But so are many Swedes. The United States is an ethnically diverse country. But so is Singapore. The biggest lie is that we are the only nation in the world that seeks to educate children of all socioeconomic classes. That has not been true for decades. The reality is simpler than that. Those other nations have fixed standards.

American schools offer fixed standards for their best and worst students, but not for the largest group, those in the middle. Advanced Placement tests are the same throughout the country. The International Baccalaureate program offers uniform curricula and standards to top-notch students in the United States and in English-language schools throughout the world. Ever-increasing numbers of states have mandated that their students pass a basic skills test before graduating. In Texas, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) is the standard. In order to prevent schools from ignoring any class of students, Texas wisely chose to track test scores by racial and economic group. The state has demanded basic skills for all students, and the schools are delivering.

For those who seek to learn more than basics, however, the result has been negative. Like other state-mandated minimum skills tests, the TAAS is helping to solve one problem while creating another: basic skills are now so strongly stressed that real academics suffer. It should be obvious that a student who has read and analyzed the works of Charles Dickens or Mark Twain would be better able to determine the sequence of events or identify the main idea of a paragraph than would a student who spent his academic year reading sample test passages, yet teachers who once taught from novels now assign reams of single-page reading passages followed by multiple-choice questions.

Perhaps there is another way. Those who take Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate tests submit to a voluntary outside standard. There is no reason that we cannot extend this option to other students as well. Textbook publishers, educators, and others could produce competing tests, to be given at the end of certain courses. Schools could submit the works of literature read and historical eras studied to private testing companies and receive tests based on that material. These tests would free teachers from the pressure to adjust the content of their courses and would assure students and their parents that the standard for each course is fixed, not floating. If *Hamlet* is tested, then *Hamlet*, not Popsicle-stick or macaroni art, will be taught.

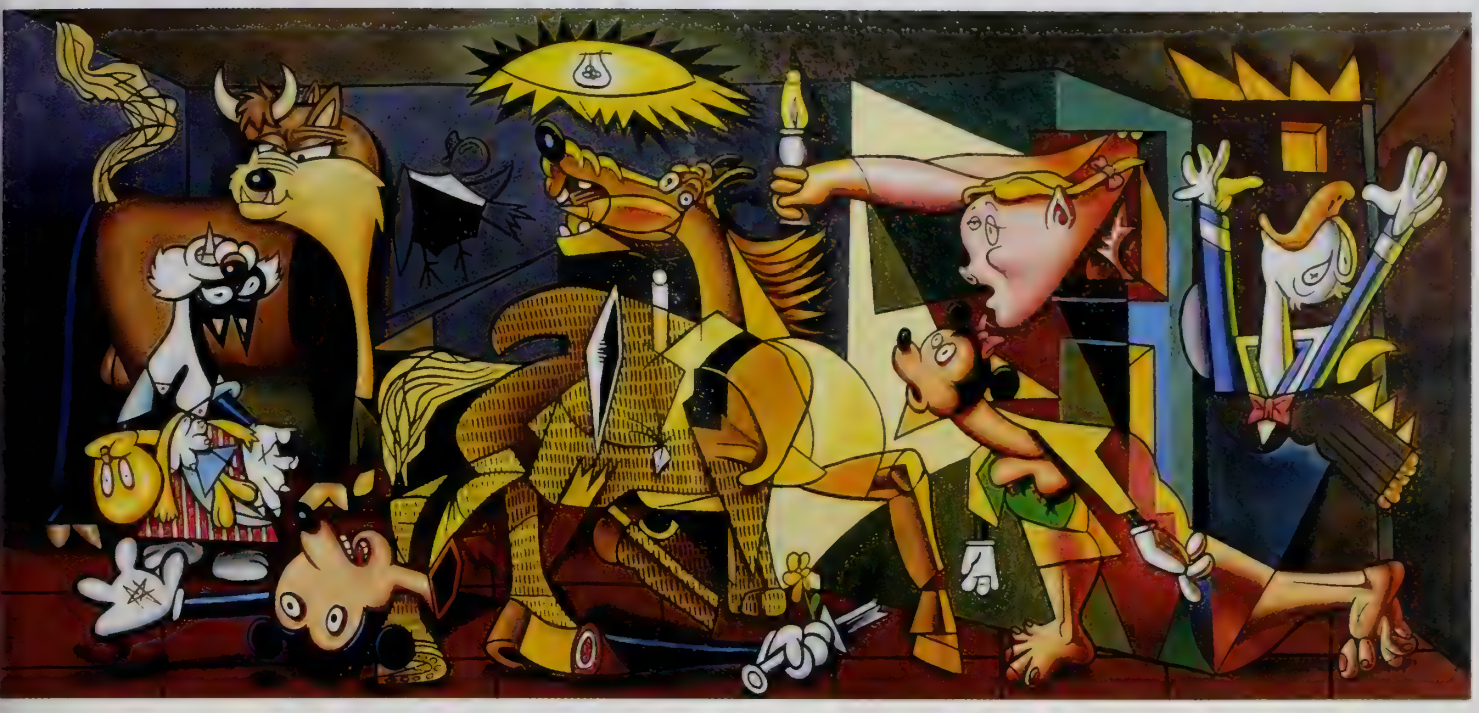
[Clarification]

TINY, TINY, TINY WHIPS OF LEATHER

From a statement issued by Wesleyan University last May in response to controversy over a course entitled "Pornography: Writing of Prostitutes." The course, taught by Hope Weissman, a professor in the College of Letters, included readings in pornography from the eighteenth century to the present, and examined "so-called perverse practices such as voyeurism, bestiality, sadism, and masochism."

This Spring semester the College of Letters offered for the second time a course on pornography. The course included a student project as its final assignment. Before members of the class, one female student executed a project in which she invited her classmates to hit her with tiny harmless whips that she provided. Two friends tied her to a board, with her back to the class. She was dressed in slacks but no blouse. At her invitation, some of her classmates did—hesitantly, feebly, and to the general amusement of everyone—gently whip her.

No members of the class were at risk. Nothing more serious than ideas were at stake.



Culture Wars, *by Ron English. His work will be on display next spring at New York City's Gallery Stendhal. English lives in Jersey City.*

[Study Aids]

GREAT BOOKS FOR DUMMIES

From plot summaries available on Schoolbytes.com, a Web site that offers book synopses and term papers online. According to the site's co-founder, Mark Saldanha, the Cliffs Notes series of study aids are "sometimes hard to understand." The Schoolbytes synopses, in contrast, are "easy explanations—the way a best friend tells you."

The Pearl

My god does this book suck. This is a book by Steinbeck, which means the plot isn't very interesting and there is A LOT of description. It's about some Indians and this magic pearl they find. Remember, the characters are Indian, which is why they have freaky names.

So there's this really poor Indian family. Kino is the daddy. Juana is the mommy. Coyotito is the little baby. The story starts with Kino just sitting around enjoying nature. Then Coyotito gets stung by a scorpion. Juana wants to go to the doctor, but the doctor is a rich prick and refuses to help them because they're poor.

Then Kino and Juana go fishing and find this bigass pearl. Kino takes the pearl back to the village, and everyone is jealous. Then Kino is taking a walk and is attacked by some dude. Juana hates the pearl because all it has brought is bad things, so she tries to throw it in the ocean. Kino stops her and then gives her an ass whooping. (He used to be nice, but now he's like OJ. See how money can change people?)

Then Kino is walking and is attacked AGAIN, this time by two dudes. Kino fights them off and kills one of the dudes. Kino and Juana decide to escape to the mountains because Kino will be wanted for murder, but they realize that three people are tailing them to get the pearl. They hide in a cave, but Coyotito makes a noise, and one of the dudes hears and shoots at them. Then Kino jumps in and kicks some tracker ass. He stabs one, shoots one, and bludgeons the other one with a gun. Then Kino goes into the cave and sees that Coyotito's head has been blown off. Kino and Juana go back to town, carrying the very dead Coyotito, and throw the pearl into the water, because see how much trouble it has caused?

Beowulf

Okay, to answer your first question: Beowulf is NOT a wolf. He's a human. Also, this is not a book. It is a really long and boring poem that nobody understands except for old English people. So here's the explanation you can understand. You're welcome.

The book starts out telling you about the history of the Danish kings (kings from Denmark), and they end with King Hrothgar. Hrothgar and his army kick a lot of ass in war. One day Hrothgar builds a hall named Heorot for his men to stay in. After it's finished the



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Culinary Program Specialist
Foodchain Community Kitchen
Rhode Island Community Food Bank



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guys in the army party like it's 1999. (The entertainment at this party is a poet. Wow. What a wild party.) Then Grendel, this big monster, hears all these guys partying. He hates it when humans party, so one night he goes to Heorot Hall and kills thirty guys. Then for twelve years the king is scared of Grendel.

Then Beowulf, a big hero-type guy, hears about the monster. He gets fourteen of his buddies and goes to Hrothgar's castle and tells the soldiers that he and his gang are there to kick a little monster ass. One of Hrothgar's soldiers, Unferth, starts talking smack. He calls Beowulf a wimp. Then Beowulf starts talking smack about Unferth and accuses him of being responsible for Grendel's reign of terror.

When Grendel shows up that night, Beowulf rips Grendel's arm off with his bare hands. Grendel runs away and dies. Everyone is happy, and they do some ceremony to honor Beowulf, though Beowulf himself isn't THAT happy with his victory. (Who the hell knows why?) Eventually, Beowulf cuts off Grendel's head and brings it back to the king, and the king gives Beowulf some loot.

Then the SECOND part of the poem starts. Beowulf is now king and has been for fifty years. One night some dude steals a precious cup from this big fire-breathing dragon. The dragon gets pissed and goes around burning houses. Then he burns Beowulf's house. Beowulf goes to the dragon's cave to kick his ass, but, remember, Beowulf is old now, so he is a weakling. He hurts the dragon a little bit, but the dragon shoots fire and burns him.

Beowulf is hurt really bad. On his deathbed, he asks his assistant, Wiglaf, to build some tower in his honor, where his tomb will be. Wiglaf builds the tower and buries Beowulf with the dragon's loot.

Brave New World

This book doesn't really have a straightforward plot. It's just a bunch of different ideas about what a perfect society would be like, according to the author. The beginning of the book just describes the world they live in. It is called Utopia. The director of "Hatcheries and Conditioning" talks about how babies are grown in bottles and all their genes are played with so that there's complete control over what each baby looks like. Remember, this book was written in the early 1900s. Huxley (author) forecasted many things (like genetic engineering) that are happening today.

Then the Controller—one of the ten dudes who run the world—talks about Utopia. One important thing is that the leaders don't teach people about history, because they don't want people to be influenced by things in the past. Another big principle is that people have no emotion. They are given a drug called Soma, which makes them permanently happy. Lastly, the government wants people to have sex with lots of different part-

[Review]

MOVIE MOST FOUL

From a review of the film South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut *on the Web site of the Child-Care Action Project, an organization devoted to the "Christian analysis of American culture."*

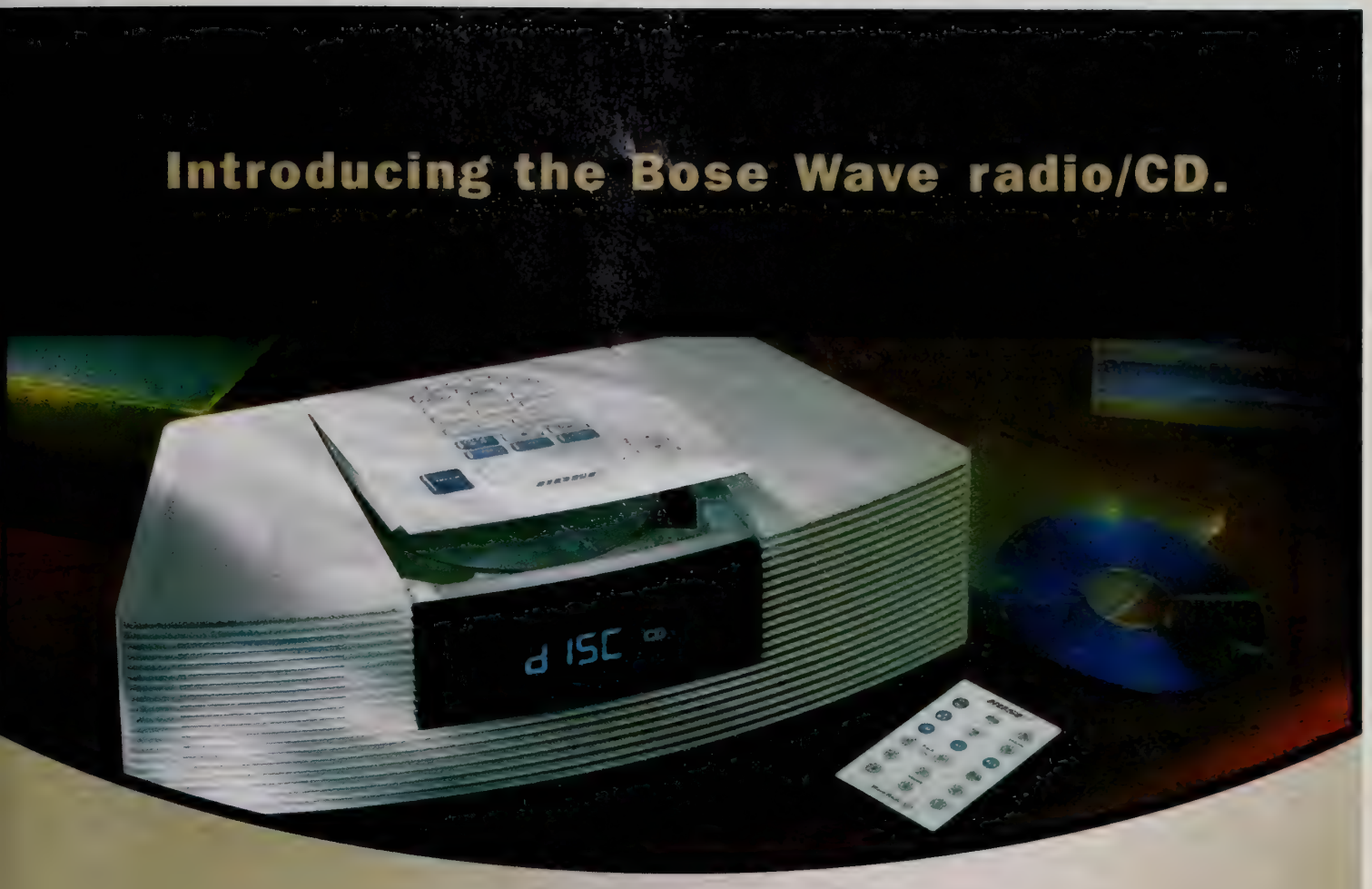
South Park is another movie straight from the smoking pits of Hell. *South Park* is an incredibly dangerous movie for those who do not understand or are developing an understanding of the Gospel. Incredibly dangerous.

Satan is portrayed as the homosexual lover of Saddam Hussein and as a sensitive, loving, and caring being. Hussein waves his disembodied male member around—and it was not a cardboard drawing like most other images in the movie; it was of photographic resolution. The most foul of the foul words was clearly spoken *by the children* at least 131 times and many other times in a muffled or garbled way. Four-letter words were used at least 119 times. God's name was taken in vain 11 times without the four-letter expletive and 6 times with it.

Angels were portrayed as nude—very nude—females. God was called many vulgar and hateful names. Satan was glorified. A child was graphically incinerated by igniting his anal wind, then another kid tried to beat out the flames with a stick and was concerned about the stick catching fire. Body parts dripping with blood were ripped from a child by a surgeon, who expressed shallow concern. The dead child was then seen with an exploded chest, and, after being rejected from Heaven (by nude female angels) and cast into Hell, the dead child was presented as a ghost trying to influence the other kids. An all-male chorus line wore pink bikini briefs. Homosexual acts were described. Decomposing burned bodies were cast as live occupants of Hell.

These are but a very few of the examples of ignominy in this celluloid developed in the fiery pits of Hell. And the kids in the audience loved it

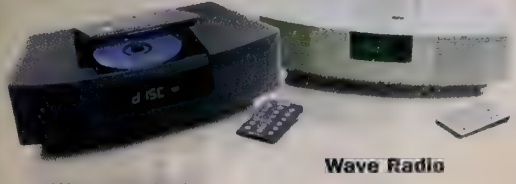
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because it's fun, but they are not allowed to be in love. In this perfect world, the people have no sense of responsibility. They live carefree, doing drugs and having sex.

[Attacks]

UMPIRE, STRIKE BACK

From a list of assaults against umpires and referees compiled by the National Association of Sports Officials (NASO). Since 1987, fourteen states have adopted legislation allowing tougher sentences for anyone convicted of assaulting a sports official; twenty more states are drafting similar legislation. NASO is based in Racine, Wisconsin.

GREENSBORO, N.C.: During a twelve-and-under soccer match, a thirty-four-year-old mother, unhappy with a call, confronted the fifteen-year-old referee after the game while the two teams were shaking hands. When he refused to give her his name, she raised her hand as if to strike him, to which he responded, "Go ahead, hit me." He later testified, "I stepped back and she hit me in the mouth and cracked my lip."

ROCKFORD, ILL.: A veteran soccer official was spit upon by a parent at the U17 Illinois Cup game. The official looked at the parent and said, "I assume that was accidental," and the parent spit again.

STURGEON BAY, WIS.: After a game, a Youth League baseball coach followed the umpire into the clubhouse, where the two scuffled on the ground until the wife of the coach intervened, saying, "Hit me instead." This caused the two to stop long enough for them to get off the ground, whereupon the coach sucker punched the umpire in the jaw, causing a cut that required four stitches.

SACRAMENTO, CALIF.: During a youth football game, a coach pushed the referee to the ground and kicked him several times in the groin area while shocked players and fans looked on. The referee had come to the sideline to ask the coach to bench a player who had been involved in an unsportsmanlike act during the previous play.

COSTA MESA, CALIF.: A twenty-one-year-old coach of a basketball team for twelve-year-olds punched the referee following a game. The act ignited a small riot among fans, and a sixty-six-year-old grandmother was trampled.

The mothers of two six- and seven-year-old players were fined for shoving and verbally abusing a thirteen-year-old referee.

WAGONER, OKLA.: A fifteen-year-old tee-ball umpire was choked and punched by a thirty-seven-year-old assistant coach of a tee-ball team for five- and six-year-olds. The umpire was treated at the hospital for bruises around his neck and a burst blood vessel in his eye.

CHARLOTTETOWN, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND: A hockey referee was beaten by University of Moncton Blue Eagles players after a controversial goal ended their game against the University of Prince Edward Island. The referee was repeatedly punched in the head and body, and speared in the groin with a stick.

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA: A cricket player was sentenced to one year in jail for aggravated assault and possession of a dangerous weapon after striking an umpire in the head with a bat. The umpire required emergency surgery and now suffers from occasional seizures.

SAN FRANCISCO: After taunting a linesman throughout a San Francisco Soccer and Football League game, an angry fan attacked him in a pedestrian tunnel. According to the linesman, the fan put him in a headlock and bit off part of his ear. Doctors were unable to reattach the piece that was bitten off.

FRUITA, COLO.: Four days after Fruita defeated archrival Grand Junction in high school wrestling, the match's referee discovered that shelves in his unfinished home and his two dogs had been spray-painted. The vandals painted the message DANIELS IS A GRAND JUNCTION LOVER, along with other derogatory comments.

[Confession]

THE TROUBLES I'VE SEEN

From a March 1, 1999, affidavit by John Weir, a former police officer in Northern Ireland. Weir made the affidavit to support journalist Sean McPhilemy in two ongoing libel suits involving his 1998 book The Committee, *which details alleged collusion between Protestant Loyalist death squads and Northern Irish security forces.*

I am a former member of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), which I joined in 1970 and served until 1980, when I was convicted for the murder of William Strathearn at Ahoghill, County Antrim, in April 1977.

I recall that in 1970 or 1971, while I was


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serving as a young constable in Strandtown, there was an arms amnesty, during which members of the public turned in substantial quantities of guns and ammunition. Many of these guns were then given out by RUC officers to local members of a Loyalist paramilitary group, the Ulster Defence Association, with the knowledge of senior officers in my RUC station.

In 1972, I was transferred to the Armagh RUC station, and I served in a specialist anti-terrorist unit, the Special Patrol Group (SPG). This involved me in police work related to the political unrest in Northern Ireland and especially in combating IRA terrorism. I quickly discovered that many members of my SPG unit had Loyalist connections and supported the activities of Loyalist paramilitaries. I recall that during the Ulster Workers Strike in 1974, all members of my SPG unit fully supported the Loyalist efforts to bring down the power-sharing executive and that we toured the barricades and encouraged the strikers to persevere. When my colleagues and I learned that we were going to be sent to Portadown to contain Loyalist protests, we sabotaged our own police vehicles by putting sugar in the petrol tanks. My unit had about thirty members, twenty-nine of whom were Protestant. The only Catholic resigned and emigrated to Canada. My unit was then entirely Protestant and committed to the Loyalist cause. Each SPG unit had a call sign; ours was "Orange."

I recall a visit to my unit by an RUC assistant chief constable, who asked us for our views on how best to combat the rise in IRA activity in South Armagh, which was at that time experiencing much terrorist activity from both sides. We suggested some extreme solutions to the problem, such as using commercial lorries with armored plating that would enable us to remove illegal IRA roadblocks by shooting everyone dead, or performing road stops wearing civilian clothes and carrying illegal weapons, pretending to be either Loyalist or IRA units and thereby learning the true allegiance of those we had stopped. Some of us later implemented these measures.

Two murders in 1974 and 1975 led to my transfer from Armagh to another unit in Castlereagh, Belfast. Rumors were circulating that I had organized the murder of John Francis Greene, an IRA man, in retaliation for the murder of an Ulster Defence Regiment officer named Elliot. Although this was untrue, it put me at risk from the IRA, so I was transferred.

Once I was in Belfast, I received a visit from some of my former colleagues in Armagh, among them Gary Armstrong, who told me that they had decided that the time had come to take direct action not only against the known Republicans and IRA activists but also against the Catholic population in general. I agreed that the only way to stop the IRA mur-

[Poem]

THE NAIL

By C. K. Williams, in the Winter–Spring issue of Salmagundi. *Williams's most recent collection of verse is* Repair. *His poem "Last Things" appeared in the October 1998 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

Some dictator or other had gone into exile, and
now reports were coming about his regime,
the usual crimes, torture, false imprisonment,
cruelty and corruption, but then a detail:
that the way his henchmen had disposed of
enemies was by hammering nails into their
skulls.
Horror, then, what mind does after horror,
after that first feeling that you'll never catch
your breath,
mind imagines—how not be annihilated by
it?—the preliminary tap, feels it in the
tendons of the hand,
feels the way you do with *your* nail when you're
fixing something, making something,
shelves, a bed;
the first, light tap to set the slant, and then the
slightly harder tap, to embed the tip a little
more . . .

No, no more: this should be happening in
myth, in stone, or paint, not in reality, not
here;
it should be an emblem of itself, not itself,
something that would mean, not really have
to happen,
something to go out, expand in implication
from that unmoved mass of matter in the
breast;
as in the image of an anguished face, in grief for
us, not us as us, us as in a myth, a moral tale,
a way to tell the truth that grief is limitless, a
way to tell us we must always understand
it's we who do such things, we who set the
slant, embed the tip, lift the sledge and drive
the nail,
drive the nail which is the axis upon which
turns the brutal human world upon the
world.

der campaign was to attack the Catholic community itself, so that it would put pressure on the IRA to call off its campaign.

At a later meeting at Armstrong's house, I was told that there was a farmhouse in Glenanne owned by an RUC officer from which they had already carried out several operations. I learned that it might be necessary to find a different base of operations, because there were other police officers who knew that the farmhouse had been used in connection with bombings but were unaware that the group's activities had been authorized at a higher level. The attacks that were carried out from this location include:

- The Dublin and Monaghan bombings. I believe thirty-three people were killed and scores seriously injured in these two bombings, which occurred on the same day in 1974.
- A bomb and gun attack on two pubs in Crossmaglen in November 1974.
- The murder of two Gaelic football supporters at Tullyvallen, near Newtownhamilton, in August 1975 by Loyalists belonging to the Ulster Volunteer Force. These men were wearing military uniforms when they stopped the two football supporters, and, after identifying them as Catholics, they shot them dead.
- A gun and bomb attack on Donnelly's bar in Silverbridge, South Armagh, in December 1975 in retaliation for the murder of an RUC reserve constable who the group believed had been held at the bar. I understand that three people were killed in the attack, including Mr. Donnelly's fourteen-year-old son.
- The murder of three Catholic brothers in Whitecross, South Armagh, in January 1976. On the same night, Robin Jackson [the late Loyalist hit man known as "The Jackal"] shot the three O'Dowd brothers dead. The two attacks were coordinated.
- A car bomb in Castleblayney, across the border in County Monaghan.

I was promoted to the rank of sergeant in 1976 and transferred to the Newry RUC station, where I remained for about a year. I renewed my contact with Armstrong. While I was based in Newry, Armstrong took me three times to meet Robin Jackson in Lurgan, where we discussed possible attacks on the IRA. On one occasion, Armstrong, Jackson, and I reconnoitered IRA homes in South Armagh. Although we did not have a gun, Jackson carried a hammer and a knife and told us that if we were to find a suitable person to kill, he knew how to do it with those weapons.

I was on duty at the Newry RUC station when I received a call from RUC Constable William McCaughey, asking me to meet him in Armagh. We met in a pub and discussed a shooting incident in which a police officer was injured in the leg. McCaughey raised the issue of retaliation but nothing specific at that stage. He then asked me to accompany him to Lurgan to meet Jackson. I agreed, and we met Jackson at his home. I soon realized that the proposed retaliation was at a more advanced level than I had appreciated. It quickly became obvious that the attack had already been discussed in detail and that Jackson and McCaughey proposed to carry out the operation that night. McCaughey told Jackson that the gun to be used in the attack had never been

[Justification]

TUNE IN, TURN ON, RAT OUT

From a May 1974 FBI interview with Timothy Leary, obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request, that was posted in June to "The Smoking Gun," a Web site edited by William Bastone and Daniel Green. The documents show that while in prison for possession of drugs, Leary informed on members of the radical Sixties group the Weathermen and identified his collaborators in a 1970 escape from prison.

I'd like to discuss my motives, briefly. Number one, I want to get out of prison as quickly as I can. And I believe that telling the total truth is the best way to get out of prison. I don't want to continue in a situation where hiding the truth is keeping me in prison. That doesn't make any sense to me personally or philosophically. Second, I feel I have a great deal to contribute—constructive, ah, activities in the United States of America. I'd like to use this as step number one in seeing if I can work out a collaborative and intelligent—an honorable relationship with different government agencies and law enforcement agencies and educational agencies, so this is not just turning someone over to get out of prison, it's part of a longer range plan of mine. I think I can contribute a great deal, I've learned a great deal. I prefer to work—I'm never going at it illegally ever again—but I would prefer to work with law enforcement people who are ready to forget the past, and to use my—in the future, because I still have a great deal to say in this country, I believe.

used in any shooting before and that he had taken it from the Lurgan RUC station.

I did not know, at that stage, the identity of the target, nor did I know for certain whether Jackson or McCaughey intended merely to frighten a particular person or to kill him. The entire discussion lasted only a few minutes. I wish to make it clear, however, that I took part in the operation voluntarily.

After McCaughey had collected the gun from his home in Lurgan, I drove him in my own car to a roundabout, where Jackson and his helper, R. J. Kerr, were already waiting in a lorry. Jackson drove the lorry, and we followed him toward Ahoghill, picking up him and Kerr when they parked about a mile from the village. After giving Jackson the gun, McCaughey told him just to fire through the upstairs windows so as to make sure the occupants got the message. McCaughey and I waited in the car not far from the target house, and we both heard the shooting. After Jackson and Kerr returned and got into my car, Jackson said he had shot a man twice. We left the village, and I drove back to the lorry, where Jackson and Kerr got out so that they could go on to their ultimate destination to deliver a load of chickens. I drove McCaughey back to Armagh and dropped him off at the RUC station. I then proceeded to my living quarters at Bessbrook RUC station and went to work early the next morning and carried on with my normal work. I learned from the news on the radio that the victim had been William Strathearn.

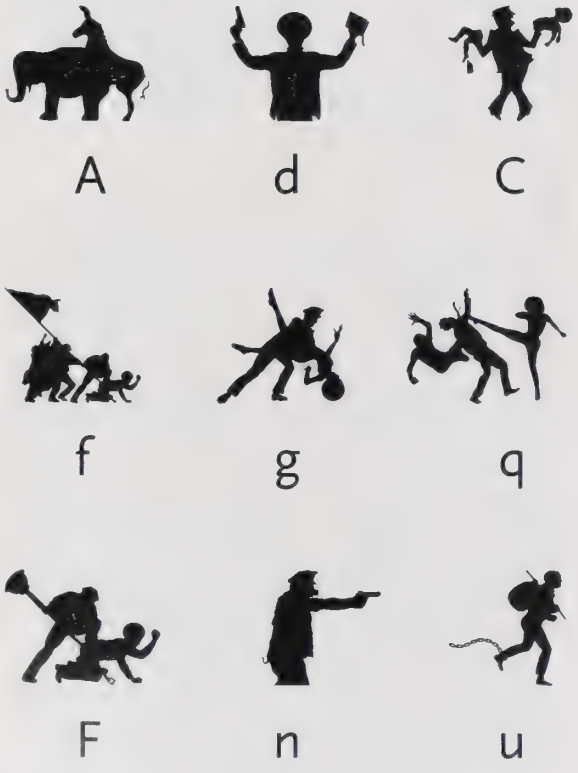
I think it is important to make it clear that this collusion between Loyalist paramilitaries such as Robin Jackson and my RUC colleagues and me was taking place with the full knowledge of my superiors. For this reason, I did not think there was the slightest possibility that I would ever be arrested or charged for my role in the Strathearn murder.

Some months after the murder, I was called to a meeting with the head of the RUC Special Branch in Newry, Chief Inspector Brian Fitzsimons. He confirmed that I was to be transferred to Newtownhamilton RUC Station. Mr. Fitzsimons let me know that he was aware that I had been involved in Loyalist terrorist activity for some time, but it was clear that he was not bothered by this. He told me that he knew all about my past activities and that my local connections to Loyalist paramilitaries was one reason that I was being placed in charge of the Newtownhamilton RUC Station. I understood the message of my meeting with Chief Inspector Fitzsimons to be that I had a green light to carry on with my activities.

During my time at Newtownhamilton, I became increasingly aware that there was an internal struggle within the security forces over the best way to fight the IRA and that there was a fierce rivalry between Army Intelligence and RUC Special Branch. I did my best to sidestep this rivalry, but I recall one occasion when I found two Englishmen in my office who introduced themselves as Special Air Services. They indicated that they knew about my past and admired my skills in fighting the IRA but warned me not to trust RUC Special Branch. I received similar advice from RUC Special Branch about Army Intelligence. I decided at that point in my career that I would no longer participate in any Loyalist activity directed against either the IRA or the general Catholic population.

I believe it was in 1978 that I was transferred to Dunmurry. I remained in Dunmurry for about a year before I applied for a transfer to

[Font]
STEREOTYPEFACE



From The Black Panther 2000, a dingbat font created by New York City artist Paul Chan to accompany "All Power to the People," a multimedia jazz ballet suite by activist Fred Ho. The ballet was performed last month at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.



Young Life, *a painting by artist Bo Bartlett. His work will be on display in November at the Torch Gallery in Amsterdam. Bartlett lives in Philadelphia.*

Magherafelt. I was there only a short while before I was arrested, just before Christmas 1979, for my part in the murder of William Strathearn twenty months earlier.

After initially denying that I had been involved, I realized that the detectives questioning me had already obtained the full story from McCaughey. I was shown the gun used to kill Strathearn, and I was confronted by McCaughey. The detectives led me to believe that Jackson and Kerr were also in custody next door and that they were also admitting their culpability. I later learned that Jackson and Kerr had not in fact been arrested or charged with the murder; indeed, they had not even been questioned about it. I was puzzled about the decision to allow Jackson and Kerr to remain at liberty, but then I did not know at the time that Jackson was untouchable because he was an RUC Special Branch agent.

While I deeply regret the murder of William Strathearn and my part in it, as I regret all the other lives lost through violence during the Troubles, I nevertheless feel that I have suffered an injustice. For I was not acting alone in the events described here, and my superiors in the RUC were well aware of what my colleagues and I were doing. Indeed, they encouraged us in our activities. I have felt since my release from prison in 1992 that my own life was in danger because of what I could reveal about the RUC. In fact, I learned that my personal details had been leaked to Republican terrorists and that on two occasions they came looking for me. That is why for the last five years I have been living in Nigeria.

[Infractions]

SOLITARY VICES

From inmate disciplinary reports filed in Florida State Prison at Starke; all of the infractions resulted in the inmates being sent to solitary-confinement cells, or X Wing, where they are often denied visitation rights, telephone calls, and reading materials and are allowed to leave their cells only to shower.

A 1997 Human Rights Watch report concluded that confinement in X Wing "clearly amounts to corporal punishment, explicitly prohibited under the U.N. Standard Minimum Rules [for the Treatment of Prisoners]." According to Florida Department of Corrections spokeswoman Debbie Tedrowian, X Wing is used only for "inmates we can't keep under control in any other way." The reports were obtained by Meg Laughlin, a reporter for the Miami Herald.

INMATE: Thomas D. Woodel
REPORTING OFFICER: John S. Hall
STATEMENT OF FACTS: At approximately 5:00 P.M. on April 5, 1999, I conducted a search of the cell housing inmate Thomas Woodel. The following items were found: 1 Popsicle stick, 1 latex glove, 69 $.33 stamps, and 14 $.20 stamps.
VIOLATION: Possession of Contraband
PENALTY: 15 days in X Wing

INMATE: Juan F. Vega
REPORTING OFFICER: L. W. Drawdy
STATEMENT OF FACTS: At approximately 5:16 P.M. on July 23, 1998, I heard a loud noise coming from the side of the wing. As I approached Juan Vega's cell, I observed that he was yelling loudly at other inmates, interrupting normal operating procedures in H Wing.
VIOLATION: Disorderly Conduct
PENALTY: 30 days in X Wing

INMATE: Donny L. Crook
REPORTING OFFICER: Douglas W. Bergman
STATEMENT OF FACTS: At approximately 7:45 P.M. on April 18, 1999, I conducted a search of the cell housing inmate Donny Crook. Officer P. Bowman assisted. We confiscated one AM/FM personal radio, which had inscribed on the back "Lebron, #472846." I asked inmate Crook if the radio was his. He stated, "Yes, it is my radio." Officer Bowman then asked inmate Crook, "Are you sure this is your radio?" Inmate Crook stated, "Yes, sir. It is mine." The radio was in fact the property of inmate Jermaine Lebron. I questioned inmate Lebron, who stated, "It was my radio, but I threw it away." The radio was confiscated.
VIOLATION: Lying to Staff
PENALTY: 60 days in X Wing

INMATE: James C. Agan
REPORTING OFFICER: Dewey M. Beck
STATEMENT OF FACTS: At approximately 1:25 P.M. on March 16, 1999, I went to the cell of inmate James Agan and ordered him to give me the sheet on his bed. Inmate Agan stated, "I am not going to give it to you." His sheet was torn on both sides and at one end.
VIOLATION: Destruction of State Property
PENALTY: 60 days in X Wing

INMATE: Mark C. DeFriest
REPORTING OFFICER: George A. McCormick
STATEMENT OF FACTS: At approximately 10:45 A.M. on February 17, 1999, I was inventorying the property belonging to inmate Mark DeFriest. I confiscated a prison library book entitled *Power Plays*, by Tom Clancy, that had the cover torn off. Pages 128 through 156 were also ripped out of the book, making it unusable.
VIOLATION: Destruction of State Property
PENALTY: 60 days in X Wing

INMATE: Alfredo Berrios
REPORTING OFFICER: Unknown
STATEMENT OF FACTS: On May 6, 1998, at approximately 2:40 P.M., I was inventorying Alfredo Berrios's property and discovered a laundry bag that was not an inmate-type laundry bag.
VIOLATION: Possession of Contraband
PENALTY: 15 days in X Wing

INMATE: Dallas J. Price
REPORTING OFFICER: John E. Bellovich
STATEMENT OF FACTS: At approximately 7:00 P.M. on November 18, 1998, I conducted a routine search of the cell of inmate Dallas Price. The following items were found: 7 excess deodorants, 3 excess soaps, 1 excess dental floss, 2 excess shampoos, and 1/8 pack of tobacco.
VIOLATION: Possession of Contraband
PENALTY: 30 days in X Wing

[Memoir]

KEEPING TIME

From "On Writing a Memoir," by Edward Said, in the April 29 issue of the London Review of Books. *Said is a professor of English and comparative literature at Columbia University. His memoir* Out of Place *will be published this month by Knopf.*

All families invent their parents and children, give each of them a story, character, fate, and even a language. There was always something wrong with how I was invented, how I was meant to fit in with the world of my parents and four sisters. Whether this was because I constantly misread my part or because of some deep flaw in my being, I could not tell for most of my early life. Sometimes I was intransigent and proud of it; other times I felt devoid of any character at all, timid, uncertain, without will. Yet the overriding sensation I had was of always being out of place. Thus it took me about fifty years to become accustomed to, or,

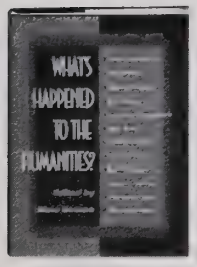
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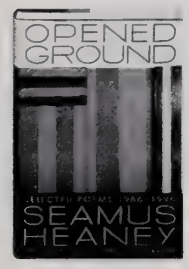
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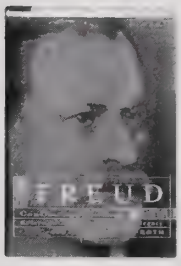
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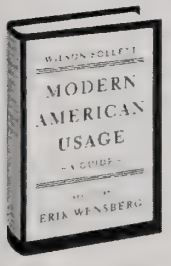
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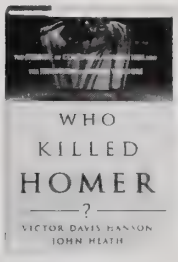
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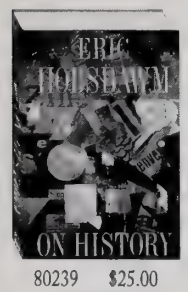
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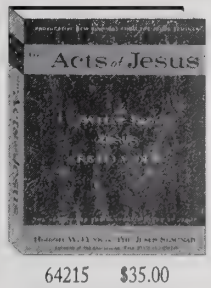
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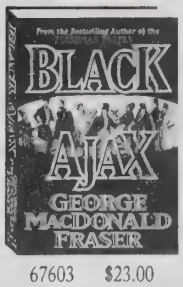
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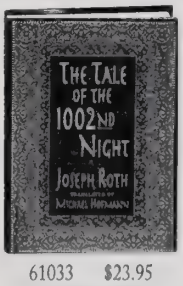
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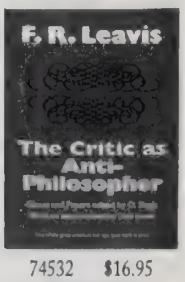
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exactly, to feel less uncomfortable with, Edward, a foolishly English name yoked to the unmistakably Arabic family name Said. True, I had been named Edward after the Prince of Wales, who cut so fine a figure in 1935, the year of my birth, and Said was the name of various uncles and cousins. But the rationale of my name broke down when I tried to connect my fancy English name with its Arabic partner. For years, and depending on the exact circumstances, I would rush past "Edward" and emphasize "Said"; at other times, I would do the reverse, or say the two so quickly that neither would be clear. The one thing I could not tolerate, but very often would have to endure, was the disbelieving, and hence undermining, reaction: *Edward? Said?*

The travails of bearing such a name were compounded by an equally unsettling quandary when it came to language. I still don't know what language I spoke first, Arabic or English, or which one is mine beyond any doubt. I trace this primal instability back to my mother, whom I remember speaking to me in both English and Arabic. Woven into her Arabic speech were English words like "naughty boy" and of course my name, pronounced "Edwaad." I am still haunted by the memory of the sound, at exactly the same time and place, of her voice calling me "Edwaad," the word wafting through the dusk at the Fish Garden just before it closed, and of me, unable to decide whether to answer her or to remain in hiding just a while longer, enjoying being called, being wanted, the non-Edward part of myself taking luxurious respite by not responding, until the silence of my being became unendurable.

When I was growing up in Jerusalem and Cairo, I always wished that my mother might have been the one to watch me play football or tennis, or that she alone could have talked to my teachers, relieved of her duties as my father's partner in the joint program for my reform and betterment. To be held in her arms when she wished to cuddle and stroke me as a small boy was bliss indeed, but such attention could never be sought. I recall that one of the most anguished moods of my childhood and early adolescence was trying, with no great success, to distract her from her role as taskmaster, and to tease her into giving me approval and support. A good deed, a decent grade, a well-executed passage on the piano might cause a sudden transfiguration of her face, a dramatic elevation in her tone, a breathtakingly wide opening of arms, as she took me in with "Bravo Edward, my darling boy, bravo, bravo. Let me kiss you." Yet most of the time she was so driven by her sense of duty as mother and household supervisor that the voice that has stayed with me is the one she used to call out injunctions: "Practice your piano, Edward!"; "Get back to your homework"; "Don't waste time: begin your composition"; "Have you had your milk, your tomato juice, your cod liver oil?"; "Finish your plate"; "Who ate the chocolates? A full box has disappeared. Edward!"

Time seemed forever against me, and, except for a brief period in the morning when I sensed the possibility of the day ahead, I was boxed in by schedules, chores, assignments, with not a moment for leisure or reflection. I was given my first watch, an insipid-looking Tissot, at age eleven or twelve; the watch obsessed me and never failed to impress me with

[How-to]

EGGS A LA NABOCOQUE

A recipe for boiling eggs by Vladimir Nabokov, written in November 1972. It was on display this summer as part of "Nabokov Under Glass," an exhibition at the New York Public Library celebrating Nabokov's centennial.

Boil water in a saucepan (bubbles mean it is boiling!). Take two eggs (for one person) out of the fridge. Hold them under the hot tap to make them ready for what awaits them. Place each in a spoon, one after the other, and let them slip *soundlessly* into the (boiling) water. Consult your wristwatch. Stand over them with a spoon preventing them (they are apt to roll) from knocking against the damned side of the pan. If, however, an egg cracks in the water (now bubbling like mad) and starts to disgorge a cloud of white stuff like a medium at an old-fashioned séance, fish it out and throw it away. Take another and be more careful. After 200 seconds have passed, or, say, 240 (taking interruptions into account), start scooping the eggs out. Place them, round end up, in *two* eggcups. With a small spoon tap-tap in a circle and then pry open the lid of the shell. Have some salt and buttered bread (white) ready.

Vladimir Nabokov

its unimpeded forward movement, which, in nearly every way, added to my feeling of being behind. I do not recall ever being much of a sleeper, but I do remember the faultless punctuality of early-morning reveille and the anxious urgency I felt the moment I got out of bed. There was never any time to dawdle or loiter, though I was inclined to both. I began a lifelong habit then of experiencing time as a wasting while at the same time resisting it by doing more and more (reading furtively, staring out the window, looking for a superfluous object like a penknife or yesterday's shirt) in the few moments before an inexorable deadline. My watch was a help when it showed that I had time to spare, but most often it guarded my life like a sentinel, defending the external order imposed by parents, teachers, and inflexible appointments.

In my early adolescence I was completely in the grip, at once pleasant and unpleasant, of time passing as a series of deadlines—an experience that has remained with me ever since. The day's milestones were set relatively early in that period and have not varied. Six-thirty was time to get up; seven-thirty started the meter running, at which point I entered the strict regimen of hours and half-hours governed by classes, church, private lessons, homework, piano practice, and sports, until bedtime. This sense of the day divided into periods of appointed labor has never left me, has indeed intensified.

My watch furnished the basic motif underlying all this, a kind of impersonal discipline that somehow kept the system in order. Leisure was unavailable. I recall with stunning clarity my father's injunction against remaining in pajamas past early morning; slippers, in particular, were objects of contempt. I still cannot spend any time at all lounging in pajamas: the feeling of time-wasting guilt and lazy impropriety simply overwhelms me. As a way of getting around the discipline, illness (sometimes feigned, sometimes exaggerated) made life away from school positively acceptable. I became the family joke for being especially gratified by, even soliciting, an unnecessary bandage on my finger, knee, or arm. And now, by some devilish irony, I find myself with an intransigent, treacherous leukemia, which, ostrich-like, I try to banish from my mind entirely, attempting with reasonable success to live in my system of time, working, sensing lateness and deadlines and that feeling of insufficient accomplishment I learned fifty years ago and have so remarkably internalized. But, in another odd reversal, I secretly wonder whether the system of duties and deadlines may now save me, though of course I know that my illness creeps invisibly on, more insidiously than the time announced by my first watch, which I carried with so little awareness of how it numbered my mortality, divided it up into perfect, unchanging intervals of unfulfilled time forever and ever.

During the last few months of my mother's life, she would tell me plaintively and frequently about the misery of trying to fall asleep. She was in Washington, I in New York; we would speak constantly, see each other about once a month. Her cancer was spreading, I knew. She refused to have chemotherapy: "*Ma biddee at'adthab*," she would say: "I don't want the torture of it." Years later I was to have four years of it with no success, but she never buckled, never gave in even to her doctor's importunings. But she could not sleep at night. Sedatives, sleeping pills, soothing drinks, the counsel of friends and relatives, reading, praying: none, she said, did any good. "Help me to sleep, Edward," she once said to me with a piteous trembling in her voice that I can still hear as I write. But then the disease spread into her brain, and for the last six weeks she slept all the time. Sitting by her bed with my sister Grace, waiting for her to awaken, was, for me, the most anguished and paradoxical of my experiences with her.

Now I have divined that my own inability to sleep may be her last legacy to me, a counter to her struggle *for* sleep. For me sleep is something to be gotten over as quickly as possible. I can go to bed only very late, and I am up at dawn. Like her, I don't possess the secret of long sleep, though, unlike her, I have reached the point where I do not want it. For me, sleep is death, as is any diminishment in awareness, and sleeplessness is a cherished state to be desired at almost any cost; nothing invigorates me so much as immediately shedding the shadowy half-consciousness of a night's loss, reacquainting myself with or resuming what I might have lost completely a few hours earlier. During my last treatment—a twelve-week ordeal—I was most upset by the drugs I was given to ward off fever and shaking chills, by the induced somnolence, the sense of being infantilized. I fought the medical soporifics bitterly, as if my identity depended on that resistance.

I occasionally experience myself as a cluster of flowing currents. I prefer this to the idea of a solid self, the identity to which so many attach so much significance. These currents, like the themes of one's life, flow along during the waking hours, and, at their best, they require no reconciling, no harmonizing. They may be out of place, but at least they are always in motion,

e, in the form of strange combinations ... out, not necessarily forward, sometimes against one another, contrapuntally, yet without one central theme.

[Family Drama]

SISTERS WITHOUT MERCY

From Cruddy, *an illustrated novel by Lynda Barry, to be published next month by Simon & Schuster. Barry is a nationally syndicated cartoonist; "Music Lessons," from her novel* The Good Times Are Killing Me, *appeared in the November 1988 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

Once upon a cruddy time on a cruddy street on the side of a cruddy hill in the cruddiest part of a crudded-out town in a cruddy state, country, world, solar system, universe. Once upon a cruddy time behind cruddy Black Cat Lumber on a very cruddy mud road which bubbles up very weird smells that evil genie themselves up through the cruddy dark rain and into the yellow lit-up window of the cruddy top bedroom of a cruddy rental house where a cruddy girl is sitting on a cruddy bed across from her cruddy sister who I WILL KILL IF YOU TOUCH THIS, JULIE, AND IF YOU DO I SWEAR TO GOD I WILL KILL YOU. NO MERCY, NO TAKE-BACKS, PRIVATE PROPERTY, THIS MEANS YOU, JULIE, YOU! The cruddy girl named Roberta was writing the cruddy book of her cruddy life and the name of the book was called Cruddy.

Cruddy by the author Roberta Rohbeson, who is grounded until September 8, 1972. Only eleven months and five more days to go.

Cruddy. The famous book by the famous author Roberta Rohbeson who can't even CONCENTRATE TO WRITE this because her little sister will NOT shut up she will NOT shut up SHE WILL NOT SHUT UP and Roberta is about to BASH her little sister's HEAD IN IF SHE DOES NOT SHUT UP AND—

Now it is later.

Now Roberta is back from just getting in huge trouble for throwing the Cutex Nail Polish Remover bottle at her sister. Roberta was aiming at her sister's ARM but it wailed on the ... HEAD by accident. Roberta was trying to explain to the mother that it was an ACCIDENT! AN ACCIDENT! But the mother never believes anything Roberta says anymore since the night the mother got called to the emergency room where the author was tripping out on drugs very badly and the mother started screaming, "DRUGS?!! DRUGS?!! DRUGS?!!" and the cords on her neck were sticking out extremely and she had to be restrained by others to keep from killing the author, and the police kept sticking their freaky heads in close to the author's face and their breath was quite squidly and they kept saying, "Where did you get the substance, Roberta, who gave you the substance, Roberta, where did you get it, the substance, Roberta?"

And in the next cubicle the restrained and tripping Vicky Talluso was screaming, "DON'T YOU NARC ME OUT, ROBERTA! IF YOU NARC ME OUT I SWEAR TO GOD I WILL KILL YOU!"

But the author didn't want to narc anyone out. All she wanted to do was deliver the fantastic message of Truth plus Magical Love equals Freedom, but this was obviously a message the police and the mother could not comprehend.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch where the author was getting screamed at by the mother for ACCIDENTALLY bashing IDIOT SISTER JULIE on the head with the nail polish remover, AN ACCIDENT, the author was sitting very still on a ripped kitchen chair and staring at the chunks of crud on the floor. The mother is what they call a main character. The mother is a very main character who says I live to torment her, that I only wailed the Cutex Nail Polish Remover bottle at the head of Julie because I want to torment her, who says the reason I do anything is just to torment her.

We live at 1619 East Crawford, a rental in a row of rentals all the same, all very hideous on a dead-end road between Black Cat Lumber and the illegal dumping ravine. People have been heaving off old mattresses and old stoves and dead dogs ever since I can remember even though there is a huge nailed-up sign that says NO DUMPING! VIOLATORS WILL BE PROSECUTED! But in all the time of our living here I have never seen anyone get prosecuted once. I don't think a prosecutor even exists.

Our house slants. Like if you lay a jar on the floor of the kitchen area it will start rolling very rapidly. The back of the house is shoved right into the dirt of the hill and the front is on sinking wooden legs and there are scabby gray streaks all over the beige paint and wet chunks of mold growing all over the roof and there is a broken TV antenna that turns in the wind and makes noises that will freak the bravest person out.

There are a lot of trees behind the house, mostly scrub maple and pine and a lot of nasty smells that come from the garbage ravine and

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Audrey *and* Oh Jackie, *by Jenny Scobel. Her work is currently on display at the Gale Gates et al. gallery in Brooklyn, New York.*

more nasty smells that come from the mud in front of the house and all day there is the sound of the loudspeaker calling in the lumberyard for Mike. Mike to the front desk. Mike, you got a call on line three. Mike to the loading dock. And I have watched out of my window to see which one is Mike, which one of the men on the forklifts inserting the smashed-flat Dracula teeth under stacked loads of wood is Mike, but every time they call for Mike a different guy goes inside. Maybe they are all Mike.

There is no sidewalk on our road. Just mud and mud and mud. The mother says there is something wrong with the ground. It bubbles. Julie says a shrunken man inhabits the mud and she has seen his face rise to the surface and she has seen the whites of his eyeballs opening at her, she has seen his muddy lips and freaky teeth and he tries to speak to her but she always runs inside before he can deliver his message. Julie is not the kind of person who makes things up and she swears it is true about the shrunken man.

I said, "Julie, you are lying."

She said, "Roberta, I am not."

I said, "If you are telling the truth then poke this pin into your hand."

Julie shoved it in all the way to its head. That is her style. And so I have been freaking on the possibility of the existence of the rising shrunken man because the way Julie did that pin thing was so sincere.

East Crawford is a road of trash people. Teeth missing and greasy two-color hair on the women and regular greasy hair on the men and all of the people come in two sizes only, very fat or very skinny. And all of them are hacking and all of them are huffing on cigs constantly. I smoke too at times. So does Julie. It is very hard not to smoke here.

There's a lot of dead cars parked sideways and some are filled with junk to where it is pressing against the window glass and there is green mold growing on the junk. There are rotten porches and slamming doors and constant yelling inside the houses and constant yelling outside the houses and two doors down there are two little fish-faced girls who just stand in the mud and do contests of who can scream the loudest.

The owner, the landlord of all the houses, is Harmong. Mr. Harmong is the cheapest chintziest most pig-lipped tightwad skanked-out lardo king landlord of all time. He weighs sixty million pounds and has to walk with a metal cane with four legs on it just to keep from falling over from

his personal fat, which also makes him wheeze and choke, and who has face skin that looks like it was rubbed with greasy pink Brillo and who wants the actual cash rent laid in his actual hand on the first day of every month, which is the job the mother makes me do while she locks herself in the bathroom until Mr. Harmong goes away.

For the inside of the house there is not much to say. The bottom floor is just one room. There is a kitchen area and a living-room area. There is the mother's TV and the mother's chair and the mother's lamp. All new. All fancy. Presents to her from the grateful people at her hospital. The mother is a nurse at Veterans.

The only other mentionable thing is a gas furnace, big and brown with dented and taped-over ducts and bubbled-up scorch marks up the side, caused by a thing called roll-out. When the furnace comes on sometimes flames shoot out orange into the room. Supposedly it's not dangerous. Mr. Harmong says it's nothing to worry about. He says if it gets out of hand, throw some baking soda at it.

Where the mother was screaming at me was in the kitchen area. The walls look like gray velour from the layers of grease and dust. There are swaying cobwebs hanging. The refrigerator is very loud and it leaks and it shakes. The final thing to mention is the kitchen table with fake wood patterns which can look very lively when you are tripping on certain substances; you can see moving heads in the patterns, nodding at you, giving you advice. And even though the author was not on any substances while she was just getting screamed at, out of the corner of her eye she could still see the lively heads moving under the plastic surface of the tabletop. It turns out that once your mind gets expanded it is very hard to shrink it back down again.

Out of the other corner of her eye the author could see Julie sitting at the top of the stairs and smiling because she was happy the mother was screaming at the author. Julie was almost laughing at the scene because JULIE IS EVIL, SHE IS AN EVIL PERSON.

The author was sitting very still in a blue-flowered Sears nightgown with one rip under the arm caused by the author insisting on sitting with her knees up and the nightgown pulled tight over her knees which she knows causes rips but she does it anyway because she has NO RESPECT, no GRATITUDE, because she thinks THE WORLD REVOLVES AROUND HER plus she is a stupid, stupid idiot because she is barefooted, what if she stepped on a needle, one of the mother's dropped embroidery needles? What if she stepped on a needle and it went right into her foot and Roberta would not feel it and the needle would rise and rise and rise through the veins leading up to the heart and then the needle would STAB HER IN THE HEART and Roberta would DIE and it would be VERY PAINFUL, this according to the nurse mother, a medical expert on Freaky Ways to Croak.

The mother shouted that she knew several people who died from the Rising Stab of the Unfelt Needle, or RSUN, she has seen cases of it many times and NOT ONE PERSON HAS SURVIVED IT.

And the author sat very still but she was thinking AS IF!!! As if I wouldn't feel a needle go into my own foot. As if I don't have enough vein biology information to know a needle would never make it to my heart. AS IF! AS IF! AS IF!

But Roberta kept her mouth shut and her eyes on the floor where she continued her study of the chunks of crud. She did not make a peep while the mother blorked out her fake medical information in horrible breath explosions.

The author has a very sensitive nose.

Once in the olden days of Roberta's life there was a dog named Cookie. And the mother was also always screaming at Cookie for everything, smoking and screaming because Cookie had incurable skin problems and Cookie was always itching and scratching and all her hair was rotting off and wet scary dog scalp was showing and the sound of the chewing got on the nerves of the mother who threw things at the dog and shouted, "YOU AGGRAVATE ME!" And then the mother said Cookie had to go and Roberta begged and begged her no but all the mother did was wait until Roberta went to school and when she came home there was no Cookie. Instead there was a bag of white-chocolate stars from the famous candy place beside the Aurora Bridge. The famous dumping and jumping bridge. And the mother had bite marks on her hand and she said to Roberta, "Have a candy star."

I said, "Where's Cookie?"

She said, "I have no idea."

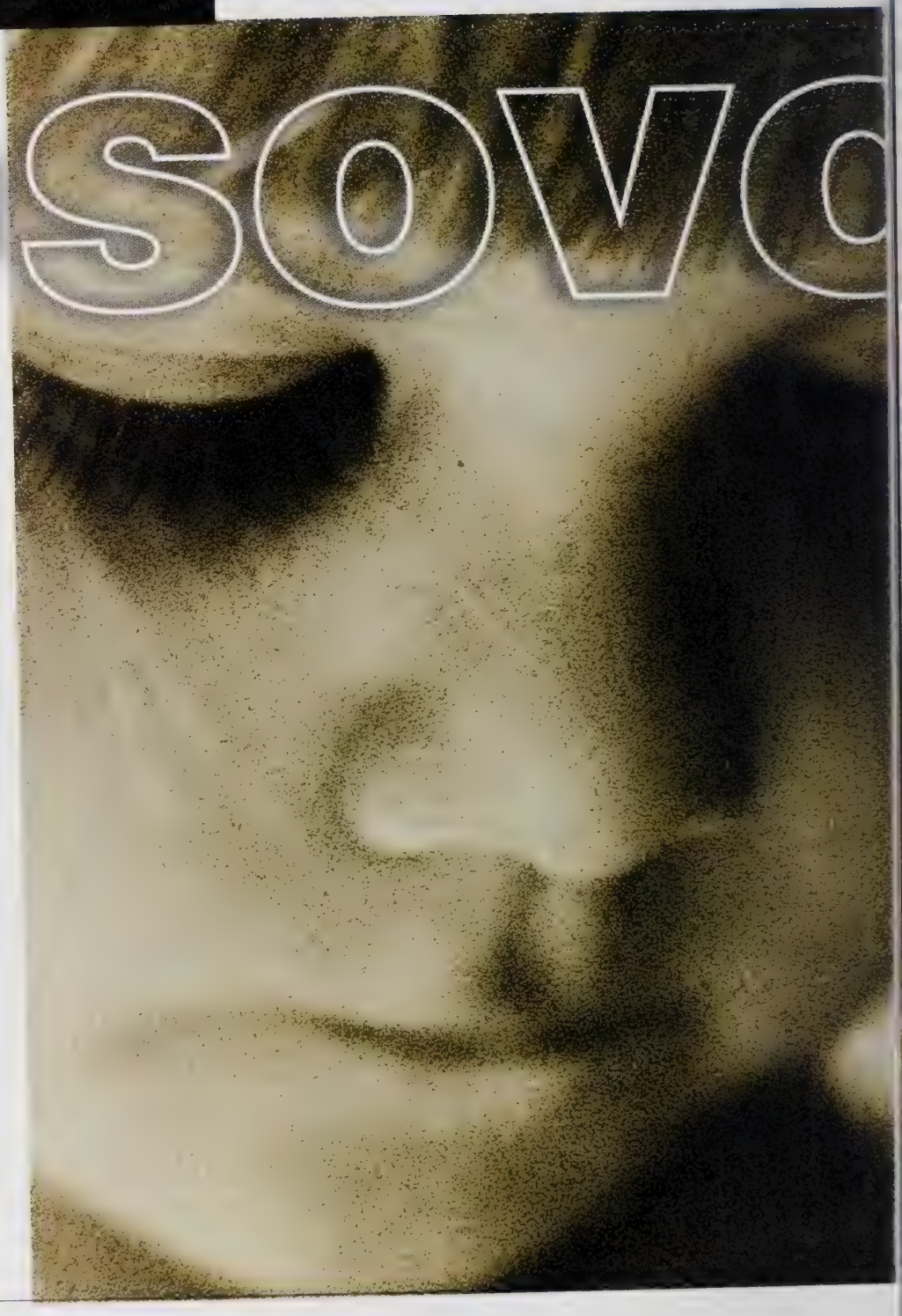
And Roberta stood on the porch and called and called until the mother yanked her inside and shouted, "You want to call that dog? Here! You call her!" And she grabbed the telephone and bashed the receiver into Roberta's face. A broken nose. A boxer's nose. One of my many distinctive features. My sense of smell has been very sensitive ever since.

Julie got a major lump on her head from the nail polish remover bottle and the mother made her come downstairs so I could feel it and know the full terribleness of my personality and maybe it was cold-blooded of me to press down on it as hard as I could but there is such a thing as hatred in this world. The hippies are trying to cure it but I do not think they will be able to. ■

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HOW TO PEEL A POEM

Five poets dine out on verse

Poetry has been described, in eras past, as "the natural language of all worship," "the hop-grounds of the brain," "devil's wine," and "the bill and coo of sex." Contemporary assessments tend to be less poetic. Poetry today is something that the federal government should fund, that our publishing houses must support, that the public schools ought to permit a larger place on the syllabus, that our creative-writing programs might give more recognition, that we honor each year (as we do "Quality," "Math Awareness," and "Medical Librarians") with a "National Poetry Month." Rarely does the public discourse on poetry speak directly to the value of poems; rarer still is the suggestion that poems simply be read and heard and enjoyed.

Hoping to correct this oversight, and taking a cue from the Chinese proverb "Recite poetry only with a poet," *Harper's Magazine* invited five practitioners of the art to dine together at the Algonquin Hotel in New York City. Each was asked to bring to the table a poem he or she truly loved, and then to tell us why.

DONALD HALL
is the author of fifteen books of poetry, the latest of which, Without, *received the 1999 PEN-Winship Award for the best book of 1998 by a New England writer.*

CYNTHIA HUNTINGTON
is professor of English at Dartmouth College and the director of the creative writing program. She is the author of two books of poetry and The Salt House, *a memoir.*

HEATHER McHUGH
is the Milliman Distinguished Writer in Residence at the University of Washington in Seattle. Her Hinge & Sign *was a finalist for the National Book Award in 1994. Her latest collection of poetry is* The Father of the Predicaments.

PAUL MULDOON
is the Howard G. B. Clark '21 University Professor in the Humanities at Princeton University and the newly elected Oxford Professor of Poetry. His most recent collection, his eighth, is Hay.

CHARLES SIMIC
is the author of fourteen collections of poetry, the latest of which is Jackstraws. *He won the Pulitzer Prize in 1990 for* The World Doesn't End.

I.
Apéritifs

CHARLES SIMIC: All these poems have one very simple virtue. When you finish reading them, you want to go back to the beginning and start reading them again. Most poems are forgettable. They may strike us as witty and clever, but once we're done we have no particular wish to return to them. To make someone reread something you've written is no small achievement.

CYNTHIA HUNTINGTON: You approach a poem, you go through it, you get it, you go away. The poems we've chosen don't allow that. They disappoint, or deflect your expectations, and that's why you go back to them.

PAUL MULDOON: If the poem has no obvious destination, there's a chance that we'll all be setting off on an interesting ride.

HEATHER McHUGH: I think one of poetry's functions is *not* to give us what we want.

DONALD HALL: In logic no two things can occupy the same point at the same time, and in poetry that happens all the time. This is almost what poetry is for, to be able to embody contrary feelings in the same motion.

McHUGH: I will misquote Simic here, to the effect that the poet isn't always of use to the tribe. The tribe thrives on the consensual. The tribe is pulling together to face the intruder who threatens it. Meanwhile, the poet is sitting by himself in the graveyard talking to a skull.

HALL: I'm surprised that we all picked twentieth-century poems.

McHUGH: I was tempted to pick an earlier one, and then I thought, "Everybody else is going to be doing that."

SIMIC: I expected that Heather and Paul and Don would pick something with great verbal richness. So I wanted to get something really plain. The kind of poem that cats and dogs could understand.

MULDOON: Or write, perhaps.

HUNTINGTON: All our poems have animals, except for Ezra Pound.

MULDOON: There's a "shag" in Ezra Pound.

McHUGH: There's at least one in everybody.

MULDOON: I mean the bird.

McHUGH: Where there's God there are animals. The shop window, by the way, occurs in each of our choices.

MULDOON: Oh, that's interesting. The flaneur.

HALL: "During Wind and Rain" has a shop window?

McHUGH: Well, your poem is the least susceptible to this reading.

HUNTINGTON: Heather has this urge to bring things together.

McHUGH: It's a hermit's foible.

HUNTINGTON: No, it's wonderful.

ii.
The Soup

DURING WIND AND RAIN (1917)
by Thomas Hardy

They sing their dearest songs—
He, she, all of them—yea,
Treble and tenor and bass,
And one to play;
With the candles mooning each face....
Ah, no; the years O!
How the sick leaves reel down in throngs!

They clear the creeping moss—
Elders and juniors—aye,
Making the pathways neat
And the garden gay;
And they build a shady seat....
Ah, no; the years, the years;
See the white storm-birds wing across!

They are blithely breakfasting all—
Men and maidens—yea,
Under the summer tree,
With a glimpse of the bay,
While pet fowl come to the knee....
Ah, no; the years O!
And the rotten rose is ript from the wall.

They change to a high new house,
He, she, all of them—aye,
Clocks and carpets and chairs
On the lawn all day,
And brightest things that are theirs....
Ah, no; the years, the years;
Down their carved names the rain-drop ploughs.

HALL: I'm happy to say this is the most beautiful poem in the English language. The paraphrase of the poem is, "People have a lot of fun together, especially in families, and then they get old and sick and die." For me the sensuous pleasure of the poem is in conflict with its melancholy paraphrase. And in this poem the conflict between the enormous, beautiful, erotic sounds of the poem and the decay, death, sickness of its—for a lack of a better word—content makes for an explosion. There are only three metaphors in this poem. There's "mooning," which is common, as the candelabrum shines off the faces as the sun shines off the moon; "reel," which can be a number of things—dancing, for instance—but in this context it's the reeling of somebody old and feeble; and then, finally, the last word of the whole poem, "ploughs," which is an extraordinary word, because the rain-drop is to the granite as the plough is to the earth. Time suddenly elongates, and the sound of the word does the elongating. That last line is equal, metrically, to "And the rotten rose is ript from the wall," but it takes forty-seven times longer to say because it has all those long vowels and consonants: the assonance of "names," "rain" and "down," "ploughs"—all dipthongs that you can hold on to forever. And the wonderful hiatus between "drop" and "ploughs." Earlier, with "carved names," to get from one vowel to another you have to climb over the boulders of four consonants—*r*, *v*, *d*, *n*. I think we read poems with our mouths, not with our eyes, not with our ears, not with our intelligences. And this is a poem with enormous mouth-joy. This is like oral sex, this extraordinary pleasure of these words in the mouth. He originally wrote the last line: "On their chiseled name the lichen grows." I don't think that Thomas Hardy sat down and said, "Ah, let me see, I'll have the identical dipthongs first and last, and a different pair of dipthongs in the middle." He fiddled with it until it *felt* right. That's what poets do. And when it felt right, he went on and wrote another poem. I think there's a terrible line here. That's my rule: there has to be something awful. "And the rotten rose is ript from the wall" is pretty bad. He had originally written, "And the wind-whipped creeper lets go the wall." I think I like that better.

MULDOON: What did he have first for the last line?

HALL: "On their chiseled names the lichen grows."

McHUGH: Now, that's a better revision.

MULDOON: He was concerned about the rhyme with "house," I guess.

HALL: And fiddling around to make the rhyme better, he made everything else better. Does anybody hate this poem?

SIMIC: It's a great poem. What I find interesting is how each stanza is a tableau, an idealized family scene cut short by an ominous concluding image.

HALL: I think that "While pet fowl come to the knee" is second in sound to the last line. There's that long vowel in the middle, that terribly short one at the beginning, that rather short one afterward. And it seems to me explosive.

MULDOON: I wonder if what really makes this poem fly off the page has to do with the imagery in the last stanza—this extraordinary vision of the graveyard furniture. And I wonder if that in a way doesn't really compensate for some of the perhaps less than wonderful moments along the way. Because I think the poem is quite risk-taking, assuming that he's aware of the risks he's taking.

HALL: Who knows what Thomas Hardy was aware of? Believe the poem, not the poet.

MULDOON: The poem knows, but someone has got to be keeping a little eye on how the poem is coming out.

McHUGH: I love his attempt to luster up the material versions of their lives by furnishing them with the very best in carnal effects: "a high new house." "All of them, . . . Clocks and carpets and chairs/On the lawn all day,/And brightest things that are theirs. . . ." All those alls! All those utmosts! The ultimate in appointments, but still, "Ah, no." They can't avoid *the* ultimate appointment.

HALL: I have a different reading of the last stanza. I think it's parallel to the singing and the breakfasting. I think they are simply moving house.

SIMIC: They're getting richer, but time is passing.

MULDOON: You know, Don, you're absolutely right. Literally, of course, they are moving to a new house. I always read "high" as "on a higher plane." I've never read it literally, if such a thing is possible.

HALL: I'm very literal. But I allow that there are different possible readings. "Reel," for instance.

McHUGH: And the great thing about readings is they needn't be ranked.

HALL: Each present tense, which we discover by the end of the first stanza, is the memory of someone who looks back and laments. Scenes of singing together around the piano, gardening, men and maidens together, and what has happened? The years have intervened. "The rotten rose is ript from the wall." "How the sick leaves reel down in throngs!" Images of frailty and debility, and then, finally, images of the long dead.

HUNTINGTON: What's so rich here is that all the positive images are very time-bound too. Music is measured in time. Clearing the moss, breakfasting—movement through the day, movement through their lives. Time the killer is also the time in which songs are sung. Time the killer is also the time in which the moss grows, in which you breakfast, in which you move house.

McHUGH: I love the degree to which the first and last stanzas' provisions against time employ the superlative—"their dearest songs," "And brightest things." Yet at each turn some equally embodied *small* thing—the leaves, the birds, the rose, and then a single raindrop—becomes the incarnation of all time. That's what does them in: one raindrop down their names. That's what's so excruciating. You think that some particular will save you, but it's the particular that effaces you.

HALL: The first line rhymes with the last line, every time. And then in between we have the interlocking rhymes of B C B C and the refrain line of "years" and "O's."

MULDOON: "The years O" is such a powerful refrain that he wants to resist using "yea" each time. He's got "yea" and then he's got "years O." Then he changed it to "aye," which where I come from we would pronounce "eye," though I gather here it's pronounced "ay." If he had Y-E-A at the end of the line and Y-E-A-R-S at the end of the line further down, some subliminal little danger signal would be sent to the reader.

HALL: If it is pronounced "eye," he is doing what Emily Dickinson did all the time, which is to take two dipthongs and rhyme on the second part. He rhymes the long "e" in each case, as it goes "eyeee . . . dayeee." So that's a rhyme, too. It's the kind of off-rhyme I don't associate with Hardy, but the possibility is there.

McHUGH: It also permits the subliminal other of the words rhymed with "aye"—"ply," "guy," "by/buy," and "die." These are unsaid perhaps but pocketed in the understudy of the poem.

HUNTINGTON: And the punctuation—every line is controlled by punctuation, given a precise timing.

HALL: Punctuation and syntax are the last things anybody thinks about these days. Maybe they're the last things I think about, but I think about them a long time. I've been talking about the mouth part of the poem, but the rest of the body of the poem is the hands moving, the legs moving, the dance. And the dance is determined by punctuation and line breaks.

MULDOON: I once knew a woman who broke off a relationship because the man used ellipses and three exclamation marks after every sentence. Yet the gap the ellipses imply in this poem, the sense of time having passed, and the shift in each of those stanzas—if those ellipses weren't there it wouldn't work.

McHUGH: And if you look at the words that precede them, three out of four are body parts. There is this momentum of the living toward itself, which Hardy then cuts off, or contains.

HALL: Richard Wilbur once said that the genie gets his strength from being enclosed in the bottle. The passion here of letting flow, the impossibility of acceptance, and the absolute tightness and closure—these are the qualities that we tend not to have in contemporary free verse.

MULDOON: I wonder here if, in preparation for "Down their carved names the rain-drop ploughs," Hardy isn't wittingly presenting a line that is less than stellar: "How the sick leaves reel down in throngs!" "See the white storm-birds wing across!" "And the rotten rose is ript from the wall." Don pointed out that this last line was worse than the one he originally had. I'm pretty sure Hardy would've known that.

HUNTINGTON: You think he's holding back for the big moment.

SIMIC: The hopelessness of a poetic gesture in the face of the inevitable.

HALL: It could be simply that he fiddled with it until it felt better.

iii.
The Fish

THE TAXIS (1963)

by Louis MacNeice

In the first taxi he was alone tra-la,
No extras on the clock. He tipped ninepence
But the cabby, while he thanked him, looked askance
As though to suggest someone had bummed a ride.

In the second taxi he was alone tra-la
But the clock showed sixpence extra; he tipped according
And the cabby from out his muffler said: "Make sure
You have left nothing behind tra-la between you."

In the third taxi he was alone tra-la
But the tip-up seats were down and there was an extra
Charge of one-and-sixpence and an odd
Scent that reminded him of a trip to Cannes.

As for the fourth taxi, he was alone
Tra-la when he hailed it but the cabby looked
Through him and said: "I can't tra-la well take
So many people, not to speak of the dog."

SIMIC: What are the extra charges? Other people's baggage?

MULDOON: Or his own. In each instance some further version of the self is coming into play. Donald, in particular, was talking about the poem beginning with the mouth, and I think in that sense the poem teaches you how to read it. My reading of "The Taxis" comes out of "I can't tra-la well." It's a version of "I can't bloody well," or "I can't fucking well," or something along those lines. "I can't tra-la well take/So many people, not to speak of the dog." I am always tempted to read this poem from end to beginning, despite the fact that its shape has got to do with building on the notion of multiple personalities and the accrual and accretion of personae on a journey or throughout a life. In a certain sense, he carries the reader's bags also, to get back to Charlie's point. The reader becomes invested in some way in the poem and recognizes something about the situation while hoping for a revelation.

HALL: When we talked about the Hardy, I talked mostly about its mouth sounds, the last line especially. This poem is more the dance than the mouth, the pulse and thrust of limbs, with the "tra-la" making a tricky step. It becomes a movable refrain. The dance surprises us in its flourishes, then concludes with a turn-and-hold that resolves itself. It's *sound* again, but dance or muscle pleasure more than mouth pleasure. It's all iambic in a very disguised way—iambic pentameter. I have looked at it, in a general way, as the accrual of experience but also in particular as the accrual of the erotic life.

MCHUGH: Eventually the cabby knows there's somebody else.

HALL: He probably sees all these women.

MCHUGH: Yes. Freud tells a terrible old Austrian teaser in *Jokes and the Unconscious:* A wife is like an umbrella. Sooner or later one takes a cab.

MULDOON: MacNeice was one of those writers who in Ireland were perceived as being English. In England he was perceived as being Irish. I think he fell between the cracks.

HALL: I have two other MacNeice lines going through my head:

> It's no go the Yogi-Man, it's no go Blavatsky;
> All we want is a bank balance and a bit of skirt in a taxi.

MULDOON: "Bagpipe Music" is a great poem. I think there were probably numerous bits of skirts in taxis.

SIMIC: Let's not forget the dog.

HUNTINGTON: I think the primary meaning of this poem is very much as we've put it, but it's interesting to entertain the idea that he's wrong. Everyone but him seems to know there are six people in the taxi. Perhaps he only *thinks* he's alone.

HALL: That magnificent conflict between "alone" and the many is what makes energy in this poem. I also think the dog is enormously funny. "Not to speak of the dog."

SIMIC: You have the sense it's a large dog, right?

MULDOON: The dog is Cerberus too, and for the first time it strikes me that a rough anagram of *canis*, "dog," occurs in MacNeice's very name. And he would be conscious of this.

HALL: We bet on him being conscious.

MCHUGH: Even of the unspeakable, the music of opportunity, the "tra-la."

HUNTINGTON: When he's alone "tra-la" sounds kind of simple, but by the time we get to "I can't tra-la well take/So many people" it's darkened itself quite a lot.

MCHUGH: By the last stanza the "tra-la" has deserted him and has fled from the first line to the second, into the cabby's territory. By *his* "tra-la" the cabby means something entirely less dreamy than does his passenger. The cabby is some sort of supervisory tollkeeper, the protonotary of sins. There's not only a dog in this poem but a god as well.

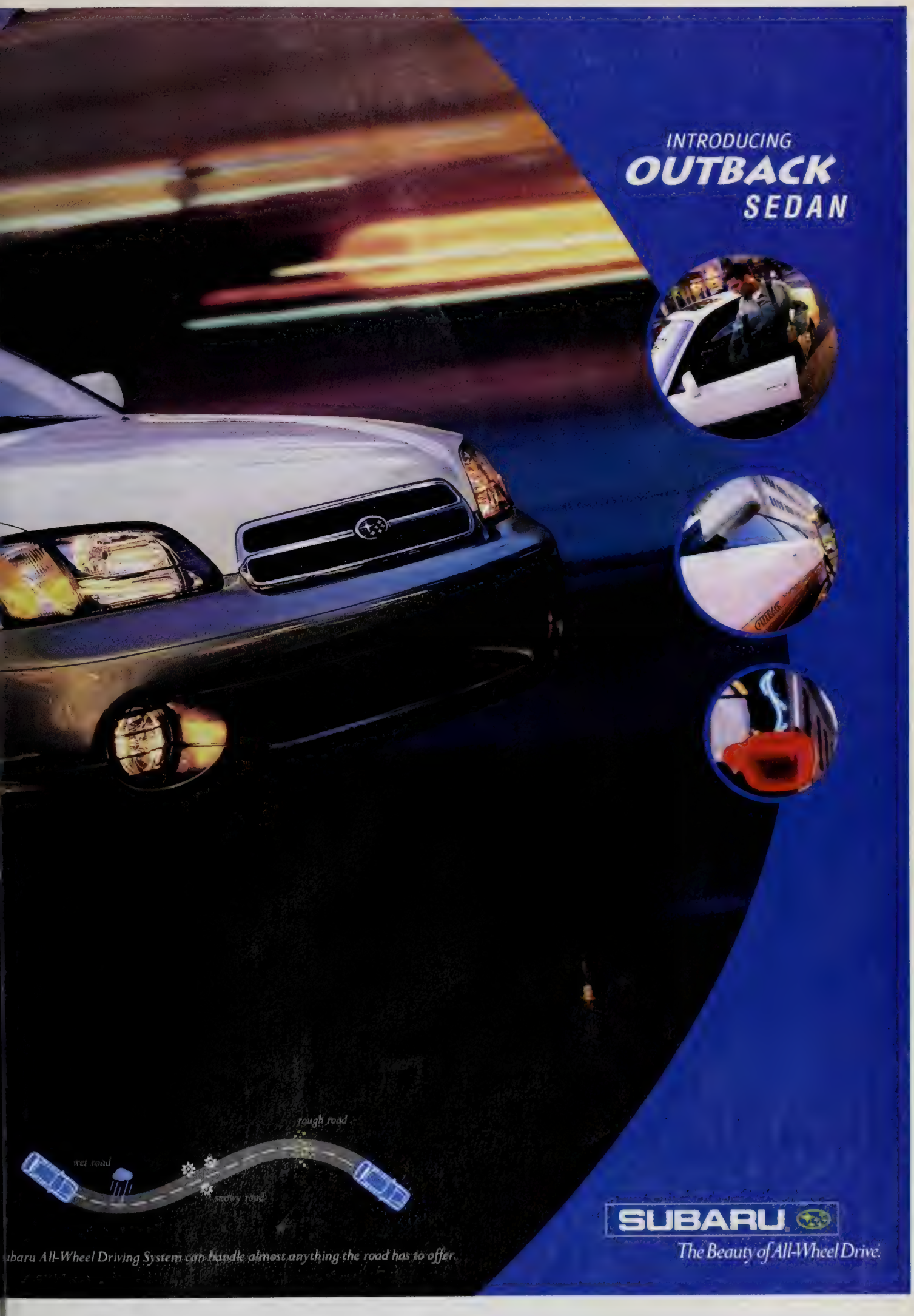
HALL: The "tra-la" is a musical, nonsensical interjection that confirms the poetry of poetry.

MCHUGH: I kept thinking of *taxis* and *logos* in their old Greek senses, as in *taxis de pasa logos*, which is roughly paraphrased as "form is in the very nature of things." In poems in general, the tra-

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always half resists the poetic forms. In this poem, the forms it resists are social forms too. But however much the "tra-la" may hope to be free, nevertheless there's the *taxis*—with its meter running.

HALL: A poem is not an essay, and the music and the body of it are there as counter-sense; they are countering sense.

MULDOON: Yeats wrote, "You can refute Hegel but you cannot refute 'A Song of Sixpence.'"

SIMIC: I was particularly spooked by those "tip-up seats" in the third stanza.

HALL: That's one of the clues to the gender of these extra people.

McHUGH: Ah, the gender doesn't matter. Only the sex.

HUNTINGTON: The dog's a bitch.

McHUGH: Seeing as we are at the Algonquin, did you know that Dorothy Parker never housetrained her dogs?

MULDOON: And why would she? Then she'd have to bring them inside.

iv.
The Meat

MUSIC (1954)
by Frank O'Hara

If I rest for a moment near The Equestrian
pausing for a liver sausage sandwich in the Mayflower Shoppe,
that angel seems to be leading the horse into Bergdorf's
and I am naked as a table cloth, my nerves humming.
Close to the fear of war and the stars which have disappeared.
I have in my hands only 35¢, it's so meaningless to eat!
and gusts of water spray over the basins of leaves
like the hammers of a glass pianoforte. If I seem to you
to have lavender lips under the leaves of the world,
I must tighten my belt.
It's like a locomotive on the march, the season
of distress and clarity
and my door is open to the evenings of midwinter's
lightly falling snow over the newspapers.
Clasp me in your handkerchief like a tear, trumpet
of early afternoon! in the foggy autumn.
As they're putting up the Christmas trees on Park Avenue
I shall see my daydreams walking by with dogs in blankets,
put to some use before all those coloured lights come on!
But no more fountains and no more rain,
and the stores stay open terribly late.

HUNTINGTON: I love Frank O'Hara. He's so funny, and not in a throwaway sense but by tripping you up every time you think you know where you're going. The disordered syntax, the images that seem to promise a depth and yet stop you before you can go further with them. The false connectives. The most mysterious line to me is "If I seem to you/to have lavender lips under the leaves of the world,/I must tighten my belt." That makes complete grammatical sense, but what the hell does it mean? It has a lot of possible meanings within the context of the poem, but when you take it out of context it has strands going in different directions. This could be a reworking of a Wordsworth poem, with a lot of subversive intent. Everything is conditional. It all follows from "If I rest for a moment. . . that angel seems to be leading the horse into Bergdorf's"—if you can accept that, you can accept the rest of the poem. There's an opportunity for fantasy and imagination to enter this very ordinary lunchtime scene and change everything. I also love the way there's such a personal voice in here but no person. It's a deliberate pose, and we know we're invited to play along with it. I think O'Hara loves New York the way people who aren't from New York love New York. It never stops being exotic to him.

HALL: His nerves are always humming. He surprises me every time he makes a turn: "and I am naked as a table cloth."

McHUGH: The trail from the stony equestrian to the liver sausage to the angel and nakedness and those disappeared celestial bodies seems to me a trail from materialism to spirit. There's an urge toward exhaustions of the flesh. If his lips seem lavender, then they aren't purple enough; he cinches his belt a little tigher. He's aiming for some end, and that's dysfunctional in a society of means—a consumer society.

HUNTINGTON: This poem's definitely about consuming: shopping, Bergdorf's, sandwiches, women with dogs in blankets.

SIMIC: Whitman has poems like this, and so do early twentieth-century French poets, in which the speaker moves through the city like a camera. O'Hara mentions places like Bergdorf's and the Mayflower Shoppe the way Apollinaire would name neighborhoods and streets in Paris to give the poem the feel of verisimilitude. Different realities collide in a city. "I could live so many lives here," one says to oneself. O'Hara's poem is a little ode to the transformative powers of the imagination.

HUNTINGTON: In O'Hara there's always that undercurrent of melancholy, and in the poems it comes and it goes. It's not dismissed, it's not solved, and it's not denied, but it doesn't take control. It never takes a dramatic leap into the abyss. It's skating between emotional levels.

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HUNTINGTON: That's partly because the beginning, the middle, and the end are not necessarily in that order in the conventional sense, because the first three, four lines would conventionally be the end of the poem, where there is some kind of resolution and a rocket goes up and "The End" comes up on the screen. And somehow the lack of resolution at the end is, I suppose, what's really of interest to him. "If I rest for a moment": if we did think of that as the end of the poem, the poem is about a momentary stay against confusion, except it's much more interested in the confusion than in the stay. "If I rest for a moment" is basically what any poem is about from line to line—it rests at the end of the line, and it might rest even in a world where no rest is possible, perhaps, where maybe lunch isn't even going to happen.

HUNTINGTON: I think resting is slightly dangerous in this poem. "If I rest," all of these things are going to happen, but if you keep going, then you can stay on the surface of things and you're okay.

SIMIC: Just as you think he's going to take off and make great claims about What I've Seen and What I Understood, he undercuts himself and ends quietly.

HALL: I feel that if I rest I'll sink under the lack of sensation. It's as if there's an absolute necessity to keep moving in order not to sink. He has to keep the ball in the air all the time, and I find it always attractive, that restlessness, nerves humming, that spinning it out of the gun.

McHUGH: And also what makes for that underlying basso continuo that you love, it seems to me, has to do in this poem—and again I really think it's a poem about the consumer and the consumed—with indentation. I do think that the indented lines, the lines with teeth, are the low-lying lines. Semantically, those indented lines are all lines of fatality. And that helps give this poem the register that saves it from mere restlessness, high jinks.

SIMIC: "No more fountains and no more rain,/and the stores stay open terribly late." To use an old jazz term, he's "cooking" now. He can say anything that pops into his head and it'll sound great.

MULDOON: Is it a particularly American phenomenon, this Mayflower Shoppe?

SIMIC: The Mayflower Shoppe was on Park near Fifty-ninth Street. I used to go there. It was just a cheap place to eat. I knew Frank O'Hara in those days. If you had thirty-five cents for lunch your options were limited and you sat over at the fountain—near the Plaza Hotel. And the lavender business, I think, has to do with the trees, the way the sunlight would come down and the way people would look around. I mean this is, to me as a New Yorker, an ex-New Yorker, what is impressive here. There's a real city scene here, a hard-core realism.

HUNTINGTON: The Mayflower Shoppe does not take you to the Mayflower.

HALL: The poem becomes less particular as it goes toward the end, and it seems to me that ten years later or five years later, however long Frank had lived, he would not have gone into "early afternoon! in the foggy autumn. . . no more fountains and no more rain." There is the kind of yearning and melancholy at the end, as opposed to the Mayflower Shoppe and Bergdorf's, that changes the direction of the poem.

SIMIC: There's a wealth of possible meanings. When he mentions the Mayflower Shoppe and Christmas, he knows these words will give rise to certain associations in the reader, but he leaves it at that. This is not a poem with an elaborate subtext of ideas.

HUNTINGTON: The idea that the stores stay open late should be a very nice thing, but it's not.

HALL: It's one of the great surprises in the poem, that "terribly." Such a dumb word, but it comes alive here, and actually a kind of terror comes through.

SIMIC: Well, it's urban solitude. A lone speaker who is going to be alone as the stores stay open terribly late.

HUNTINGTON: The other use of the word "open" in this poem is "my door is open to the evenings of midwinter's/lightly falling snow," and again there's the sense not that things are open and welcoming but that they haven't closed down as they should. There's a feeling of danger.

HALL: I don't understand the connection between "locomotive" and "march." I mean "march" is walking, for God's sake.

McHUGH: That's a misfortune—everybody is allowed one.

HALL: I say there's no wonderful poem without at least one crummy word in it.

McHUGH: Then he had to redeem "march" by putting in "season."

HUNTINGTON: When I find these things in O'Hara, I think I'm way too susceptible to them, because I think, "Oh well, he knew that was a terrible line, and it's hilarious." That's not necessarily a good way to read people.

McHUGH: Well, he redeems it in other ways. That is, if you look, as I can't help doing always, at the first and last lines, it's also a poem about time, which is another way of saying consumability. The relation between "for a moment" and "terribly late" is potent. You would think that the urban was the place of the very fast, but in fact in this poem what O'Hara articulates is the possibility of the urban as a kind of perpetuity, with resting for a moment as the poetic occasion, which is a fleeting occasion.

HALL: I love that line of abstraction—"distress and clarity." If things are clear they are melancholy—"distress and clarity." The essence of lyric poetry is oxymoron.

MULDOON: I'm just thinking about the "lavender lips under the leaves of the world," "tighten my belt."

HUNTINGTON: I'm thinking of O'Hara's comment on form in poetry: you want your pants to be tight enough so everyone will want to go to bed with you.

MULDOON: The "tighten my belt" thing has to do with, "If I'm hungry, if I tighten my belt, I won't feel it." But I agree that there is a sexual aspect running throughout the poem: "the lavender lips," wherever they might be; "under the leaves of the world,/I must tighten my belt"; the locomotive—it sounds like a bad film. And I think that's why he recovers himself insofar as he can on "march."

HALL: Frank O'Hara could not use the word "lavender" without thinking of being gay.

MULDOON: That's the undertow of this, isn't it?

SIMIC: All lyric poems are narcissistic. They are the earliest form of personal ad. They've been saying for more than a thousand years, "I'm a sensitive, vulnerable, misunderstood, barely solvent, lovable little fellow who would like to meet a person of exquisite taste who is not averse to an occasional roll in the hay."

HUNTINGTON: I think it's defended at the same time. He shows some vulnerability like a tease. Perhaps this will get the crowd—I'll show my vulnerable side. But at the same time he's being overt and open and dramatic, he's also mocking that whole movement that seems to lead, at that point in the poem, to the great Romantic statement. And in the syntax of a great Romantic statement, he speaks nonsense: "Clasp me in your handkerchief like a tear, trumpet/of early afternoon!"

SIMIC: Roman poets sometimes do this kind of stuff: you evoke all the clichés of the tradition, all the self-pity, but you're playing off all these things and having a great old time doing it. These are usually poems written by incredibly sophisticated, clever individuals who know the traditions, and every time they look at something, they think of something else, like the trumpet business. Allusions, allusions, allusions.

McHUGH: The voice of continence!

SIMIC: It's that wonderful play between the poet and the tradition. What is amazing is that the end product sounds genuine. He's making it all up, and yet I find myself deeply moved. Great french fries.

McHUGH: Be it noted that all the poets picked red meat.

HALL: Does anyone know a good poet who's a vegetarian?

2.
Salad and Cheeses

TRAVELING THROUGH THE DARK (1962)
by William Stafford

Traveling through the dark I found a deer
dead on the edge of the Wilson River road.
It is usually best to roll them into the canyon:
that road is narrow; to swerve might make more dead.

By glow of the tail-light I stumbled back of the car
and stood by the heap, a doe, a recent killing;
she had stiffened already, almost cold.
I dragged her off; she was large in the belly.

My fingers touching her side brought me the reason—
her side was warm; her fawn lay there waiting,
alive, still, never to be born.
Beside that mountain road I hesitated.

The car aimed ahead its lowered parking lights;
under the hood purred the steady engine.
I stood in the glare of the warm exhaust turning red;
around our group I could hear the wilderness listen.

I thought hard for us all—my only swerving—,
then pushed her over the edge into the river.

SIMIC: This is a poem I've known for about thirty years, and as I was re-reading it I was struck by the speed and matter-of-factness of the narrative. Plain language, no striving to be poetic, a commonplace American experience retold. "Traveling through the dark" has a kind of literary echo—Dantesque, dark night of the soul—but the specificity of what he finds makes you forget the opening phrase. Then it's plain details, but Dante's still there: the narrator finds himself in a kind of hell; he has to make a very difficult decision. Where his art comes in—and I've never thought of Stafford as a very artful poet—is how quickly I'm implicated in this hell, this difficult moral decision. When he's standing over her after he says, after this police report, "she had stiffened already, almost cold./I dragged her off; she was large in the belly./My fingers touching her side brought me the reason," and then I, too, as a reader, am stuck. This is a poem of huge solitude, because every time we make moral decisions we're alone, if we're really honest. And the car turns into a partner there: "lowered parking lights,"

as I embarrassed. Stafford doesn't say what his emotions are, but his car is becoming emotional. And then we get this very strange line: "around our group I could hear the wilderness listen." Group? What group? The car? The fog? The dead deer? This is a kind of cop-out—it's not just me, we're all in this together. We always assume that we must save *all* the innocent, but in truth choices must be made. Stafford was a conscientious objector, so the issue of sacrificing the innocent in order to save others would have been very big for him. And if you know anything about country roads, there are curves, and there could be teenagers coming back from . . .

MULDOON: Prom?

SIMIC: Yes—driving fast, coming around the curve. Or maybe Heather is driving.

McHUGH: I'm the world's best driver.

HUNTINGTON: What's his difficult moral choice?

SIMIC: The other innocent—the prom kids, say—are ideas, but this is the immediate life. I have to kill the one who is here before me, to save the abstract others.

HALL: Is he thinking of performing a cesarean?

HUNTINGTON: I think Don's point is that he really sets up a false idea that there is a choice to be made. Is he going to take this little fawn fetus home in his car?

McHUGH: And there's an anterior problem. As soon as you say "to swerve might make more dead"—which is actually one of the moments I love most, because there are four stresses in a row—then to *stop* might make more dead also. And he stops. He could have killed somebody then.

HUNTINGTON: He's got his lights on.

HALL: I do think that the moral dilemma is, in a sense, trivial. But I agree that it's a hard thing to do, as to kill your own cat is a hard thing to do.

HUNTINGTON: You've killed a cat?

HALL: I haven't done it, actually.

SIMIC: We happen to have a cat here tonight.

McHUGH: And we've just eaten it.

MULDOON: The fact that the "swerve" is repeated there in the "swerving" might easily be problematic, because the "swerving," by the end of the poem, more significantly has to do with the moral dilemma. The moment I make that argument I see the contrary argument, which is that there is a terrifically throwaway aspect to the poem. When one reads "dead on the edge," one has a little swerving, because it's not absolutely certain whether it means that the narrator is on the edge or that the deer is on the edge.

HALL: It's that wonderful repetition of the vowel sounds there: "dead," "edge."

SIMIC: What we need to understand is that you don't have much time to make this decision, because, as Heather pointed out, if you stop the car, someone can come around the curve and kill you, too.

MULDOON: You either push it over the side or what? You shoot it?

HALL: Perform the cesarean?

HUNTINGTON: It's not really a choice. I distrust this poem on a certain level. I have a distrust for "I could hear the wilderness listen," for the certainty of the speaker that Nature, History, Culture, Morality are all overseeing his choice.

SIMIC: I think it's ironic. I don't think he really means it.

HUNTINGTON: "I could hear the wilderness listen." You think that's ironic?

SIMIC: I think it's a description of the great silence that surrounds you in that moment.

HUNTINGTON: But that's not what he said.

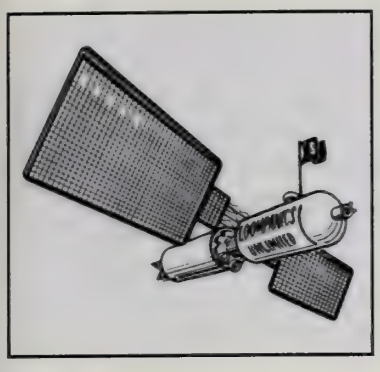
MULDOON: There's an awkwardness throughout that stanza. "Under the hood purred the steady engine" is not exactly a line that's changing the state of poetry. In another context one would say it's absolutely clichéd. "I stood in the glare of the warm exhaust turning red." Hold on, is the exhaust turning red or am I turning red? But what I would say in favor of this knowing awkwardness is that it's constantly forcing one to ask, "What is my reading here of this situation, of this poem, from word to word?" And maybe we've done it a little bit of an injustice by suggesting that there's a choice involved. He doesn't really present it as a choice.

HALL: I think "aimed" is a wonderful word, because it's threatening. What do you aim? You aim a gun, an arrow. A commonplace, yes, but it's the perfect word. It's subtle, the way Stafford is. I talked a moment ago about killing a cat. There's one cat in this poem I'd damn well like to kill. "Purred." Disgusting word. Every good poem has one disgusting word in it. It's a damned dead metaphor.

MULDOON: Except, of course, that there is an argument to be made for Stafford's witting use of the metaphor, being conscious of it as a cliché. I said it myself that in another context it'd be dreadful. But it's possible that this clichéd way of discussing things was simply an attempt to record the event as it happened, which is basically, I think, what he's trying to do. It's a hand-held poem.

HUNTINGTON: Perhaps it's not a poem about making a moral choice but a poem about having to endure the moment.

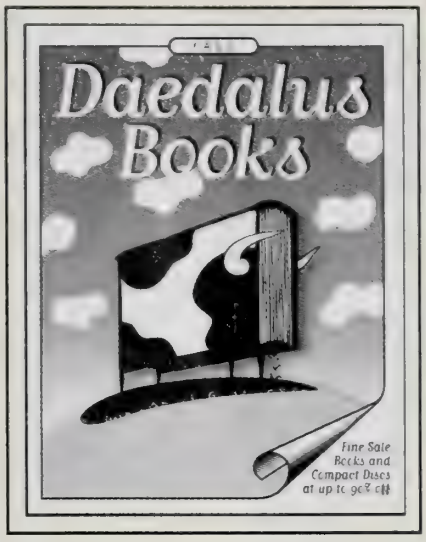
McHUGH: That word "still" keeps being drawn both to "still alive" and to "stillborn," which are opposites. There is a sense in which this poem stays in that static moment—the undecidability of things. There is the unmoving thing dead on the edge, and then there is the edge of the river, which is eternally moving and also dividing. Then there's the



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thing that splits one thing from another, the thing that makes the canyon that it's "best to roll them into."

MULDOON: The poem has gone over the edge, and he's conscious of its having gone over the edge.

MCHUGH: It's a self-criticism in a way.

MULDOON: The arguments for keeping both the "swerving" and the "swerve" is that he has "dead on the edge" in the second line and he comes back to it.

HALL: The comma with "still" bothers me, because if the fetus is still how do you know it's alive? Alive still? How does he know it's alive? I read once from the speech of a Language poet who ridiculed this poem because it was William Stafford saying, "I'm a nice guy. What a nice guy I am."

MULDOON: I don't think that's what he's saying.

SIMIC: Oh, no, no, no, no, no.

HUNTINGTON: That's reductive.

SIMIC: The strength of this poem is that we find ourselves in his shoes. I ask myself, what would I have done in the circumstances? I would have done the same thing, and it would have been very difficult. To me the strength of the poem is that it draws me in. I don't feel any separation.

MCHUGH: The one word you object to, Don, is "purred," and from my point of view what that word calls up is the poetic intention to make another animal worth as much as the doe.

HALL: There's no cat in the word "purred."

MCHUGH: But I don't mean the particular cat any more than he means the particular "purred." What I do mean is that there's another animal claim on the moment.

SIMIC: I think it's an unfortunate choice.

MCHUGH: It's a cutesifying choice in a certain way, but to my mind that's the reason that the indecisiveness is the greater power of the poem.

MULDOON: I think it's infelicitous, but an argument can be made for its infelicity.

HALL: I know, but I think it's a bad argument.

MULDOON: To be devil's advocate, what would be wrong with the poet, the speaker in the poem, coming out and appearing to be a good guy?

MCHUGH: It's rarely loved. I've never liked this poem myself, but one of the perks of this evening's convocation is that I find myself beginning to understand why the poem might so appeal to Charlie.

SIMIC: Why?

MCHUGH: There is a moment of necessary decisiveness not necessarily rooted in the evidences of the world. There are all kinds of evidences there, but decisions must be made. For me, there's this kind of haplessness about happenstance.

SIMIC: What is very true to me about this poem is that it seems like a great moral decision, and that gives you a kind of heroic sense, of making a decision between life and death. But then there's a kind of a horror when you realize it's not a moral decision, that you're just doing the inevitable, which is much worse. If you have a moral decision you can walk away feeling moral.

HALL: I love the quiet cadence of this poem, way behind its iambic pentameter. I find it assuring.

MCHUGH: That's part of Stafford's charm.

HALL: When he's good, which is often. Somebody once asked, "Mr. Stafford, what happens when your poem is not up to your standards?" And he said, "I lower my standards."

VI.
Dessert

THE LAKE ISLE (1916)
by Ezra Pound

O God, O Venus, O Mercury, patron of thieves,
Give me in due time, I beseech you, a little tobacco-shop,
With the little bright boxes
piled up neatly upon the shelves
And the loose fragrant cavendish
and the shag,
And the bright Virginia
loose under the bright glass cases,
And a pair of scales not too greasy,
And the whores dropping in for a word or two in passing,
For a flip word, and to tidy their hair a bit.

O God, O Venus, O Mercury, patron of thieves,
Lend me a little tobacco-shop,
or install me in any profession
Save this damn'd profession of writing,
where one needs one's brains all the time.

MCHUGH: This is the poem of a pedant who dreams of hanging out with the pedestrians, who appear here quite literally as streetwalkers. The brightness he inveighs against in brains is present as a glow in the carnal display cases. The poem he parodies here—Yeats's "The Lake Isle of Innisfree"—is very young Yeats and deserves parody in the sense that a whole genre of Romantic pastoral in English poetry deserved parody at just that moment. But although I chose to bring Pound's poem to dinner, by nature I'm much more given to the poem it makes fun of. Yeats writes:

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:

Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

To "live alone in the bee-loud glade" sounds great to me. Pound writes his poem just after Yeats has declared Romanticism dead. Pound has even stayed at Yeats's place for a while. The parodic impulse is thus rooted partly in affection. But affection is more Yeats's métier than it is Pound's. I am thinking of the last line of Yeats's poem: "I hear it in the deep heart's core." You sense that the "heart" is only an anagrammatical twist away from the "earth," and you can't help feeling a landed love—not just a love of nation but some kind of geophilia. I see Pound's failings written into the triumph of his poem—his raving and pounding away at usury and fools. The "neatly" and the "loose" can't help fighting each other here, and there's a sense in which the neatness of all of that pounding can't help seeking its release in the "loose" and the "shag."

HALL: Pounding, eh?

McHUGH: Yes, yes. I have a secret theory that most poets, at one time or another, write into their poems their own self-criticism. Ezra Pound's anagram is "A proud zen"—his zen is his great stuff, but his pride does him in. He pounds his humor away over time with tendentiousness.

HUNTINGTON: I think what's fond and appreciative about the parody is that there's a sense of personal power in Pound here—he's not contending with Yeats. Pound is great when he's contentious and constrained, but in this poem there's an assuredness that makes him more likable.

McHUGH: You're right. There's a way in which he's Yeats's friend at the moment, and I love that redemption. He's humbling himself, doffing his hat: "O God, O Venus, O Mercury, patron of thieves." The whole poem is about restraint: all I want is "a little tobacco-shop." Even at the end: "Save this damn'd profession of writing,/where one needs one's brains all the time." Brains were the thing Pound thought made poetry. Yeats knows, and says all the time, that the heart is the thing that makes poetry. For me it's a very interesting convocation, that of these two souls.

HALL: I don't think it's parody, though. Maybe I'm just quibbling, but I think it's friendly comic allusion to the Yeats poem. I once asked a young poet, "What do you write?" And she said, "I write God-gimmes. God gimme a house by the side of the road, and so on." This is a God-gimme. It's not parody. Parody is an antithesis within style, using the same style and making it ridiculous, and this does not do that at all. There are a zillion Pounds, and this is one of them. It's the ironic, prosey Pound, where one needs one's brains all the time. Think of all the Pounds there are: the Provençal Pound, the Cathay Pound—which leads to this sarcastic, prosey Pound—and then the Mauberley Pound, which is quite contentious. No one has bequeathed so many styles to twentieth-century poetry as Ezra Pound did. It's extraordinary.

McHUGH: Well, you love the lovely Pounds, and I love the ugly Pounds.

HALL: No, I love this because—well, it is rather beautiful in its little descriptions.

SIMIC: It's a very literary poem. It echoes so many smart-ass Roman poets who found poetry in being anti-poetic. The poet pretends that he'd rather be a mule driver or a toll collector than waste his days writing love poems to some snotty heartless floozy. I've had that thought myself—a nice little pastry shop next to a Catholic girls' school wouldn't be so bad.

McHUGH: "Innisfree" is that same small wish. In that sense, too, the Pound is not so much a parody.

MULDOON: It's a reversal. It's a reversal of thought.

HALL: So it's an homage. He works with point of view: "For a flip word, and to tidy their hair a bit." Who's saying "a bit"? It's the whores who are saying it.

McHUGH: That's right. The power of this poem is that it invests itself in investment, in the teaspoonfuls or the inches—the bits. The formal strategy of the poem is to get more and more mincing about its loves and then burst out in "this damn'd profession of writing,/where one needs one's brains all the time," that grandeur of the thing it claims not to want.

HALL: It's a small poem by Pound, but the pacing of it is just so precise and accurate. It's a poem I keep coming back to.

MULDOON: This must be one of the earliest uses of "flip" in that sense: "flippant."

HALL: Did anybody bring an *OED?*

MULDOON: "Flip" is what this poem's about.

McHUGH: And it's wonderful that it works the way the "bright" does—it looks toward the brains at the end and refuses them. From the first line you can see this trajectory: "O God" to "patron of thieves," that diminuendo. It's a rejoicing in the diminuendo, but it knows that at the end it's going to burst out in the thing it really wished for.

SIMIC: The poem also relates to Frank O'Hara. Forget about nature, he seems to be saying. Urban life is so much more interesting.

HALL: He has perfect pitch for diction: "in due time, I beseech you, . . ."

McHUGH: Yes, and it comes to "all the time" at the end. It starts with "in due time" and it comes to "all the time."

HALL: "Give me," "Lend me," "install me."

McHUGH: Yes—he starts with "give me," and then he goes to "Lend me," and then he says, "At least

...will me in a profession, at least make me work." American poems go in the opposite direction generally. They start from thieves and brains and aim for God and Venus, the Romantic grandeurs.

HALL: I do love the clever, young, funny fellow who wrote this poem. There are so many Pounds to love and so many Pounds to hate.

McHUGH: A ton of Pounds.

SIMIC: I love the poem except for those last two lines. "Save this damn'd profession of writing,/where one needs one's brains all the time." I don't believe it for a minute. Ordinarily, Pound is a genius at recycling literary clichés, but not in these final lines.

McHUGH: But he discovers himself in those last two lines. High reference and low irreverence are the great conjunction in Pound.

HALL: What saves the last two lines for me is the contradiction to the earlier style. There's a fake elevation all the way through—the wonderful description of things, the poetical thing, and then the sarcastic drop in tone. It's a young man's poem.

McHUGH: As is Yeats's. I mean, "Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee/And live alone in the bee-loud glade"—that's beautiful writing, but the poem's pastoralism smacks of the errors of the contemplative ideal, as surely as Pound's refutation of the pastoral smacks of the errors of commerce.

vii.
Digestifs

MULDOON: Here's a question that's come up throughout the course of the evening: How conscious is the writer?

McHUGH: In poets, there is no such thing as poetic intention. Only in scholars.

HALL: It's dangerous. When we talk about Hardy's bracketing of vowels and so on, we are not saying that he went to the blackboard and decided he would write his poem by formula. People can think we are talking about the poet as a crossword-puzzle maker, and that's why I tend to deny it.

McHUGH: I love the argument, Don, which I very much take to heart and have always repeated, that the poet *feels* his way toward the finished-ness of the poem.

MULDOON: But surely the poet must know.

McHUGH: There is a kind of protoknowing.

HUNTINGTON: You say: "This is a really good line, even if I don't know what it means." And then when you finally figure it out, everybody else knew all along.

McHUGH: And it's always nice if someone *says* you know.

HALL: I want to recount a little bit of almost every poem I read. There are many times that I think I have such high notions of what poetry should be that no poem is ever good enough. Henry Moore said that every time he began a sculpture he wanted to be better than Donatello or Michelangelo, and every time he finished he knew he hadn't been. But he had the temperament to say, "Well, maybe the next one."

McHUGH: Oscar Wilde said of tobacco that it's exquisite and it never leaves one satisfied—what more could one want? For me no destination is adequate. What I'm interested in about faith is the requirement that there be no comprehensible end.

HUNTINGTON: It's not that I fiddled until I came across the Final Truth but that I fiddled until I got something I didn't know I was going to get—something surprising and satisfactory.

McHUGH: And beyond one's self, beyond one's ken.

HUNTINGTON: And you leave it alone when you understand that it might not be perfect but there is some serendipity and some grace. Something unexpected has entered in, and you don't know quite what it is, but you know well enough to leave it alone.

MULDOON: Because you've recognized something.

HALL: There always comes a time when I can't see any more to do, and believe me, I do not mean that what I leave alone is necessarily a good poem. I hope to hell it is, but what might ultimately be good about a poem is something that I was not consciously aware of. Still, I did it. Something in me did it. One writes in a largely intuitive and sensual manner and then leaves it alone until perhaps one's friend points out a bloody stupid line.

MULDOON: That's either the very simple or the very complex element—that one's own capacity for self-delusion is major. Everything looks great, somehow, at the time.

HALL: In the act of plunging one's self into writing at the desk, one leaves one's identity behind. And in that sense it's without ego. But of course the attempt to make great art is not an act of humility.

MULDOON: No, but to try to make it involves humility, selflessness before the idea of it being made.

HALL: I'm not sure.

McHUGH: Well, the it is not just an id.

HUNTINGTON: Moses has the ego to go up the mountain and talk to God, but when he goes up there he gets his socks knocked off.

McHUGH: Only God has the ego to mark those words in stone.

HALL: I intend a poem, a line, only insofar as I do not cross it out.

MULDOON: I'm not interested in what the poet intends, I'm only interested in what the poem intends.

SIMIC: I agree. God, in his infinite mercy, made poems far smarter than poets.

McHUGH: We tend the poem. The intending is something else. ■

A BOY'S LIFE

For Matthew Shepard's killers, what does it take to pass as a man?

By JoAnn Wypijewski

"When I think of how fragile men are," a dominatrix once said to me, "I feel so much pity. All that fear, all that self-mutilation, just to be 'men.' When I heard that those guys in Laramie took Matthew Shepard's shoes, I was so creeped out. I mean, shoes are so symbolic—'walk a mile in my shoes' and all that. Why did they take his shoes?"



THE ROMANCE OF THE WEST

From the beginning there was something too awfully iconic about the case. Matthew Shepard—young, small, gay, a college boy in the cowboy town of Laramie, Wyoming, a kid who, his father says, didn't know how to make a fist until he was thirteen—lured out of a bar by two "rednecks" ("trailer trash," "drop-outs," every tabloid term has been applied), hijacked to a lonely spot outside of town, strung up like a scarecrow on a buck fence, bludgeoned beyond recognition, and left to die without his shoes, his ring, his wallet, or the $20 inside it. With that mix of real and fanciful detail, it has been called a trophy killing, a hate crime, a sacrifice. Press crews who had never before and have not since lingered over gruesome murders of homosexuals came out in force, reporting their brush with a bigotry so poisonous it could scarcely be imagined. County Attorney Cal Rerucha says death by injection is the just response. At the site where Shepard was murdered, in a field of prairie grass and sagebrush within eyeshot of suburban houses, a cross has been laid out in pink limestone rocks. In crotches of the killing fence, two stones have been placed; one bears the word "love"; the other, "forgive." The poignancy of those messages has been transmitted out and beyond via television; it is somewhat diminished if one knows that the stones were put there by a journalist, whose article about the murder for *Vanity Fair* was called "The Crucifixion of Matthew Shepard."

Torture is more easily imagined when masked in iconography but no better understood. Perhaps it all will become clear in October, when one of the accused, Aaron McKinney, goes on trial for kidnapping, aggravated robbery, and capital murder (his companion, Russell Henderson, pled guilty on April 5 and avoided death with two consecutive life terms), but it seems unlikely. "The story" passed into myth even before the trials had been set, and at this point fact, rumor, politics, protective cover, and jailhouse braggadocio are so entangled that the truth may be elusive even to the protagonists.

What is known, though somehow elided, is that in the most literal definition of the word, Matthew Shepard was not crucified. His hands were not outstretched, as has been suggested by all manner of media since October 7, 1998, when the twenty-one-year-old University of Wyoming student was discovered near death, but rather tied behind him as if in handcuffs, lashed to a pole four inches off the ground. His head propped on the lowest fence rail, his legs extending out to the east, he was lying almost flat on his back when Deputy Reggie Fluty of the Albany County Sheriff's Department found him at 6:22 P.M., eighteen hours, it's believed, after he was assaulted. It was Shepard's diminutive aspect—Fluty thought he was thirteen—and the horrid condition of his face and head, mangled

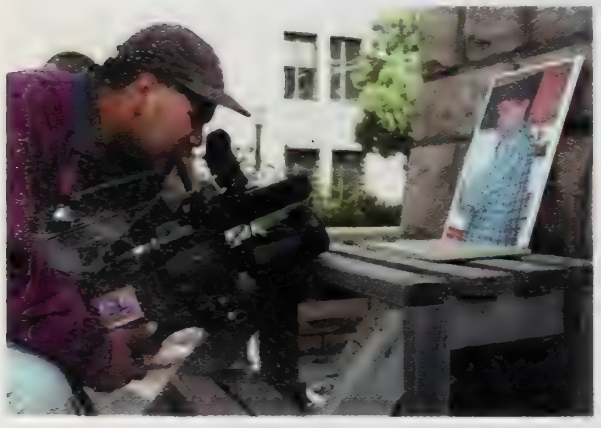
JoAnn Wypijewski is a senior editor at The Nation. *Her last piece for* Harper's Magazine, *"The Secret Sharer," appeared in the July 1998 issue.*

Photograph by G. Rancinan / Sygma

by eighteen blows from a three-pound Smith & Wesson .357 magnum, that most compelled her attention.

Shepard had encountered McKinney and Henderson, both also twenty-one, at the Fireside Bar on October 6. They exchanged words that no one heard, then left the bar and got into a truck belonging to McKinney's father. There Shepard was robbed and hit repeatedly. Out by the fence came the fatal beating. Shepard must have been kicked too, because he was bruised between his legs and elsewhere. Amid the blows he cried, "Please don't." He was left alive but unconscious, as McKinney and Henderson headed for an address they'd got out of him. En route they ran into two local punks out puncturing tires, Emiliano Morales and Jeremy Herrera, and started a fight. McKinney cracked Morales's head open with the same gun he'd used on Shepard, coating the weapon with still more blood. Herrera then whacked McKinney's head with a stick. Police arrived, grabbed Henderson (he and McKinney had run in different directions), and found the truck, the gun, Shepard's shoes and credit card. Police wouldn't put the crimes together until later, so Henderson was cited for interference with a peace officer and released. Henderson then drove to Cheyenne with his girlfriend, Chasity Pasley, and McKinney's girlfriend, Kristen LeAnn Price (both later charged as accessories after the fact), to dispose of his bloody clothes. McKinney, dazed from the gash in his head, stayed home in bed, and Price hid Shepard's wallet in the dirty diaper of her and McKinney's infant son, Cameron. Six days later, on October 12, Shepard died.

A FRIEND SAYS MCKINNEY AND HENDERSON BEGAN A METH BINGE ON OCTOBER 2; WHEN THEY MET MATTHEW SHEPARD, THEY HADN'T SLEPT IN DAYS



THE PRESS DESCENDS ON LARAMIE

Those are the facts as disclosed by court records and McKinney's confession. (He has pleaded not guilty.) In response, the Equality State—which enfranchised women long before anyplace else, which struck sodomy laws from the books in 1977—has disowned McKinney and Henderson as monsters. So has the rest of the country.

And yet McKinney and Henderson appear to be young men of common prejudices, far more devastatingly human than is comfortable to consider. They acquired the gun a few days before the murder in a trade for $100 in methamphetamine—crank, speed, crystal meth—the drug of choice among white rural youth, cheaper than cocaine and more long-lasting, more relentless in its accelerating effects, more widely used in Wyoming, per capita, than in any state in the country. McKinney, says the friend who traded him for it, desired the gun for its badass beauty—eight-inch barrel, fine tooling, "the Dirty Harry thing." The trade occurred while these three fellows and their girlfriends were on a meth binge. Before it was over they would smoke or snort maybe $2,000 worth of the drug. By the time they met Matthew Shepard, says the friend, who saw them that day, McKinney and Henderson were on the fifth day of that binge. They had not slept, he says, since before October 2, payday, when the partying had begun.

Those unreported facts—to the extent that anything can be factually determined in Laramie these days, with everyone involved in the case under a gag order*—may tell more about the crime, more about the everyday life of hate and hurt and heterosexual culture than all the quasi-religious characterizations of Matthew's passion, death, and resurrection as patron saint of hate-crime legislation. It's just possible that Matthew Shepard didn't die because he was gay; he died because Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson are straight.

"If you're telling your feelings, you're kind of a wuss." Brent Jones, a heterosexual who went to high school with McKinney and Henderson, was guiding me through the psychic terrain of a boy's life.

"So what do you do when things hurt?"

"That's why God created whiskey, don't you think? You get drunker than a pig and hope it drains away—or you go home and cry."

"Is that true for most guys, do you think?"

"Yeah, pretty much."

"So secretly you're all wusses, and you know you're wusses, but you can't let anyone know, even though you all know you know."

** The order prohibits lawyers; witnesses; local, state, and federal law-enforcement officers; et al. from discussing the case. McKinney's friend says he was visited by black-suited agents of the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Department shortly after McKinney and Henderson were arrested, and told them this story. Before it passed into his hands, says McKinney's friend, the gun had been stolen, which is consistent with court records. Henderson's grandmother says she noticed nothing unusual about Russell when he visited her on October 5. McKinney's friend and the other drug users, ex-users, or dealers in Laramie spoke with me on condition of anonymity.*

Photograph by Richard Alan Hann

"You could say that."

"Can you talk to girls about this stuff?"

"Unless you know this is the one—like, you're ng to get married, and then you're in so deep you n't help yourself—but if not, if you think she might eak up with you, then no, because she might tell neone, and then it gets around, and then everyone nks you're a wuss. And you don't want people to nk you're a wuss, unless you are a wuss, and then u know you're a wuss, and then it doesn't matter."

Among the weighty files on the proceedings against McKinney and Henderson in the Albany County Courthouse is a curi- s reference. The state had charged, as an "ag- avating factor" in the murder, that "the defen- nt[s] knew or should have known that the victim s suffering from a physical or mental disability." ie court threw this out; Judge Jeffrey Donnell, io presided over Henderson's case, told me he sumed it referred to Shepard's size (five foot o, 105 pounds) but was legally irrelevant what- er its intent. In a sense, it is sociologically ir- evant as well whether the prosecution regard- Shepard as crippled more by sexuality or size, ice by either measure he was, in the vernacular Laramie's straight youth, a wuss.

Wussitude haunts a boy's every move. It must ve haunted Aaron McKinney most of his life. cKinney, too, is a little thing—not as little as epard, but at about five foot six, 145 pounds, doesn't cut a formidable figure. George Markle, io roomed with him after they both dropped t of high school, describes McKinney as hav- g "tiny arms, a tiny, tiny chest, no definition his body." He affected a gangsta style—droopy ns, baggy shirt, Raiders jacket, gold chains, ld on all his fingers. He'd ape hip-hop street k, but "he couldn't get it going if he tried." His ckname was Dopey, both for his oversized ears d for his reputation as a serious drug dealer d user. His shoulder bears a tattoo of the Dis- y character pouring a giant can of beer on his ther's grave, an appropriation of a common per's homage to a fallen brother: "Pour a forty nce on my homey's grave."

The prosecution contends that Shepard was ed out of the bar as if on a sexual promise. unty public defender Wyatt Skaggs says that ther Henderson nor McKinney ever asserted t they came on to Shepard. And in his con- sion, McKinney said Shepard "did not hit on make advances toward" him and Henderson, ording to Sheriff's Detective Sgt. Rob De- e. Perhaps McKinney said something different en he came home that night and wept in the ns of Kristen Price, or perhaps, presuming ho- phobia to be an acceptable alibi, she thought was helping him when she told the press that and Henderson "just wanted to beat [Shepard] up bad enough to teach him a lesson not to come on to straight people." But once at the Albany County Detention Center, McKinney seemed to take up the pose of fag-basher as a point of pride. At least five prisoners awaiting trial or sentencing have asked their lawyers if the things he's said to them might be leveraged to their own advantage. "Being a verry [sic] drunk homofobick [sic] I flipped out and began to pistol whip the fag with my gun," McKinney wrote in a letter to another inmate's wife. He didn't mean to kill Shepard, he wrote; he was turning to leave him, tied to the fence but still conscious, when Matthew "mouthed off to the point that I became angry enough to strike him more with my gun." Even



RUSSELL HENDERSON AND AARON McKINNEY

then, he insists, his attitude toward homosexuals is not particularly venomous and the murder was unintentional.

McKinney's mother was a nurse; she died as a result of a botched operation when Aaron was sixteen. Markle says there was a kind of shrine to her in his house, but Aaron rarely spoke of her, and then only superficially and only when he was high: "He was always happy then. Once, on mushrooms, he said that if he would slide backward down a hill, he could see his mom in heaven." According to probate records, McKinney got $98,268.02 in a settlement of the wrongful-death lawsuit his stepfather brought against the doctors and the hospital. "After he got the money, he had a lot of friends," Markle told me. He bought

ograph by Ed Andrieski / AP/ World Wide Photos

cuts and cracked them up, bought drugs and became an instant figure in town. He was engaged at one point—"she got the drugs, he got the sex; I guess it worked out for a while"—until the girl found a more attractive connection. "He wasn't a babe magnet," Brent Jones says. He might make a good first impression—he's funny, I was told, though no one could quite explain how—but he



THE FIRESIDE BAR

couldn't keep that up. Women were *bitches* and *hos*, just like other men, who might also be called *fag*, *wuss*, *queer*, *sissie*, *girly man*, *woman*, the standard straight-boy arsenal, which McKinney employed indiscriminately, says Markle, "about as much as anybody—you know, joking around—he never mentioned anything about hating gays." He talked about marrying Price, who is eighteen, but, according to more than one person who was acquainted with them, he wasn't faithful and didn't seem even to like her much.

He loves his son, I'm told. And what else? Blank. What did he talk about? Blank. What did he fear? Blank. Who is he? None of the boys can really say. Interior life is unexplored territory, even when it's their own. Exterior life, well, "Actually, when he wasn't high he was kind of a geek," says a guy who's done drugs with him since high school. "He wasn't the sharpest tool in the shed. He always wanted to seem bigger, badder, and tougher than anybody," says Jones, a strongly built fellow who first noticed McKinney when the latter hit him from behind. "He usually didn't pick on anyone bigger than him. He could [illegible] alone, and he couldn't do it toe-to-toe."

Markle says nothing much mattered to McKinney in picking a fight, except that if he started to lose, his friends would honor the rule they had among themselves and come in to save him.

A stock media image of McKinney and Henderson in this tragedy has them counting out quarters and dimes with dirty fingers to buy a pitcher of beer at the Fireside. It is meant to indicate their distance from Shepard, who had clean hands and paid for his Heinekens with bills, and to offer some class perspective on the cheap. *They were poor, they were losers, they lived in trailers, for God's sake!* McKinney, as it happens, didn't live in a trailer, though he had when he was younger—a nice double one with his stepfather, until recently program director at KRQU radio. His natural father is a long-haul truck driver whom he was heard to call "Daddy" only a few years ago, and in Aaron's childhood the family lived on Palomino Drive in the Imperial Heights subdivision. As teenagers he and his friends would drink and get high in the field behind it—"quite the hangout," according to Markle—where McKinney had played as a boy and where he would later leave Shepard to die.

Henderson spent most of his childhood in the warmly appointed ranch house where his grandmother runs a day care and to which his late grandfather would repair after work at the post office. At the time of the murder Russell lived with Pasley, a UW art student, now serving fifteen to twenty-four months, in a trailer court no uglier than most in Laramie and with the same kinds of late-model cars, trucks, and four-wheel-drive vehicles parked outside, the same proportion of people pulling in and out wearing ties or nice coats or everyday workers' clothes, and probably the same type of modest but comfortable interiors as in the ones I visited. No matter, in the monumental condescension of the press, "trailer" always means failure, always connotes "trash," and, however much it's wrapped up in socioculturoeconomico froufrou, always insinuates the same thing: What can you expect from trash?

McKinney and Henderson were workers. At the end of the day they had dirty hands, just like countless working men who head to the bars at quitting time. Dirt is symbolic only if manual labor is, and manual laborers usually find their symbolism elsewhere. The pair had drunk two pitchers of beer at the Library bar before going to the Fireside; no one remembers anything about them at the Library, presumably because they paid in dollars. Maybe they resented a college boy's cle

Photograph by Richard Alan Hann

nds and patent-leather loafers and moneyed nfidence; they wouldn't have been the only ople in town who do, though acquaintances cribe no such sentiments to them. UW is a state hool, the only university in Wyoming. It stands of from the town, but no more than usual. Poll lassroom, and about a fifth of the students are m Laramie, and half say their parents are man- l workers. Shepard, originally from Casper but hooled abroad because his father is in the oil siness, didn't need a job; Pasley, like most stu- nts, did. There's nothing unique here about e injuries of class. In a month at Laramie Val- Roofing, McKinney and Henderson each uld gross around $1,200, roughly $7.50 an hour. ith rent payments of $370 and $340, respec- ely, they were like a lot of people in Laramie, ere the median household income is $26,000, e average monthly rent is $439, and the aver- e family works two jobs, maybe more.

It's said that McKinney squandered the entire ndred grand from his mother's settlement, and his application for a public defender he listed in assets. Before moving to his last address, he d his family briefly lived rent-free in a con- rted indoor stable with no shower, no stove, no rigerator, and, in some rooms, a cloth ceiling d cloth walls. But everyone I spoke with who s openly familiar with him through drugs was ptical about the poverty story. To finance his reation, I was told by the guy tweaking with n in the days before the murder, McKinney uld often be fronted an "eight ball" of meth ree grams, an eighth of an ounce, street price out $300; for him, wholesale, sometimes as low $100), keep two grams for himself, double the ount of the remaining powder by cutting it th vitamin B, sell that, and have $200 and ough crank to keep two people awake for prac- ally a week before he'd even paid a cent. At one int a few years ago, according to a friend now nitored by an ankle bracelet, McKinney was ying an eight ball every few days.

Maybe he miscalculated the costs of his binge that first week in October. A few days before epard would be tied to the fence, McKinney l Henderson walked into the Mini-Mart where orge Markle works, and, in an agitated state, Kinney shouted that Markle owed him $4,000 l that he needed it. Years earlier, Aaron had ught George a used Chevy S-10 low-rider truck. st it was called a gift, then a loan, then no e talked about it much, Markle says, and after friendship broke, he didn't intend to pay any- ng back. That day in the Mini-Mart, Aaron eatened to kill George. He had threatened n once or twice before within the last few eks, always with Henderson silently in tow. rkle told his boss, but neither of them thought much of it. "I'm gonna kill you"—it was just Aaron pretending to be big and bad. It was the way he talked; like when he first came into the Mini-Mart and, seeing George, exclaimed, "Oh, look at that—it's my favorite little bitch, my favorite little whore."

LARAMIE IS AS CONTRADICTORY AS ANYTHING LIBERATED FROM CARICATURE, BUT ITS OUTWARD IDENTITY REMAINS HITCHED TO THE COWBOY

"Things are good enough for me to stay for now," Elam Timothy, a writer, gardener, and handyman, was telling me just before we decided what his pseudonym would be. "I have a relationship, I'm out at work and to as many people as I care to be—but I'm not looking through rose-colored glasses. They're demonizing those boys so they don't have to look at themselves. Yes, this could have happened anywhere, but it didn't. Can we please look at it? That whole 'live and let live' myth. In my mind that boils down to one sentence: If I don't tell you I'm a fag, you won't beat the crap out of me."

"Have you ever been hurt or threatened here?"

"No."

"Do you know anyone who has been?"

"No, but I don't know many gay men either."

"So what is it that's dangerous?"

"What's scary is just hearing people use the word 'faggot' all the time. It makes me feel like a pig at a weenie roast. Danger isn't palpable, but I keep myself in safe pockets. I wouldn't expect to find safety in the Cowboy [bar], but Coal Creek [coffeehouse], yeah, that's safe."



McKINNEY'S CONVERTED STABLE APARTMENT

Laramie was founded on sex and the railroad, in that order. Women created the region's first service industry, and soon after the town's establishment, in 1868, it was associated with some thirty saloons, gambling houses, and brothels. Before any of that, it was associated with death. Around 1817, a French Canadian trapper named Jacques LaRamie was working these parts with his mates. As the story goes, he was young and handsome, and in winter decided to take his beaver traps upstream on what is now either the Big or the Little Laramie River. In spring he failed to return, and Indians told his erstwhile

tograph by Ted Wood

companions that he'd been killed by other natives and stuffed under the ice of a beaver pond. His headstone thus became the plains, a mountain range, two rivers, a fort, a county, a railroad terminal, and, ultimately, the city.

From the foothills of the Laramie Range, the high prairie where the city is situated stretches out, scored by steel tracks and pocked by late-model houses defiant of the city's already shaggy bound-

BEFORE IT BECAME THE HIGHEST STATE TO WHICH STRAIGHT SOCIETY COULD ASPIRE, TOLERANCE WAS WHAT ONE HAD FOR A BAD JOB OR A BAD SMELL

aries. From the right vantage point those are obscured, and all that's in sight is the plain and, to the west, the Snowy Range and what, against reason, seems like infinity. People may swoon about Wyoming's mountains and river valleys, but the power is all in the wind, which has shaped the plains like a pair of enormous hands playing in a sandbox of soft soil and red clay, massaging the earth into fine overlapping layers and fluid hollows. Such subtlety is merely the profit of aeons. Over spring break a student from the university left his truck out in an open field while the winds blew thirty, forty miles an hour; within two weeks, the windward side of the truck had been sandblasted down to bare metal.

Laramie, a pleasant place of liberal inclination and some 27,000 people, is not a railroad town anymore. Freight lines rush through but are marginal to the city's economy. It's not a sex town either, though in the history-charmed buildings abutting the rail yard along 1st Street shopkeepers will happily show off narrow cubicles in an upstairs flat, or a slotted box in a side door, where nighttime ladies deposited their earnings under the madam's gaze and key, their work organized as on a sharecrop, with ledgered debt always exceeding income. Carol Bowers, an archivist at the university's American Heritage Center, recounts a history in which the town elders seesawed between plans for eradication and regulation, usually recognizing the superior benefits of the latter. (In one nineteenth-century city record, all but $20 out of $240 in fines and fees collected one month came from prostitutes.) So the women were harassed, corralled, controlled by periodic raids, punished for any venture into legitimate civic life by threats to their licenses—but tolerated. "The town didn't want them to go away," Bowers says. "The town wanted them to be invisible."

A hundred years later, sex is almost totally in the closet. Only the truck stops off I-80 are [illegible] by mobile squads of women or by men, who also work the rest stops. For every other unspoken desire there's The Fort, a rambling ware house south of town that has survived Ca Rerucha's tireless efforts at suppression. There men, mostly men, stop in (all classes and ten dencies, all night on weekends), nervous and chatty—about a practical joke or a bachelor par ty or the wife—before surveying the aisles, then scuttling to the checkout with a strap-on dildo o a Miss Perfection "port-a-pussy" or a sexual ban quet of videos. A tall, lean man of the muscula outdoors type crouches before a display and come away with the Sauna Action Pump, guarantee to improve an erection beyond any natural ca pacity. Now and then one man is followed fiv minutes later by another, under the red light an into the video booths in back.

In the best of times, sex is playground to th imagination, the place where what *is* need not b what it seems, where strength and weakness swa clothes, and the thin cry, "This is who I am, thi is who I dream of being—don't hurt me" seeks it voice. Laramie happens now to be associate with sex in the worst of times, sex boxed an squared in the unexamined terms of the "natur al" course of things or the unexamined terms c "identity." Many in town are irritated by this as sociation and by all the talk of hate since th murder attracted national attention. McKinne and Henderson, it's said, are "not Laramie." Be fore his death, Shepard was surely "not Laramie either, if only because he took risks that other ga men in town might not have. Laramie, it's saic is not censorious about sex, homo or hetero– *We're just tight-lipped. We don't go there. We believ "live and let live"*—and it's certainly not hatefu just as most of the country is not, just as, perhap even McKinney and Henderson are not. If the all were, everything would be much simpler.

Hatred is like pornography—hard to defin but you know it when you see it. On the mornin before Russell Henderson pleaded guilty, the Re erend Fred Phelps of Topeka, Kansas, brought h flock to the county courthouse with signs decla ing GOD HATES FAGS, FAG GOD=RECTUM, PH 3:19, SAVE THE GERBILS. Phelps cited as his guic for most of this (the Bible has nothing to s about gerbils) such scriptural passages as Levitic 18:22, "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as wi womankind: it *is* abomination." I asked if he al subscribes to Moses' suggestion a bit further on Leviticus 20:13, "If a man also lie with mankin as he lieth with a woman, . . . they shall surely l put to death." He said he thought all civil la should be based on biblical code, but "it's nev going to happen. I'm a pragmatist, a visionary.

"So, if you could, though, you would execu homosexuals?"

"I wouldn't execute them. The governme would execute them."

His only audience were police, press, and a ng of angels—counterprotesters dressed in white bes, their great wings sweeping up before his udy placards. The next day the university's stu- ent newspaper covered the day's events, run- ing in enlarged type the observation of freshman risten Allen that "they have no business using ie Bible verses out of context. God hates the sin ut loves the sinner." On campus, where Phelps ter moved his protest, onlookers expressed dis- ust at his message and invoked "tolerance."

Before it came to signify the highest state to hich straight society could aspire, tolerance was mething one had for a bad job or a bad smell or nightmare relative who visited once a year. In s new guise, tolerance means straight people now of gay men and women, but there is no rec- gnizable gay life, no clubs except a tiny one on ampus, no bars or restaurants or bookstores fly- g the rainbow flag. It means the university might stitute a Matthew Shepard Chair in Civil Lib- rties but has no antidiscrimination policy that ap- lies to homosexuals and no employee benefit olicy that extends to domestic partners.* It means ie public school curriculum does not say teach- rs must "avoid planning curriculum promoting erversion, homosexuality, contraception, promis- uity and abortion as healthy lifestyle choices"— ie policy in Lincoln County, Wyoming—but it so does not include "homosexuality" among vo- abulary terms for sex-ed classes at any grade lev- l and mentions the word only once, for eighth rade, under "Topics to be Discussed . . . particu- rly as they relate to [sexually transmitted dis- ases]." It means a father tells his lesbian daugh- r, "If you have to do this you should do it in the loset," and the mother tells her, "Let's just pre- nd I don't know, okay?" It means her brother ries to be as supportive as he can be—and he is— ut if a man hit on him, he'd beat the shit out of im. He wouldn't beat up someone for another ason, and he thinks that's an accomplishment— nd it is." It means Chasity Pasley's mother won er custody battle over the charge that as a lesbian e was unfit, but her children had to call her rtner "Aunt." It means if you're gay and out nd attend a company party with your boyfriend, e sense in the room is "We know you're gay nd that's okay, but do you have to bring your yfriend?" It means Fred Dahl, the straight head UW's Survey Research Center, accepts the niversity's expression of outrage over Shepard's murder but tells a social work master's candidate named Shannon Bell that her project to poll Wyoming residents on their attitudes toward homosexuality might amount to harassment of straight people, and anyway, "one good rodeo season and Wyoming will be back to normal."

In a graduate-class discussion right after Shepard was found, the high-minded talk was all of tolerance as students challenged a woman who had said she abhorred violence but still. . . homosexuality, it's immoral. Amid the chatter, a cowboy who'd been silent said plainly, "The issue isn't tolerance. We don't need to learn tolerance; we need to learn love."

There may be, as the song goes, a thin line between love and hate, but, however many twists it takes, it is life's defining line. And people like



DOWNTOWN LARAMIE

Phelps are no more responsible for it than pop music is responsible for the murders at Columbine High School. What keeps that line so strong, like strands of the clothesline used to tie Matthew Shepard's wrists, are all the little things of a culture, mostly unnoticed and unremarked, like the way in which the simplest show of affection is a decision about safety, like the way in which a man entwined with a woman is the stuff of everyday commerce but a man expressing vulnerability is equivalent to a quaint notion of virginity—you save it for marriage.

"Masks are no longer as protective as they used to

UW president Philip Dubois told me that the university has ch an antidiscrimination policy, but as of July 1999 sex- l orientation was still not included as a protected catego- in the university's official Equal Employment Opportu- ty/Affirmative Action Statement approved by the trustees. or does it appear in the antidiscrimination provisions for stu- nt admissions. Only these formal statements of policy ve the force of law, says the ACLU's Marv Johnson.

otograph by Ted Wood

[illegible] John Scagliotti, the maker of Before (and now After) Stonewall, *was telling me. "If you're gay, no longer can you hide, because straight people watch TV, and they see how people hide. And also this has changed straight culture, so all the little things you do might make you question whether you're straight, or straight enough. Your own suspicions are suspicious.*

"It gets even more complicated now that all these things that represent maleness are very attractive to both gay and straight men. The downside of this, in a way, is that straight male bonding, and male bonding in general, especially in rural places, is going to be a very confused thing. Already at gyms, eighteen-year-olds don't take showers anymore—or if they do, they take all their things in with them, like modest little girls. You're confused, you're eighteen, and you really like this guy; he's your best buddy, and you'd rather spend all your time with him than with this girl. And you are straight, but now you're worried too."



THE REVEREND FRED PHELPS

The Henderson trial was to have begun on the first Tuesday after Easter. At the Harvest Foursquare full-gospel church that Sunday, people wore name tags and expressed a serene camaraderie. Then they sent the children downstairs to play while the "illustrated sermon"—a dramatization of Christ's Passion and death—took place. It was a stunning performance, beginning with the Jesus character racked with sorrow in the Garden of Gethsemane. The narrator said Jesus suffered like any man. Then he [illegible]id, departing from the script, "Every time I see [illegible]mage of a feminine Jesus, it makes my blood [illegible]. Jesus wasn't a weakling. Jesus was a man. If [illegible]us here today, he could take on any man in this room." Later, when the Jesus character was tied to a post, flogged by two men—soldiers who took "sensual pleasure" in every fall of the whip, the narrator said—"Jesus didn't cry out for mercy . . . Jesus was a man. Jesus was a man's man." The Jesus character writhed in agony. After he stumbled offstage with the cross, and the only sounds were his moans amid the pounding of nails, the narrator described the tender caress of the hands now ripped by sharp iron. In the congregation, men as well as women were moved to weeping. By the end, they were all singing, swaying, proclaiming their weakness before the Lord.

Time was when "a man's man" could mean only one thing, and in the romance of the West, that meant cowboys. In reality, Laramie is as contradictory as anything liberated from caricature, but in symbolism its outward identity remains hitched to the cowboy. Willie's Cowboy Bar anchors one corner downtown; a few feet away is The Rancher. Farther up the same street is the Ranger Lounge and Motel; down another, the legendary Buckhorn Bar, with its mirror scarred by a bullet hole, its motionless zoo of elk and deer and prong-horned antelope, bobcat and beaver and buffalo, a two-headed foal, a twinset of boar. Around the corner stands the Cowboy Saloon with its tableau of locomotives and thunderin horses, lightning storms and lassos, portraits grand old men who'd graced the town in histo (Buffalo Bill Cody) and in dreams (Clint Eas wood). A wall inside the courthouse bears a s houette of a bronco buster, whose figure has also appeared on Wyoming license plates sin 1936. The university's symbol is the rodeo rid its sports teams, the Cowboys and Cowgirls; its p per, the *Branding Iron;* its mascot, Pistol Pe and its recruiting slogan, "It's in our nature."

For the men of Laramie who didn't grow up a ranch riding horses and roping cattle—that most of them—the cowboy cult appears to be natural as the antlers affixed to a female el head hanging on a wall at the Buckhorn. It seems to fit, until you look closer and realize th this buck is actually Bambi's mother butched For those who did grow up to be cowboys, the uals and vestments may be just as they were their fathers and grandfathers—like going to t dance hall on a Saturday night, scrubbed a polished and wearing one's best hat and boots but the meanings have changed, or at least more complicated. In a different setting, t

Photograph by Kevin Moloney / Liaison Ag

aves of men kicking it up to "Cotton Eye Joe" the Cowboy Saloon would be high camp, just the beautiful, guileless cowboy explaining the deo to me, undulating in a pantomime of the t of bull riding, could as easily have been audioning for a spot with The Village People.

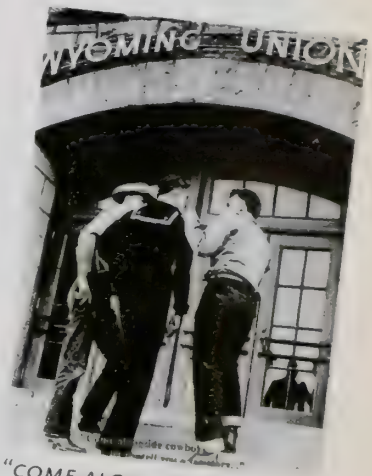
Camp still flies under the radar of straight aramie: heterosexuals didn't wink when the gold- anniversary commemorative booklet of the iversity union featured a sailor flanked by two mesome cowboys, circa the 1940s, with the ption "Come alongside cowboys . . . let me tell u a sea story . . ." But the rodeo rider doesn't need *know* he's a gay icon for such things to tinge his entity, any more than he needs to know he's a estern icon. He grows up on a ranch but takes degree in civil engineering, forsaking the land it not the culture. His children then trade in the eels and pointy toes for something else, or they fect the look but with a suspect authenticity. heir grandfathers' world is still theirs as well, it now only in nostalgia.

The cowboy was not part of Wyoming's conious image until after he had ceased to exist in e form later to be romanticized. In 1889, the govnor's appeals for statehood contained none of the eroic references advertised on the front of the owboy Saloon; instead, he imagined Wyoming a magnet for industrial capital, a dream that uld not be fully abandoned by state planners un- 1997. As detailed by Frieda Knobloch, a UW ofessor of American Studies, the state's history this regard can be read as a continual longing be what it is not: anticipation that vast oil and ineral reserves would issue forth factory towns e those in the East; then advancement of the ild West as a tourist attraction just as the enosure of the open range was complete. Central the latter project were artists from the East—ederic Remington, Owen Wister—whose work as financed or seized upon by local promoters. By 22 the governor was urging citizens to put on ur-gallon hats" for the benefit of Eastern exrience-seekers at the state's Frontier Days celration. In 1939, even as the Department of mmerce and Industry was lobbying investors th forecasts of a manufacturing dawn, its head an was again reminding locals to dress up as wboys to "give our guests what they want."

Perhaps some in Laramie bridled so at the presce of the national press on the Shepard case not ly out of their own defensiveness and justified trage at reporters' arrogance—jamming the or when Henderson's grandmother declined comment, blustering over being barred from the urtroom even though they never reserved seats, staking cottonwoods for oaks—but also beuse of some deep vibrations of that old tradition outside gawking and self-exploitation. A hetosexual lawyer named Tony Lopez chatted with me for a long time but nevertheless let me know, "This is home, and you're an uninvited guest."

Now in front of the small ranches on the edge of Laramie, the third vehicle might be a school bus, which the rancher drives to make $300, $400 a month in the off-season. No small spread survives just on cattle; in fewer than ten years the price of a calf has fallen from well over a dollar to sixty cents a pound. The profit margin for these ranches, never fantastic, according to Brett Moline, the University Agricultural Cooperative Extension educator for Albany County, is now "squeezed so tight one financial mistake can be enough to wipe you out." Most ranch owners are in their late fifties or early sixties; younger ones have either inherited the land or are carrying so much debt from buying that they won't be in business long. Without a lot of money to live on and huge assets all tied up in land, the only way to realize the value of what they have is to sell it—usually to housing developers or to out-of-state gentility, who might pay three times the land's worth to set up what Moline calls their "ranchette."

"JESUS WAS A MAN'S MAN," SAID THE PASSION PLAY NARRATOR. "IF JESUS WAS HERE TODAY, HE COULD TAKE ON ANY MAN IN THIS ROOM"



"COME ALONGSIDE COWBOYS . . ."

Wyoming, with 480,000 people, still has the lowest population density in the country, and where there's space there is a kind of freedom. The state has no income tax, no motorcycle-helmet law, no law against openly carrying a gun, no open-container law on the interstates (meaning you can drink without worry unless you're drunk); there's a seat-belt law, but it's not enforced (police take $5 off the fine for another violation—say, speeding—if you're buckled up); until last year children didn't have to go to school before the age of seven and didn't have to stay in school past the eighth grade; unless there's a weapon involved, Laramie police say they prefer wrestling a suspect to the ground to other kinds of force, and in ten years they have killed only one civilian.

"This is the last frontier," says Laramie police officer Mike Ernst, with a curl in his voice. After the university, the government is the biggest employer, and after the bars, the most striking commercial establishments are bookstores and restaurants and, near UW, the fast-food strip. On the fringes of town rise some enormous houses, and elsewhere some people have no running water or refrigeration, so the soup kitchen substitutes

peanut butter for meat in takeaway lunches in summer. Most, though, live in bungalows in town, trailers and suburban houses a bit farther out. Except for Mountain Cement and the sawmills,

IT'S EASIER TO SEE SHEPARD AS A CHILD-SAINT, BECAUSE TO THINK OF HIM AS A MAN EVOKES A SEXUAL EXPERIENCE NO ONE WANTS TO KNOW

there's little manufacturing work, mostly only retail and service jobs, maid work at the motels, short-order cooking and rig washing out at the truck stops, telemarketing for the hippie kids, and temp work from construction to computers, but none of that pays more than $8 an hour.

McKinney and Henderson were roofers. Construction has a short season in Wyoming, intensifying even normally intense work. An eight-hour day can stretch into ten or twelve hours of fitting a shingle, banging a hammer, fitting and banging and banging bent over, on a grade, on your knees—bang, bang, bang. "I hurt a lot every day. I'm only twenty-one," Brent Jones told me. "My back shouldn't hurt." Jones works for a competing roofing company. "It's not bad if you use a nail gun, but if you use a hammer—eight hours of that and you can't even turn a doorknob . . . You just work through the pain. Sometimes you take a bunch of Advil. You go to bed at night and just pray that when you wake up you don't hurt so much."



ON THE FRINGES OF LARAMIE

Sometimes you drink—"booze, the cause of and answer to all of life's problems," in Jones's crisp phrase. Drinking is a pleasure in its own way in Laramie and a curse in all of the usual ways. Officer Ernst said that if alcohol somehow disappeared, Laramie wouldn't need three quarters of its police force. *The Boomerang*'s daily police blotter is dominated by DUI and "domestic disturbance" calls, and not by coincidence. News of murder is rare, but it's ugly. In the year before Matthew Shepard was killed, fifteen-year-old Daphne Sulk was found naked in the snow, dead from seventeen stab wounds; eight-year-old Kristin Lamb, while away visiting her grandparents in the town of Powell, was kidnapped, raped, and thrown into the garbage in a duffel bag. No one calls those hate crimes. Just as six years ago no one called it a hate crime when the body of a gay UW professor, Steve Heyman, was found dumped by the side of a road in Colorado. Law enforcement and university administrators alike simply forgot the murder. After hearing of Shepard's beating, State Senator Craig Thomas declared, "It's th most violent, barbaric thing I've ever heard happening in Wyoming."

There are 14,869 women in Albany Count according to the 1990 census, and 1,059 ext men. Stefani Farris at the SAFE Project, a have and advocacy center for people who've bee abused or sexually assaulted, said she thougl "people in this town would be spinning if th knew how many times women were beaten by husband or boyfriend." The state recorded 163 i cidents of domestic violence in the county 1997, nine rapes, and ninety-nine aggravated a saults. In its 1997–98 report, though, SAF records 3,958 phone calls, almost all from wo en, reporting battering, stalking, sexual assau and other physical or emotional hurts, almost committed by men. It notes 1,569 face-to-face se sions; 1,118 individuals served; 164 individu sheltered for 2,225 total days. SAFE can't spe much time analyzing perpetrators, Farris e plained. "When you see that women are bei battered, their children are being abused, th pets are being killed, you see a woman who com in and we've seen three other women befo come in who were in the same situation with t same guy—it's hard to have any sympathy f what the man went through."

The court remands some batterers to t ADAM Program at the Southeast Wyoming Me tal Health Center for reeducation, but the projec director, Ed Majors, says that all he can deal wi is behavior. "I can't find a dime for services, [the deep issues are still not addressed. If you chocolate and use Clearasil, you're still going have problems."

Such as?

"When it's fear or hurt, which is typically t primary emotion at work, when you can't s 'I'm scared shitless,' most hurt and fear will co out in the only vehicle men are allowed. It co out crooked. It looks like anger, it's expressed anger, but it isn't."

"Here's a joke for you," an amiable guy offer "What do you get when you play a country song ba ward? You get your car back, you get your dog ba you get your house back, you get your wife back .

"Here's another one: You can have sex wit sheep in Wyoming, just don't tie the shepherd to fence . . . Oh, God, now you're gonna think I'm inbred redneck asshole."

There was no trial for Russell Henderson the end, so what drama his story co arouse had to be fit into one early-A hearing. According to his testimony, Hender had disagreed when McKinney suggested r bing Shepard, but when they all left the l McKinney said drive, and he drove. McKin

Photograph by Ted W

d go past Wal-Mart, and he proceeded; stop the , and he stopped; get the rope, and he got it; his hands, and he tied them. Henderson nev- hit Shepard, he said. "I told him [McKinney] stop hitting him, that I think he's had enough." cKinney, in this account, then hit Henderson, o retreated into the truck. Finally, again Mc- nney said drive, and Henderson drove.

Henderson offered nothing more. How is it t Shepard left the bar with them? Why did ey beat him? Why were they going to 7th eet—supposedly to rob Shepard's house—when lived on 12th? Why did they fight with Morales l Herrera? When Henderson and Pasley and ce drove to Cheyenne to throw away the bloody thes, why didn't they take McKinney and lit- Cameron with them and keep on going? Such estions have to wait for McKinney.

At the hearing Henderson looked like a man mb from combat as Cal Rerucha and Wyatt aggs—men whose names appear on court doc- ents involving Henderson since childhood— nt through the legal motions, as Judy Shepard d the court of Matthew's sweetness and ambi- n, of his mounting achievements, of the hor- of his last days, and the depth of her loss; as nderson's grandmother, Lucy Thompson, the man who raised him, told of his own sweetness l disappointments, of his expectations for his Ds, of the inexplicability of his actions and the adth of her grief. When Russell told the Shep- s, "There is not a moment that goes by that I n't see what happened that night," he spoke as e does of a bad dream half-remembered, hope- s to resurrect the rest. When Mrs. Shepard l him, "At times, I don't think you're worthy n acknowledgment of your existence," he did flinch. In a proceeding marked by sobs and rs suppressed, the only figure who flinched less s Mr. Shepard.

Henderson was transferred to the Wyoming te Penitentiary. The word around town, orig- ting with a prison guard, was that the inmates l held an auction, or perhaps it was a lottery, his services and those of McKinney. Prosecutor ucha says he expects the only time Hender- will leave the pen is as a corpse for burial. On- leath would have been a harsher sentence. e tumbrels are rolling for McKinney.

t should be easier for the state to cast Mc- nney's trial as a contest between good and evil: caricature Shepard as a child-saint, because hink of him as a man evokes a sexual experi- e no one wants to know; and to caricature Kinney as a devil-man, because to think of him aramie's, or anyone's, child sits harder on the science. In this respect, Henderson's was the re difficult case, because from the beginning he erged as that stock character in the country's n violent drama—a quiet boy, kept to him- self, "the most American kid you can get," in the words of his landlord.

Judy Shepard told *Vanity Fair*, "I believe there are people who have no souls," and others have told me they believe some people are just "born bad," but Russell Henderson was born like any child of a young mother in bad trouble—prema- ture, sickly, poisoned by the alcohol in her blood. Cindy Dixon was nineteen when she had Russell, and, as Wyatt Skaggs remembers, "she was the sweetest, most considerate, loving person when she wasn't drinking; when she was drinking, she was abusive, obnoxious, every single adjective you could think of for an intoxicated person." On January 3, 1999, at forty, she was found dead in the snow about eight and a half miles from town. Ear- ly reports had her somehow losing her way after leaving the bars on foot, in light clothing, on a night so frigid and blustery that Elam Timothy and his boyfriend turned back while driving on the road where she'd be found. The death was later de- termined a homicide: Dixon was bruised, her un- derwear torn, there was evidence of semen; and now a Florida man, Dennis Menefee, is on trial for her murder. Somehow the fact that Russell lost a mother—and Mrs. Thompson, a daughter— through another murder, a sex crime, never count- ed for much in all the stories about Laramie.



INSIDE THE FIRESIDE BAR

"I don't like my place in this town," Hender- son said to an old girlfriend, Shaundra Arcuby, not long before Shepard's murder. "Part of it," she said, "had to do with his mom and what people said about her. The thing about this town is that who you are is kind of set in stone. It's not that easy to remake yourself."

Shaundra fell in love with Russell when they both were in high school (he a sophomore, she a senior) and worked at Taco Bell. She was confused about an old boyfriend, who was bullying her to

ograph by Chris Anderson / Aurora

get back with him. "Do what makes you happy," Russell said. "That was the winning point with me," she recalled. "Someone's giving me an ultimatum and someone's telling me to be happy—there was no question what I'd choose." They'd hang out, watch movies; he always came to the door, spoke to her mom. He made her tapes—Pearl Jam, The Violent Femmes. They went to her

THE PROBLEM WITH HATE-CRIME LAWS IS THAT GAY PEOPLE ARE RECOGNIZED ONLY IN SUFFERING AND STRAIGHT CULTURE REMAINS UNEXAMINED

prom; friends thought they'd get married. Then she dumped him: "I was the first female in my family to graduate high school and not be pregnant," she said. "I just couldn't think of marriage. It scared me, so I ran away." Not long after, she'd get married, disastrously, and then divorce.

Most of the guys who knew McKinney in high school didn't know Henderson—"he was a little too good." He collected comic books and baseball cards, loved scouting, even beyond making Eagle Scout. He pumped gas, fiddled with an old Corvair. He played soccer—the "fag sport," as it's known. He had fantasies of being a doctor but was headed for Wyoming Technical Institute for mechanics until he was told, days before he was to celebrate high school graduation, that he wouldn't get a diploma because he'd missed a paper. He was prayerful in the Mormon tradition. About homosexuality, Lucy Thompson says, he believed "everyone has a right to their own free agency." Until he was fifteen he helped Lucy with the dialysis machine that kept his beloved grandfather alive, and watched as his life drained away. Bill Thompson never let on how he suffered. Neither did Russell. "He never ever talked about the hurt that was inside him," Lucy told me. "He'd say, 'That's okay, Grandma; don't worry, Grandma.'" She told the court, "When my husband and his grandfather passed away, so did a part of Russell."

Brent Jones remembers Henderson as "kind of an asshole," less of a troublemaker than McKinney but "his elevator didn't go to the top floor either." He had some juvie trouble. A judge once told Cindy Dixon she'd have to choose between Russell and her boyfriend. She was not in good shape that day and said, "Oh, that's easy," with an approving gesture toward the boyfriend.

It's said that over the past forty years Lucy Thompson has raised half the kids in Laramie. She is a woman of profound serenity. Russell was in his grandparents' care from his birth to the age of five, when they thought he should be in the nuclear family. Cindy was married then, with two little girls. Three and a half years later the Thomp sons again got custody. In the intervening perio Russell took a physical and emotional batterin from his mother's partners. Years of police repor follow Cindy's own familiarity with violenc Once Russell told his grandparents about a ha rowing beating he had watched his mother endur Why didn't he call them? "When that happen I just freeze, and when I do something about it, just get retaliation," Lucy remembers him sayin

The standard description of Henderson is th "he was a follower." At work, though, he was t leader, says Joe Lemus of Laramie Valley Roofin Both boys are nice, friendly people. Sure, they talk *fag*, *wuss*, *sissy*, Lemus says. "In grade scho you call people *fat*, *stupid*. When you get old this is just what you say; it's like calling someon a retard." Everybody does it, even college ki (one of whom scratched KILL THEM under the t tle of the UW library's copy of *How to Make t World a Better Place for Gays and Lesbians*), eve the straight-boy cub reporter at *The Boomera* who helped cover the case before becoming an i tern at *Rolling Stone*. According to police a counts, when McKinney and Henderson came u on Morales and Herrera, it was Henderson wh called them "fucking bitches." "Why the fu are you calling us bitches?" Morales answere and McKinney hit him from behind. Police Co mander David O'Malley testified that in que tioning Henderson about the fight, Officer Fli Waters said if police found someone with a b let they'd have more to talk to him about: "M Henderson laughed and said, 'I guarantee th you wouldn't find anybody with a bullet in them

Lemus says that in the period leading up the murder Henderson was downhearted; Chas had cheated on him. McKinney was excited; h just bought a gun. They were working betwe eight and eleven hours a day. Henderson had cently turned twenty-one and was eager to go a bar. It was new for him, though I'm told he w not a stranger to drink and had his own sour for crank as well. When he was younger, a d tor had told him that because of the circu stances of his birth, alcohol (and presumal drugs) could affect him very badly. His grand ther asked Russell if he understood what t meant. "Deeper than you think," he answe gesturing to his mother's photograph.

"Certain things make sense only if you're ou your mind," a knowing woman told me. "On m you would know what you were doing, but in that ment it doesn't matter. We used to have the rank most foul sex when we were on dope. Men don't erections too well on speed, so already that's bad, then there's the two-hour blow job, because u you start something, you just have to finish, o you can't finish because he won't get an erection

won't have an orgasm, and you'd really like to stop, ut you just can't."

Maybe Wyatt Skaggs is right when he says "drugs were not involved in this case," or maybe he's just being lawyerly. Rumors ound about what set that night in motion—love iangles, revenge, a mob-style debt collection. eality is usually less baroque. Matthew Shepard noked pot and had at least tried methampheta-ine; McKinney dealt drugs and used them with enderson; they all had a mutual acquaintance ho regularly carries a police scanner, whose igned ignorance about drugs could be matched nly by an extraterrestrial, and whom every drug er I met recognizes as a link in the trade. Those ings are not rumors but maybe just coincidence. nd maybe Skaggs is more right when he adds, That's not to say [meth] couldn't have been used metime before; you don't need to take it that ght to feel the effects." McKinney and Hen-erson never were tested for drugs, but then po-e say that one of the beauties of meth for the user that there's no sure test for it.

History is one long quest for relief through emicals, more powerful substitutes for endor-hins, released when you cry so hard you run out tears. But it is difficult to imagine a more un-petizing recipe for relief than methampheta-ine. It is made from ephedrine or pseudo-hedrine, extracted from over-the-counter cold nd asthma medicines, then cooked up with any a variety of agents—lye, battery acid, iodine, ntern fuel, antifreeze. A former user says it tastes e fake crab "sea legs" marinated in cat piss, t its medicinal benefits, especially for its large nstituency of construction workers, is that othing hurts anymore; you're wide awake; you em to accomplish what you set out to accom-ish. Only later do you understand that you've en up for two days"—and that, depending on w much you smoke or snort or shoot, eupho-morphs into hallucination, which morphs in-paranoia, which morphs into God knows what. According to the state's Methamphetamine itiative, Wyoming's eighth-graders use meth at higher rate than twelfth-graders nationwide, d among juvenile offenders in its correctional stitutions in 1997 at least 50 percent had a his-ry of meth use. Albany County is not one of the te's top three target zones, but drug sources in ramie volunteer that meth is everywhere. Maybe cKinney is lying and maybe he's not when he ys Shepard "mouthed off," prompting him to e fatal frenzy of violence, but one crank-head ld me that he once almost wasted someone just r saying hi—"You're so paranoid, you think, Why is he saying hi?' Does he know something? he a cop?" "And maybe all the meth users I met ere lying or wrong or putting me on in saying they immediately took the murder for a meth crime because it was all too stupid and, except for one heinous detail, all too recognizable.

None of this is a defense for what happened, but it all complicates the singular picture of hate crime. Why did they kill him? "That was the meth talking," I was told. But why did they pick on him to begin with? "Because he was a fag." So why do you think they didn't kill him because he was gay? "They were regular guys, and then they beat up the Mexicans." And, anyway, "what kind of a man beats the shit out of a wussy guy?"

Ask around for impressions of Matthew Shepard and you find as many characters as there are speakers: a charming boy, always smiling and happy; a suicidal depressive who mixed street drugs and alcohol with Effexor and Klonopin; a good listener who treated everyone with respect; "a pompous, arrogant little dick" who condescended to those who served him; a bright kid who wanted to change the world; a kid you'd swear was mentally defective; a generous person; a flasher of money; a good tipper; a lousy tipper; a sexual seeker; a naïf; a man freaked by his HIV status or at peace with it; a "counterphobic" who courted risk rather than live in fear; a boy who, his father said, "liked to compete against himself," entering races he couldn't win and swimming contests he'd finish "dead last by the length of the pool" just to prove he could do it; a boy never quite sure of his father's approval; a gay man; a faggot; a human being. Any one of those Matthew Shepards could have been set up for death; the only constant is that he'd still be dead, and McKinney and Henderson would still be responsible. Gay men are killed horribly everywhere in this country, more than thirty just since Shepard—one of them, in Richmond, Virginia, beheaded. Gay and straight, male and female, some 40,000 individuals have been murdered since Shepard; the only constant is that they are dead, and that most of their killers are straight and most of them are men.



EMILIANO MORALES

Among those who advocate hate-crime laws, it's always the sexuality of the victim that's front and center, not the sexuality of the criminal or the everyday, undifferentiated violence he took to extremity. Among the tolerance peddlers, it's always the "lifestyle" of the gay guy, never the "lifestyle" of the straight guy or the culture of compulsory heterosexuality. Even among those who argue that the victim's sexuality is irrelevant—that Shepard died just because a robbery went bad or just because McKinney and Henderson were crazy on crank—the suggestion is that the crime is somehow less awful once ho-

tograph by Ed Andrieski / AP/ Wide World Photos

mophobia is removed, and what is brewing inside the boys bears less attention. "The news has already taken this up and blew it totally out of proportion because it involved a homosexual," McKinney's father told the press. Eighteen blows with a .357 magnum—murder happens.

A few years ago during an exercise at Laramie High School, students were asked to list the five best things about being a boy or a girl. The boys' list noted no breasts, no period, no pregnancy, and one other scourge of femininity that the guidance counselor who told me this story had been too stunned to remember. I was at the school, flipping through yearbooks, noticing that the class of '96, Henderson's class, had identified its number two "pet peeve" as "skinny wimps who complain about jocks." The previous day, Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris had killed their classmates in Littleton, Colorado, 140 miles away. Through that crime ran a thread from every high-profile school shooting over the past two years. Springfield, Pearl, Paducah, Jonesboro, Conyers—every one of those boy murderers or would-be murderers had been taunted as a wuss, a fag, a loser, or had been rejected by a girl, or was lonely and withdrawn, or had written harrowing stories of mayhem and slaying. Two of them had killed their pets. All of it, like the meanness of the jocks some of them despised, was regarded as just boy play—Oh, Fluffy's in the trash can? Boys will be boys. And by the logic of the culture, it was just boy play, like McKinney's brawling, like Henderson's admonition out by the fence, "I think he's had enough." Only when it turned to murder did it register, and for that there's punishment, prison, the death penalty, more violence.



THE FENCE

For any of these boys—for any boy, for that matter—what does it take to pass as a man? At Henderson's hearing, Judy Shepard memorialized the number of languages Matthew spoke, the friends he'd had and books he'd read, the countries he'd traveled, the promise life held. As she spoke the courtroom heaved with her agony. But in the story writ large, it's almost as if Matthew's death counted for more than it might have if he had been just a wuss, a fag, her son; if he had been found in a ramble, with his pants down, with a trick (as have so many murdered gay men, whose cases have never been exploited by presidents to win points or by big, polite gay groups to raise dollars); if he had been killed simply because he was tiny and weak; if anything about the murder or its aftermath had forced a consideration of sex and freedom, instead of only tolerance and hate.

Since Shepard's death, the talk is all of hate crime laws. But as Rita Addessa of the Lesbian an Gay Task Force in Philadelphia, who nevertheles supports such laws, admits, they "will have n impact whatsoever on addressing the causes c anti-gay violence." They matter only to the dea or the maimed, for even if Wyoming were to be come the twenty-third state with a hate-crim law including anti-gay violence, and even if federal law were to pass, the little Matt and Ma ty Shepards of America would still grow up learn ing their place, because for them in all but eleve states discrimination is legal, and everywhe equality under the law is myth. It's said that hat crime laws symbolize a so ciety's values. If that true, it means gay peopl are recognized only in su fering, and straight peop are off the hook. It mean Shepard may stand fo every homosexual, bu McKinney and Hende son stand just for then selves. It means nothin for life and, because its only practical function to stiffen penalties, everything for death.

In her interview with *Vanity Fair*, Judy Shep ard said she thought that her son would probab approve of the death penalty if he could know th case, if it had been his friend and not himse beaten at the fence. And in her conclusion at th hearing, she told Henderson, "My hopes for yo are simple. I hope you never experience a day night without feeling the terror, the humiliatio the helplessness, the hopelessness my son fe that night." Not just that night. As a gay man America, Shepard must have sensed all of tho things just around the corner, and not just in v olence, not just in blood. Looking back on He derson's biography, and on McKinney's, I won der if, in different measure, they aren't already to well acquainted with such things; if perhaps th injuries of terror and humiliation aren't alrea too well spread around in this season of punis ment and revenge.

"If a guy at a bar made some kind of overture you, what would you do?"

"It depends on who's around. If I'm with a girl, I be worried about what she thinks, because, as I sa everything a man does is in some way connected a woman, whether he wants to admit it or not. D look queer? Will she tell other girls?

"If my friends were around and they'd laugh a shit, I might have to threaten him.

"If I'm alone and he just wants to buy me a bee then okay, I'm straight, you're gay—hey, you can b me a beer."

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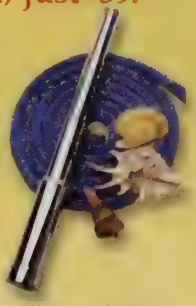
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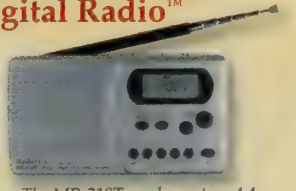


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I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD CANNOT READ

How American high school students learn to loathe literature

By Francine Prose

Books discussed in this essay include:

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou. Bantam Books, 1983. 256 pages. $5.50.
To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee. Warner Books, 1988. 288 pages. $4.99.
Teaching Values Through Teaching Literature by Margaret Dodson. ERIC/EDINFO Press, 1993. 168 pages. $16.95.
Teaching the Novel by Becky Alano. ERIC/EDINFO Press, 1989. 88 pages. $14.95.
Teaching Literature by Women Authors by Carolyn Smith McGowen. ERIC/EDINFO Press, 1993. 224 pages. $16.95.

Like most parents who have, against all odds, preserved a lively and still evolving passion for good books, I find myself, each September, increasingly appalled by the dismal lists of texts that my sons are doomed to waste a school year reading. What I get as compensation is a measure of insight into why our society has come to admire Montel Williams and Ricki Lake so much more than Dante and Homer. Given the dreariness with which literature is taught in many American classrooms, it seems miraculous that any sentient teenager would view reading as a source of pleasure. Traditionally, the love of reading has been born and nurtured in high school English class—the last time many students will find themselves in a roomful of people who have all read the same text and are, in theory, prepared to discuss it. High school—even more than college—is where literary tastes and allegiances are formed; what we read in adolescence is imprinted on our brains as the dreamy notions of childhood crystallize into hard data.

The intense loyalty adults harbor for books first encountered in youth is one probable reason for the otherwise baffling longevity of vintage mediocre novels, books that teachers may themselves have read in adolescence; it is also the most plausible explanation for the peculiar Modern Library list of the "100 Best Novels of the 20th Century," a roster dominated by robust survivors from the tenth-grade syllabus. *Darkness at Noon*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Brave New World*, and *The Studs Lonigan Trilogy* all speak, in various ways, to the vestigial teenage psyches of men of a certain age. The parallel list drawn up by students (younger, more of them female) in the Radcliffe Publishing Course reflects the equally romant and tacky tastes (*Gone with the Win The Fountainhead*) of a later gener tion of adolescent girls.

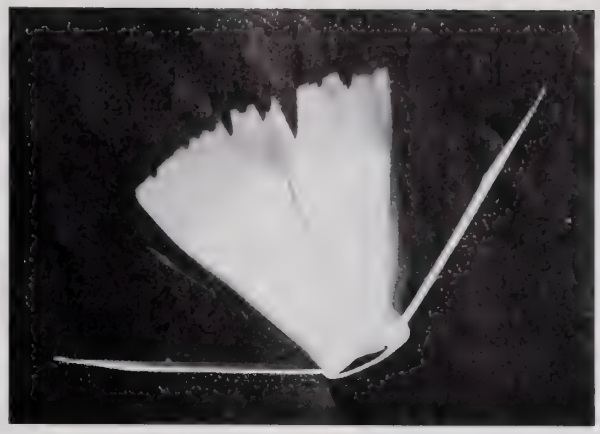
Given the fact that these early e counters with literature leave such i delible impressions, it would seem do bly important to make sure that hi school students are actually readi literature. Yet every opportunity instill adolescents with a lifelong affi ity for narrative, for the ways in whi the vision of an artist can percola through an idiosyncratic use of la guage, and for the supple gymnasti of a mind that exercises the mind the reader is being squandered on re imens of trash and semi-trash, taug for reasons that have nothing to with how well a book is written. fact, less and less attention is bei paid to what has been written, l alone how; it's become a rarity for teacher to suggest that a book mig be a work of art composed of wor and sentences, or that the choice these words and sentences can infor and delight us. We hear that mo books are being bought and sold th ever before, yet no one, as far a know, is arguing that we are produ ing and becoming a nation of av readers of serious literature.

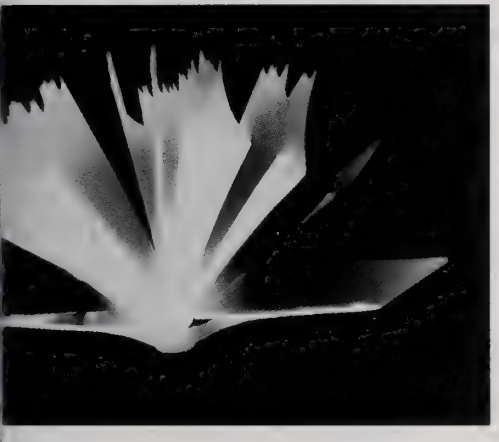
Much has been made of the le minglike fervor with which our u versities have rushed to sacrifice co plexity for diversity; for decades no critics have decried our plummeti scholastic standards and mourned t death of cultural literacy without h ing done one appreciable thing to ra the educational bar or revive our mo bund culture. Meanwhile, scant not has been paid, except by exasperat parents, to the missed opportunit and misinformation that form the t curriculum of so many high sch English classes.

My own two sons, now twenty-o and seventeen, have read (in pub and private schools) Shakespea Hawthorne, and Melville. But they also slogged repeatedly through t manipulative melodramas of Al Walker and Maya Angelou, throu sentimental, middlebrow favorites (

Francine Prose's [illegible] of a Woman Ink: An [illegible] Really Inferior?" appeared in the June 1998 issue of Harper's Magazine. *Her new novel,* Blue Angel, *will be published in April*

ll a Mockingbird and *A Separate ace)*, the weaker novels of John einbeck, the fantasies of Ray adbury. My older son spent the st several weeks of sophomore glish discussing the class's sum- er assignment, *Ordinary People*, veeper and former bestseller by dith Guest about a "dysfunc- nal" family recovering from a enage son's suicide attempt. Neither has heard a teacher ggest that he read Kafka, ough one might suppose that enagers might enjoy the transfor- ative science-fiction aspects of *The etamorphosis*, a story about a young an so alienated from *his* "dysfunc- nal" family that he turns—embar- ssingly for them—into a giant bee- . No instructor has ever asked my





hs to read Alice Munro, who writes lucidly and beautifully about the persensitivity that makes adoles- nce a hell.

n the hope of finding out that my children and my friends' children were exceptionally unfortunate, I ently collected eighty or reading lists from high nools throughout the ntry. Because of how erworked teachers are, w hard to reach during school day, as well as odd, paranoid defen- eness that pervades so ny schools, obtaining se documents seemed to quire more time and gged perseverance than taining one's FBI sur- llance files—and what I came away with may not be a scientifically accurate survey. Such surveys have been done by the National Council of Teachers of English (published in the 1993 NCTE research report, *Literature in the Secondary Schools)*, with results that both underline and fail to reflect what I found.

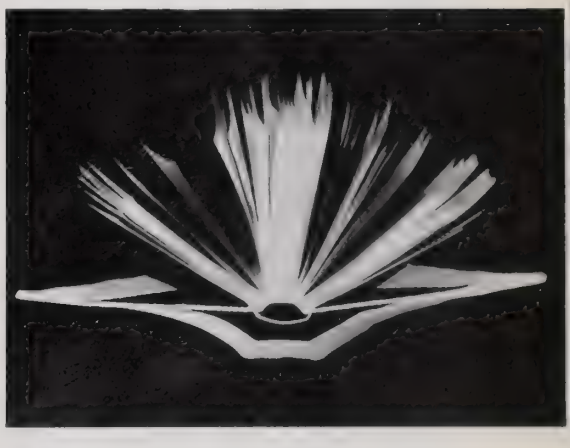
What emerges from these photocopied pages distributed in public, private, and Catholic schools as well as in military academies, in Manhattan and Denver, in rural Oregon and urban Missouri, is a numbing sameness, unaffected by geography, region, or community size. Nearly every list contains at least one of Shakespeare's plays. Indeed, in the NCTE report, Shakespeare (followed closely by John Steinbeck) tops the rosters of "Ten Most Frequently Required Authors of Book-Length Works, Grades 9–12."

Yet in other genres—fiction and memoir—the news is far more upsetting. On the lists sampled, Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* are among the titles that appear most often, a grisly fact that in itself should inspire us to examine the works that dominate our children's literary education.



First published in 1970, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* is what we have since learned to recognize as a "survivor" memoir, a first-person narrative of victimization and recovery. Angelou transports us to her childhood in segregated Arkansas, where she was raised by her grandmother and was mostly content, despite the unpleasantness of her white neighbors, until, after a move to St. Louis, eight-year-old Maya was raped by her mother's boyfriend.

One can see why this memoir might appeal to the lazy or uninspired teacher, who can conduct the class as if the students were the studio audience for Angelou's guest appearance on *Oprah*. The author's frequently vented distrust of white society might rouse even the most sluggish or understandably disaffected ninth-graders to join a discussion of racism; her victory over poverty and abuse can be used to address what one fan, in a customer book review on Amazon.com, celebrated as "transcending that pain, drawing from it deeper levels of meaning about being truly human and truly alive." Many chapters end with sententious epigrams virtually begging to serve as texts for sophomoric rumination on such questions as: What does Angelou mean when she writes, "If growing up is painful for the Southern Black girl, being aware of her displacement is rust on the razor that threatens the throat"?



But much more terrifying than the prospect of Angelou's pieties being dissected for their deeper meaning is

ographs by Alison Rossiter, from the series *The Stacks*, 1997 / Yancey Richardson Gallery, New York

[illegible] her language being used [illegible] model of "poetic" prose style. Most of the terrible mysteries that [illegible] teachers of college freshman composition can be solved simply by looking at Angelou's writing. Who told students to combine a dozen mixed metaphors in one paragraph? Consider a typical passage from Angelou's opaque prose: "Weekdays revolved on a sameness wheel. They turned into themselves so steadily and inevitably that each seemed to be the original of yesterday's rough draft. Saturdays, however, always broke the mold and dared to be different." Where do students learn to write stale, inaccurate similes? "The man's dead words fell like bricks around the auditorium and too many settled in my belly." Who seriously believes that murky, turgid, convoluted language of this sort constitutes good writing? "Youth and social approval allied themselves with me and we trammeled memories of slights and insults. The wind of our swift passage remodeled my features. Lost tears were pounded to mud and then to dust. Years of withdrawal were brushed aside and left behind, as hanging ropes of parasitic moss."

To hold up this book as a paradigm of memoir, of thought—of literature—is akin to inviting doctors convicted of malpractice to instruct our medical students. If we want to use Angelou's work to educate our kids, let's invite them to parse her language, sentence by sentence; ask them precisely what it means and ask why one would bother obscuring ideas that could be expressed so much more simply and felicitously.

Narrated affably enough by a nine-year-old girl named Scout, *To Kill a Mockingbird* is the perennially beloved and treacly account of growing up in a small Southern town during the Depression. Its hero is Scout's father, the saintly Atticus Finch, a lawyer who represents everything we cherish about justice and democracy and the American Way, and who defends a black man falsely accused of rape by a poor white woman. The novel has a shadow hero, too, the descriptively named Boo Radley, a gooney recluse who becomes the occasion for yet another lesson in tolerance and compassion.

Such summary reduces the book, but not by all that much. To read the novel is, for most, an exercise in wish-fulfillment and self-congratulation, a chance to consider thorny issues of race and prejudice from a safe distance and with the comfortable certainty that the reader would *never* harbor the racist attitudes espoused by the lowlifes in the novel. We (the readers) are Scout, her childhood is our childhood, and Atticus Finch is our brave, infinitely patient American Daddy. And that creepy big guy living alone in the scary house turns out to have been watching over us with protective benevolent attention.

Maya Angelou and Harper Lee are not the only authors on the lists. The other most popular books are *The Great Gatsby*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and *The Catcher in the Rye*. John Steinbeck (*The Pearl*, *Of Mice and Men*, *The Red Pony*, *The Grapes of Wrath*) and Toni Morrison (*Song of Solomon*, *Sula*, *The Bluest Eye*, *Beloved*) are the writers—after Shakespeare—represented by the largest number of titles. Also widely studied are novels of more dubious literary merit: John Knowles's *A Separate Peace*, William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, Elie Wiesel's *Night*, and Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, *Dandelion Wine*, *The October Country*, and *Something Wicked This Way Comes*. Trailing behind these favorites, Orwell (*Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm*) is still being read, as are the Brontës (*Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*).

How astonishing then that students exposed to such a wide array of masterpieces and competent middlebrow entertainments are not mobbing their libraries and bookstores, demanding heady diets of serious or semi-serious fiction! And how puzzling that I should so often find myself teaching bright, eager college undergraduate and graduate students, would-be writers handicapped not merely by how little literature they have read but by their utter inability to read it; many are nearly incapable of doing the close line-by-line reading necessary to disclose the most basic information in a story by Henry James or a seemingly more straightforward one by Katherine Mansfield or Paul Bowles.

The explanation, it turns out, lies in how these books, even the best of them, are being presented in the clas room. My dogged search for readi lists flushed out, in addition to the lis themselves, course descriptions, teacl ing guides, and anecdotes that reve how English literature is being taug to high school students. Only rarely teachers propose that writing mig be worth reading closely. Instead, st dents are informed that literature principally a vehicle for the soporif moral blather they suffer daily fro their parents. The present vogue teaching "values" through literatu uses the novel as a springboard for t sort of discussion formerly conduct in civics or ethics classes—areas study that, in theory, have been phas out of the curriculum but that, in fa have been retained and cleverly su stituted for what we used to call E glish. English—and everything abo it that is inventive, imaginative, pleasurable—is beside the point classrooms, as is everything that co stitutes style and that distinguish writers, one from another, as precis ly as fingerprints or DNA mapping.

The question is no longer what t writer has written but rather who t writer is—specifically, what ethr group or gender identity an author re resents. A motion passed by the S Francisco Board of Education in Mar 1998 mandates that "works of literatu read in class in grades nine to eleven each high school student must inclu works by writers of color which refl the diversity of culture, race, and cl of the students of the San Francis Unified School District.... The writ who are known to be lesbian, gay, sexual or transgender, shall be app priately identified in the curriculun Meanwhile, aesthetic beauty—feli tous or accurate language, imag rhythm, wit, the satisfaction of rec nizing something in fiction that see fresh and true—is simply too frivolo suspect, and elitist even to mentio

Thus the fragile *To Kill a Mocki bird* is freighted with tons of socio litical ballast. A "Collaborative P gram Planning Record of Learni Experience," which I obtained fr the Internet, outlines the "overall g of teaching the book ("To understa problems relating to discriminati and prejudice that exist in our pr ent-day society. To understand a

ply these principles to our own
es") and suggests topics for student
scussion: "What type of people make
your community? Is there any group
people . . . a person (NO NAMES
EASE) or type of person in your
mmunity that you feel uncomfort-
le around?"

A description of "The Family in Lit-
ature," an elective offered by the
inceton Day School—a course
cluding works by Sophocles and Eu-
ne O'Neill—begins: "Bruce Spring-
een once tried to make us believe
at, 'No one can break the ties that
nd/You can't for say-yay-yay-yay-
y-yay-yake the ties that bind.' He
s since divorced his wife and married
s back-up singer. So what are these
es and just how strong are they, after
l?" With its chilling echoes of New
ge psychobabble, Margaret Dodson's
eaching Values Through Teaching Lit-
ature, a sourcebook for high school
nglish teachers, informs us that the
oint of Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*
"to show how progress has been
ade in the treatment of the mental-
disadvantaged, and that more and
tter roles in society are being de-
sed for them [and to] establish that
entally retarded people are human
ings with the same needs and feel-
gs that everyone else experiences."

An eighth-grader studying Elie
iesel's overwrought *Night* in a class
ught by a passionate gay-rights ad-
cate came home with the following
tes: "Many Jews killed during the
olocaust, but many *many* homosex-
ls murdered by Nazis. Pink trian-
—Silence equals death."

It's cheering that so many lists in-
ude *The Adventures of Huckleberry*
n—but not when we discover that
is moving, funny novel is being
ught not as a work of art but as a
ce of damning evidence against that
ot, Mark Twain. A friend's daugh-
's English teacher informed a group
parents that the only reason to study
uckleberry Finn was to decide whether
was a racist text. Instructors con-
ting *Teaching Values Through Teach-*
Literature will have resolved this
bate long before they walk into the
ssroom to supervise "a close reading
Huckleberry Finn that will reveal the
rious ways in which Twain undercuts
n's humanity: in the minstrel rou-



Once a bottle of Glenmorangie Ten Years Old leaves us, it generally doesn't stay full for long.

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And tranquil it is. For here, we are blessed with that curiosity of nature which experts now refer to as the microclimate. This rare combination of softly turning seasons stirred by raw coastal breezes has been understood for centuries to be perfectly suited to the distiller's craft.

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as the 'straight man';
generalizations about Blacks as unreli-
primitive and slow-witted. . . ."

Luckily for the teacher and students required to confront this fictional equivalent of a minstrel show, Mark Twain can be rehabilitated—that is to say, revised. In classes that sound like test screenings used to position unreleased Hollywood films, focus groups in which viewers are invited to choose among variant endings, students are polled for possible alternatives to Huck's and Tom Sawyer's actions—should Tom have carried out his plan to "free" Jim?—and asked to speculate on what the fictional characters might have or should have done to become better people and atone for the sins of their creators.

In the most unintentionally hilarious of these lesson plans, a chapter entitled "*Ethan Frome:* An Avoidable Tragedy," Dodson warns teachers to expect resistance to their efforts to reform Wharton's characters and thus improve her novel's outcome: "Students intensely dislike the mere suggestion that Ethan should have honored his commitment to Zeena and encouraged Mattie to date Dennie Eady, yet this would surely have demonstrated greater love than the suicide attempt.

Thus another puzzle confronting college and even graduate school instructors—Why do students so despise dead writers?—is partly explained by the adversarial stance that these sourcebooks adopt toward authors of classic texts. Teachers are counseled "to help students rise above Emerson's style of stating an idea bluntly, announcing reservations, and sometimes even negating the original idea" and to present "a method of contrasting the drab, utilitarian prose of *1984* with a lyric poem 'To a Darkling Thrush,' by Thomas Hardy." Why not mention that such works have been read for years—for a reason!—and urge students to figure out what that reason is? Doesn't it seem less *valuable* to read Emily Dickinson's work as the brain-damaged mumblings of a demented agoraphobic than to approach the subject of Dickinson, as Richard Sewall suggests in his biography of her, on our knees? No one's suggesting that canonical writers should be immune to criticism. Dickens's anti-Semitism, Tolstoy's overly romantic ideas about the peasantry, Kipling's racism, are all problematic, and merit discussion. But to treat the geniuses of the past as naughty children, amenable to reeducation by the children of the present, evokes the educational theory of the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

No wonder students are rarely asked to consider what was actually written by these hopeless racists and sociopaths. Instead, they're told to write around the books, or, better yet, write their own books. Becky Alano's depressing *Teaching the Novel* advises readers of Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* to construct a therapeutic evaluation of its suicidal heroine ("Do you think she is ready to go home? What is your prognosis for her future?") and lists documents to be written as supplements to *Macbeth* (a script for the TV evening news announcing the murders; a psychiatrist's report on Lady Macbeth, or her suicide note to her husband; Macbeth's entry in *Who's Who*, or his obituary).

How should prospective readers of Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* prepare? Carolyn Smith McGowen's *Teaching Literature by Women Authors* suggests: "Give each student a paper grocery bag. Explain that to avoid being sent to a concentration camp, many people went into hiding. Often they could take with them only what they could carry. . . . Ask your students to choose the items they would take into hiding. These items must fit into the grocery bag." A class attempting to interpret an Emily Dickinson poem can be divided into three groups, each group interpreting the poem based on one of Freud's levels of consciousness; thus the little ids, egos, and superegos can respond to the Dickinson poem according to the category of awareness to which their group has been assigned.

Those who might have supposed that one purpose of fiction was to deploy the powers of language to connect us, directly and intimately, with the hearts and souls of others, will be disappointed to learn that the whole point is to make us examine ourselves. According to Alano, *The Catcher in the Rye* will doubtless suggest an incident "in which you felt yourself to be an 'outsider' like Holden. Why did you feel outside? What finally changed your situation?" Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* should make us compare anxieties ("Describe an event that anticipated with fear. . . . Was the actual event worth the dread?") with those of its Civil War hero. And what does *The Great Gatsby* lead us to consider? "Did you ever pursue a goal with single-minded devotion? . . . Would you have gained your end in any other way?" Are we to believe that the average eleventh grader has had an experience comparable to that of Jay Gatsby—or F. Scott Fitzgerald? And is it any wonder that teenagers should complete these exercises with little but contempt for the writer who so pointlessly complicates and obfuscated a personal true story that sixteen-year-olds could have told so much more interestingly themselves?

I remember when it dawned on me that I might, someday, grow old. It was in the eleventh grade. Our marvelous and unusual English teacher had assigned us to read *King Lear*—that is, to read every line of *King Lear*. (As I recall, we were asked to circle every word or metaphor having to do with eyes and vision, a tedious process we grumbled about but that succeeded in focusing our attention.) Even though I knew I would never even resemble the decrepit adults around me, Shakespeare's genius, his poetry, his profound, encyclopedic understanding of personality, managed to persuade me that I could *be* that mythic king—an imaginative identification very different from whatever result might have obtained by persuading myself that my own experience was the *same* as Lear's. I recall the hallucinatory sense of having left my warm bedroom, of finding myself—old, enraged, alone, despised—on that heath in that dangerous storm. And I remember realizing, after the storm subsided, that language, that mere words on the page, had raised that howling tempest.

Lear is still the Shakespeare play I like best. I reread it periodically, increasingly moved now that age is no longer a theoretical possibility, and now that its portrayal of Lear's behavior so often seems like reportage—a friend whose elderly boss is ruining his company with irrational tests of loyalty and refusals to cede power no

Arabian Fables (II)

More fanciful Arab myths to sway world opinion.

Earlier this year, we published our message, "Arabian Fables (I)", in which we made clear how the Arab propaganda machine creates myths and lies with which to misinform the world. We discussed the myths of the "Palestinians" and of the "West Bank" and the mythical concept of "occupied territories". In today's message, we shall address three more of these myths.

What are some of these myths?

Jerusalem ("Arab East Jerusalem"). The Arabs have assiduously propagated the myths that Jerusalem is an Arab capital, that (after Mecca and Medina) Jerusalem is their third holy city, and that it is intolerable to them that infidels (Jews) are in possession of it.

The reality of course is that Jerusalem was never an Arab capital and that it was, until the Jews revitalized it, a dusty provincial city that hardly played any economic, social, or political role. Jerusalem is mentioned hundreds of times in the Jewish Bible and has been the center of the Jewish faith and the focus of Jewish longing ever since the Romans destroyed the Temple in the early years of the first millenium. Not once is Jerusalem mentioned in the Koran.

> "The Arab propaganda machine has created myths that have been accepted by much of the world. No peace in the Middle East is possible until those Arab myths have been exposed for what they are!"

As to "East Jerusalem": There is East Saint Louis, there is East Hampton, and there used to be East Berlin, but, until the Arab propaganda machine created the concept, there was never in history an "East Jerusalem", let alone an "Arab East Jerusalem".

The eastern part of Jerusalem is now predominantly inhabited by Arabs, though their proportion is decreasing. But what is the reason for this? It is because the Jordanians destroyed all traces of Jewish presence from the eastern part of the city and drove all the Jews out during the 19 years (between 1948 and 1967) in which they were in occupation of the eastern part of the city. The world, informed by Arab propaganda, considers those Jews who wish to return to the eastern part of the city to be troublemakers or worse.

The concept of Jerusalem being a holy Arab city and the capital of whatever political entity the "Palestinians" may eventually form is a myth and so of course is the concept of "Arab East Jerusalem".

"Settlements". When Jordan came into possession of Judea/Samaria and the eastern part of Jerusalem, following the invasion of the newly-formed Jewish state, and stayed in occupation for 19 years, it systematically obliterated all Jewish villages in the area under their occupation, drove out the Jewish inhabitants, and left the area "judenrein" (free of Jews) – the first time that concept had been applied since the Nazis created it during their short and bloody reign in Germany. When the Israelis recovered these territories, they rebuilt these villages, created new ones, and built new towns and suburbs to existing cities, especially Jerusalem.

The Arabs decided to call these towns and villages "settlements", with their connotation of illegitimacy and impermanence. The world, including the United States, is much agitated over these population centers and, goaded by the Arabs, declares them to be impediments to peace. What nonsense! Nobody considers the tens of thousands of Arabs who continue to stream to these territories as impediments to peace.

The term "settlements", too, is a propaganda myth created by the Arabs.

"Refugees". In 1948, when six Arab armies invaded the Jewish state in order to destroy it on the very day of its birth, broadcasts by the advancing Arab armies appealed to the resident Arabs to leave their homes so as not to be in the way of the invaders. As soon as the "quick victory" was won, they could return to their homes and would also enjoy the loot from the Jews, who would have been driven into the sea. It didn't turn out quite that way. Those Arabs who, despite the urgings of the Jews to stay and to remain calm, foolishly left, became refugees. Those who decided not to yield to those blandishments are now, and have been for over 50 years, citizens of Israel, with all the same rights and privileges as their Jewish fellows.

But what happened to those refugees – by best estimates about 600,000 of them? Did their "Arab brethren" allow them to settle in their countries, to work, and to become productive citizens and useful members of their societies? No! They kept and still keep them, their children, their grandchildren, and in some cases even their great-grandchildren, in miserable "refugee camps", so that they can be used as political and military pawns in order to keep the burning hatred against Israel alive and in order to supply the manpower for the unremitting fight against Israel.

During those more than fifty years, Israel has taken in more than three million Jewish immigrants from all parts of the world and has integrated them productively into its society. According to the "Palestinians", the Arab "refugees" have now marvelously increased to five million(!). It is the intent and fervent desire of the Arabs that all of them should return to Israel so as to destroy the country without the necessity of war.

The "refugees" are a red herring and another myth created by the Arab propaganda machine.

The Arab propaganda machine, aided by the most high-powered public relations firms in the United States and all over, has created myths that, by dint of constant repetition, have been accepted as truth by much of the world. No sensible discussion, no peace in the Middle East, is possible until those Arab myths have been exposed for what they are.

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Facts and Logic about the Middle East
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to describe the situa-
Act One.

high school favorite was
Version of the Book of
I don't think I'd ever
Armageddon, nor did I be-
out when the seals of a book
horses would fly out.
What delighted me was the language, the cadences and the rhythms, and the power of the images: the four horsemen, the beast, the woman clothed with the sun.

But rather than exposing students to works of literature that expand their capacities and vocabularies, sharpen their comprehension, and deepen the level at which they think and feel, we either offer them "easy" (Steinbeck, Knowles, Angelou, Lee) books that "anyone" can understand, or we serve up the tougher works predigested. We no longer believe that books were written one word at a time, and deserve to be read that way. We've forgotten the difference between a student who has never read a nineteenth-century novel and an idiot incapable of reading one. When my son was assigned *Wuthering Heights* in tenth-grade English, the complex sentences, archaisms, multiple narrators, and interwoven stories seemed, at first, like a foreign language. But soon enough, he caught on and reported being moved almost to tears by the cruelty of Heathcliff's treatment of Isabella.

In fact, it's not difficult to find fiction that combines clear, beautiful, accessible, idiosyncratic language with a narrative that conveys a complex worldview. But to use such literature might require teachers and school boards to make fresh choices, selections uncontaminated by trends, clichés, and received ideas. If educators continue to assume that teenagers are interested exclusively in books about teenagers, there *is* engaging, truthful fiction about childhood and adoles-
written in ways that remind us why someone might like to read. There is
, Charles Baxter's precise
Gryphon." And there are the carefully chosen details, the complex sentences, and the down-to-earth diction in Stuart Dybek's great
Chicago story, "Hot Ice."

which students can talk about racism and ethnic identity, why not teach Hilton Als's *The Women*, Flannery O'Connor's "Everything That Rises Must Converge," or any of the stories in James Alan McPherson's *Hue and Cry*, all of which eloquently and directly address the subtle, powerful ways in which race affects every tiny decision and gesture? Why not introduce our kids to the clarity and power of James Baldwin's great story "Sonny's Blues"?

My suspicion is that the reason such texts are not used as often as *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* is precisely the reason why they *should* be taught—that is, because they're complicated. Baldwin, Als, and McPherson reject obvious "lessons" and familiar arcs of abuse, self-realization, and recovery; they actively refute simplistic prescriptions about how to live.

Great novels can help us master the all-too-rare skill of tolerating—of being able to hold in mind—ambiguity and contradiction. Jay Gatsby has a shady past, but he's also sympathetic. Huck Finn is a liar, but we come to love him. A friend's student once wrote that Alice Munro's characters weren't people he'd choose to hang out with but that reading her work always made him feel "a little less petty and judgmental." Such benefits are denied to the young reader exposed only to books with banal, simple-minded moral equations as well as to the student encouraged to come up with reductive, wrong-headed readings of multilayered texts.

The narrator of *Caged Bird* is good, her rapist is bad; Scout and Atticus Finch are good, their bigoted neighbors are bad. But the characters in James Alan McPherson's "Gold Coast" are a good deal more lifelike. The cantankerous, bigoted, elderly white janitor and the young African American student, his temporary assistant, who puts up with the janitor's bullshit and is simultaneously cheered and saddened by the knowledge that he's headed for greater success than the janitor will ever achieve, both embody mixtures of admirable and more dubious qualities. In other words, they're more like humans. It's hard to imagine the lesson plans telling students exactly how to feel about these two complex plausible characters.

No one's suggesting that ever
existing syllabus be shredde
many books on the curre
lists are great works of art. But wh
not *tell* the students that, instead
suggesting that Mark Twain h
posthumously reprimanded? Why n
point out how convincingly he ca
tured the workings of Huck's min
the inner voice of a kid trying de
perately to sew a crazy quilt of self t
gether from the ragged scraps arou
him? Why not celebrate the accura
and vigor with which he translat
the rhythms of American speech in
written language?

In simplifying what a book is allow
to tell us—Twain's novel is whol
about racism and not at all about wh
it's like to *be* Huck Finn—teachers pr
tend to spark discussion but actual
prevent it. They claim to relate th
world of the book to the world of e
perience, but by concentrating on th
student's own history they narrow th
world of experience down to the pe
sonal and deny students *other* sorts
experience—the experience of wha
in the book, for starters. One reas
we read writers from other times or cu
tures is to confront alternatives—
feeling and sensibility, of history a
psyche, of information and ideas.
experience the heartbreaking matt
of-factness with which Anne Frank
scribed her situation seems more use
than packing a paper bag with Ga
Boys, cigarettes, and CDs so that
can go into hiding and avoid bei
sent to the camps.

The pleasure of surrender to t
world of a book is only one of t
pleasures that this new way of rea
ing—and teaching—denies. In bl
ring the line between reality and f
tion (What happened to you that w
exactly like what happened to Hes
Prynne?), it reduces our respect
imagination, beauty, art, thought,
for the way that the human spirit
presses itself in words.

Writers have no choice but to
lieve that literature will survive, th
it's worth some effort to preserve
most beautiful, meaningful lyrics
narratives, the record of who we w
and are. And if we want our child
to begin an extended love affair w
reading and with what great writ
can do, we *want* them to get an ea

rt—or any start, at all. Teaching dents to value literary masterpieces ur best hope of awakening them to infinite capacities and complexities human experience, of helping them knowledge and accept complexity d ambiguity, and of making them e and respect the language that al- vs us to smuggle out, and send one other, our urgent, eloquent dis- ches from the prison of the self.

That may be what writers—and ders—desire. But if it's not occur- g, perhaps that's because our cul- e wants it less urgently than we do. ucation, after all, is a process in- ded to produce a product. So we ve to ask ourselves: What sort of duct is being produced by the cur- t system? How does it change when tain factors are added to, or removed m, our literature curriculum? And is really in the best interests of our nsumer economy to create a well- ucated, smart, highly literate society fervent readers? Doesn't our epi- nic dumbing-down have undeni- e advantages for those institutions e media, the advertising industry, government) whose interests are tter served by a population not ined to read too closely or ask too ny questions?

On the most obvious level, it's worth ting that books are among the few aining forms of entertainment not tained by, and meant to further, the erests of advertising. Television, wspapers, and magazines are busily tilling us with new desires and pre- usly unsuspected needs, while books only themselves. Moreover, the e we spend reading is time spent ay from media that have a greater nce of alchemically transmuting ention into money.

But of course what's happening is re complex and subtle than that, re closely connected to how we ceive of the relation between in- ect and spirit. The new-model En- h-class graduate—the one who has n force-fed the gross oversimplifi- ions proffered by these lesson plans l teaching manuals—values empa- and imagination less than the abil- to make quick and irreversible judg- nts, to entertain and maintain plistic immovable opinions about lt and innocence, about the possi-



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...conditions of human na... ...comfortable with the gray ... ...with sharply delineated ... ...and white, he or she can work in ... ...and operate by consensus, and ... ...a resultant, residual distrust for the ...ntric, the idiosyncratic, the an... ...ingly... individual.

What I've described is a salable product, tailored to the needs of the ...nomic and political moment. What results from these educational methods is a mode of thinking (or, more accurately, of *not* thinking) that equips our kids for the future: Future McDonald's employees. Future corporate board members. Future special prosecutors. Future makers of 100-best-books lists who fondly recall what they first read in high school—and who may not have read anything since. And so the roster of literary masterpieces we pass along to future generations will continue its downward shift, and those lightweight, mediocre high school favorites will continue to rise, unburdened by gravity, to the top of the list. ■

THUS SPOKE JEDEDIAH

The distilled wisdom of a cornpone prophet

By Roger D. Hodge

For Common Things: Irony, Trust and Commitment in America Today, by Jedediah Purdy. Knopf. 256 pages. $20.

Jedediah Purdy was raised and homeschooled on a hardscrabble West Virginia farm by hippie parents who let their young run free and naked, slathered with mud and adorned with wildflowers. He learned by working alongside his parents and listening well when neighbors came to call. He explored the hollows and ridges of his native landscape, cut the hay he had planted, slaughtered the steers he had raised as pets. He dug ditches for a spring's cold fresh water and drilled boreholes in the living wood of sugar maples to get at the sweet clear sap. He watched his philosopher mother and farmer father as they lived a simple, earnest, dignified life. And he saw that it was good.

Having come down out of the mountains secure in the home truths of his earthy parents, the decadence of life at Harvard must have been al... ...much for young Jedediah Purdy to bear. Surrounded as he was by the easy sarcasm nowadays known universally as "irony," his earnest young feelings bruised by the unkind comments of a future television sitcom writer, he was seized with an urge to bear witness to the sins of a buzzing and desperate age, to shout out the maxims of Wendell Berry, the Fugitives, and other philosophers of the Agrarian persuasion. And so it was that at the tender age of twenty-four, Jedediah Purdy strode forth to the offices of Knopf and secured for himself a book contract and a wizard's cap.

The philosophy of the young sage is easily summarized, though his unctuous sentimentality can be conveyed only through quotations. "This is a difficult time for writing love letters," he writes. "This book is a defense of love letters. It is itself a kind of love letter to the very idea of such letters." It is Jedediah Purdy's assertion that pernicious ironic people such as Jerry Seinfeld have created a culture in which the love letter cannot be taken seriously. "Irony," Jedediah Purdy writes, "is powered by a suspicion that everything is deriv... ...tive. It generates a way of passi... ...judgment—or placing bets—on wh... ...kinds of hope the world will su... ...port." Thus irony takes the blame f... ...the disturbing hollowness in our pu... ...lic life, the tawdry and callow chara... ...ter of our politicians, and the sha... ...lowness of our television program... How is it that an ancient and ven... ...able figure of speech long associat... ...with Socrates, Plato, Boccacci... Shakespeare, and Cervantes, to me... ...tion only the most distinguished ... ironists, came to be the cause of ... much unhappiness? Jedediah Pur... doesn't say exactly. He is far mo... concerned with delivering the alar... ...ing news that countless America... desperate to escape the terrible neg... ...tivity of Jerry Seinfeld's relentles... ironic campaign to strip our lives ... dignity and moral clarity, are flee... toward New Age spirituality, the b... lief in angels, and subscriptions ... such dangerously subversive mag... zines as *Wired* and *Fast Company*.

Apparently because we're all t... ironic or falsely spiritual to believe ... anything as simple and real as t... value of living on a hillside farm ... West Virginia, we lack a politics th... functions as a repository of our hop... and dreams. And so Jedediah Pur... offers us treatises on Rousseau's the... ...ry of the social contract, the opinio... of Alexis de Tocqueville, the histo... of Poland since 1989, and the ess... of Michel de Montaigne. He expla... the meaning of Thoreau's concept ... self-sufficiency. He frets about t... global economy and the unseen ... therapeutics of President Clinto... policies and the implications ... biotechnology ("It is urgently imp... ...tant that we practice responsi... thinking about technology"), a... provides a lengthy dissertation ... the evils of strip-mining. He seems ... have included every single term ... per he wrote at Harvard, weav... them together with references ... wicked ironists and the disturb... Promethean futurists of *Fast Com... ny* and *Wired*.

Jedediah Purdy also treats us t... number of helpful etymologies. "P... *lic*," he explains, "comes from ... Latin *publius*, the people." The w... "private" refers "to the lack of so...

Roger D. Hodge ... editor of Harper's Magazine

ng." "*Mundane* comes from the
in *mundus*, 'the world.'" He pa-
ıtly explains that the term "street
d" refers to "credibility," that the
ective "Promethean" derives from
Greek myth of Prometheus, who
le fire from the gods. Oddly
ough, he never offers an etymolo-
of the word "irony."*
edediah Purdy demonstrates a
p concern for the young people of
ay, who all too easily fall victim
ırony, particularly at expensive
leges, and among whom skepti-
n about politics and public ser-
e is pronounced. Jedediah Purdy
ses to give in, however. He will
e his stand and fight for a new vi-
ı of public responsibility that re-
on a new interpretation of "the
lic," which he bases on the old
a of the village commons. Jededi-
Purdy declares that all good,
utiful, and healthy things depend
their existence on a whole host
such things, and in this insight
ere lurks an idea of responsibili-
If we care for one thing, the
ng sage explains, we must neces-
ly care for all that it depends up-
Having arrived at this thunder-
conclusion, which he takes from
ology" (as opposed to basic
sics or even elementary logic),
page 91, Jedediah Purdy devotes
next 115 pages to applying his
nciple—we might call it the
at Chain of Being Obvious—to
rality ("moral ecology"), politics
cial ecology"), and the steward-
of the natural world ("ecolo-
)—all of which correspond to
e different kinds of "commons."
calls for a renewed "attentive-
" to the common things, and, in
er to help us keep that goal in
ıd, he sprinkles his prose with
orisms that we apparently are
ınt to mutter as we go about our
y business: "Responsibility begins
ttentiveness, because only that
help us to discern the conditions
ıope"; "the honest love of any
good thing discomforts us so far as we find that thing neglected or despoiled around us"; "there is nothing good that we can have alone"; "a marriage of commitment and knowledge produces dignified work." A set of sayings that are as relentlessly unmemorable as they are banal, much like the book to which they belong.

Although he does manage a few eloquent passages and an old-fashioned epigrammatic style, Jedediah Purdy is not yet a good writer. He has studied Wendell Berry's sentences as well as his ideas, and his writing often echoes his master's style, yet the effect is stagy and false. Berry would never use opaque jargon such as the term "quantum self," nor would he allow a sentence such as the following to see the light of day: "I do not think I can write intelligently about these things without naming them, describing them, trying to show the sorts of things they are." Style is only as strong as the ideas it expresses, and down-home piety is no substitute for a natural wit. And last time I checked, Wendell Berry was still plowing his Kentucky farm with a horse and issuing occasional treatises on the value of simple rural life, good neighbors, and local politics. Why, then, do the second- and third-hand musings of a twenty-four-year-old command our attention?

Alas, such books are all too common. Jedediah Purdy belongs to a publishing tradition that includes Dinesh D'Souza, Katie Roiphe, and Wendy Shalit, a line of young Ivy-educated authors whose prose briefly quickened the hearts of the marketing executives who decide which titles will appear at the front of book catalogues, in Barnes & Noble display windows, and on the banner of the Amazon.com home page. How nice that these young sages were fortunate enough to attend expensive schools, how nice for them to be published at such a tender age. And yet how utterly worthless are their books, stacked on remainder shelves in the basements of used-book stores soon after their publication, their notoriety worn thin, their authors' careers all but over. ■

*a series of preemptive strikes at his crit-
ıte in the book, Purdy does offer a rudi-
tary definition of the word—in response,
oubt, to the objections of a copy editor at
pf armed with a dictionary and handbook
etoric—which serves to undo everything
as previously said about the trope.*

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—Toby Lester, *Atlantic Monthly*

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The future of ENGLISH

By H. L. Mencke

The English tongue is of small reach, stretching no further than this island of ours, nay not there over all.

This was written in 1582. The writer was Richard Mulcaster, headmaster of the Merchant Taylors' School, teacher of prosody to Edmund Spenser, and one of the earliest of English grammarians. At the time he wrote, English was spoken by between four and five millions of people, and stood fifth among the European languages, with French, German, Italian, and Spanish ahead of it in that order, and Russian following. Two hundred years later Italian had dropped behind but Russian had gone ahead, so that English was still in fifth place. But by the end of the Eighteenth Century it began to move forward, and by the middle of the Nineteenth it had forced its way into first place. To-day it is so far in the lead that it is probably spoken by as many people as the next two languages—Russian and German—combined.

It is not only the first—and, in large part, the only—language of both of the world's mightiest empires; it is also the second language of large and populous regions beyond their bounds. Its teaching is obligatory in the secondary schools of countries as diverse as Germany and Argentina, Turkey and Denmark, Estonia and Japan. Three-fourths of all the world's mail is now written in it; it is used in printing more than half the world's newspapers, and it is the language of three-fifths of the world's radio stations. No ship captain can trade upon the oceans without some knowledge of it; it is the common tongue of all the great ports, and likewise of all the maritime Bad Lands, from the South Sea islands to the Persian Gulf. Every language that still resists its advance outside Europe—for example, Spanish in Latin-America, Italian in the Levant, and Japanese in the Far East—holds out against it only by making large concessions to it. That is to say, all of them show a large and ever larger admixture of English words and phrases; indeed in Japanese they become so numerous that special dictionaries of them begin to appear. Finally, English makes steady inroads upon French as the language of diplomacy and upon German as the language of science.

How many people speak it to-day? It is hard to answer with any precision, but an approximation is neverthe possible. First, let us list those to wh English is their native tongue. T run to about 112,000,000 in the c tinental United States, to 42,000, in the United Kingdom, to 6,000, in Canada, 6,000,000 in Austra 3,000,000 in Ireland, 2,000,00 South Africa, and probably 3,000, in the remaining British colonies the possessions of the United Sta All these figures are very conservat but they foot up to 174,000,000. N add the people who, though born some other language, live in Engl speaking communities and speak glish themselves in their daily b ness, and whose children are be brought up to it—say 13,000,000 the United States, 1,000,000 for Ca da (where English is gradually ous French), 1,000,000 for the Un Kingdom and Ireland, and 2,000, for the rest of the world—and you h a grand total of 191,000,000. . . .

Altogether, it is probable t English is now spoken as a sec language by at least 20,000,000 sons throughout the world—very ten, to be sure, badly, but never less understandably. It has becon platitude that one may go aln anywhere with no other lingu

H. L. Mencken (1880–1956), writer, editor, philologist, and wit, wrote this article for the April 1935 issue of Harper's Magazine. *Ellipses indicate omitted material.*

ipment and get on almost as well
n New York. I have visited since
War sixteen countries in Europe,
in Africa, three in Asia, and
ee in Latin-America, beside a
ge miscellany of islands, but I
't remember ever encountering a
ation that English could not re-
e. I have heard it spoken with
onable fluency in a Lithuanian
age, in an Albanian fishing port,
at the edge of the Libyan Desert.

n part, of course, its spread has been due to the extraordinary dispersion of the English-speaking
ples. They have
n the greatest trav-
s of modern times,
the most adven-
us merchants, and
most assiduous
onists. Moreover,
have been, on the
le, poor linguists,
so they have
ged their language
n them, and forced
pon the human
. Wherever it has
with serious com-
tion, as with
nch in Canada,
Spanish along our
hwestern border,
with Dutch in
th Africa, they
e compromised
its local rival on-
luctantly, and then
ght every opportu-
, whether fair or
air, to break the
. If English is the language of the
it is largely because there are more
ish ships on the sea than any oth-
ind, and English ship captains
se to learn what they think of as
barbaric gibberishes of Hamburg,
and Marseilles.

ut there is more to the matter
n this. English, brought to close
ters with formidable rivals, has
very often, not by force of num-
and intransigence, but by the
r weight of its merit. "In wealth,
lom, and strict economy," said the eminent Jakob Grimm a century ago, "none of the other living languages can vie with it." To which the eminent Otto Jespersen was adding only the other day: "It seems to me positively and expressly masculine. It is the language of a grown-up man, and has very little childish or feminine about it." Dr. Jespersen goes on to specifications: English is simple, it has clear sounds, it packs its words closely together, it is logical in their arrangement, and it is free from all pedantic flubdub, by Latin out of the languages of Babel. What an immense advantage lies in a single thing: its lack of grammatical gender! (I spent the years from 1887 to 1892 trying to remember whether *Hund* and *Katze* were *der*, *die*, or *das*, and I can't tell you to this day.) And what another in its reduction of all the pronouns of the second person nominative to the single *you*!



When American pedagogues discourse on the virtues of English they almost always begin by hymning its enormous vocabulary, which is at least twice as large as that of any other language. But this is not what enchants the foreigner; on the contrary, the vast reaches of the vocabulary naturally alarm him, and he keeps as close as he may to its elements. The thing that really wins him is the succinctness and simplicity of those elements. We use, for all our store of Latin polysyllables, a great many more short words than long ones, and we are always trying to make the long ones short. What began as *mobile vulgus* in the Eighteenth Century, two words and both Latin, is *mob* today, one word and that one as English as *cat*. What was once *pundigrion* is now *pun*; what was *gasoline* only yesterday is already *gas*. No other European language has so many three-letter words, nor so many four-letter words, whether decorous or naughty. And none other can say its say with so few of them. "First come, first served"—that is typically English, for it is bold, plain, and short. In French, as Dr. Jespersen reminds us, the same homely proverb is stretched out and toned down to "*Premier venu, premier moulu*"; in German it is mauled and hammered into "*Wer zuerst kommt, mahlt zuerst*," and in Danish it reaches the really appalling form of "*Den der kommer først til mølle, far først malet.*"

Several years ago an American philologian, Dr. Walter Kirkconnell, undertook to count the number of syllables needed to translate the Gospel of Mark into forty Indo-European languages, ranging from Persian and Hindustani to English and French. He found that, of all of them, English was the most economical, for it took but 29,000 syllables to do the job, whereas the average

ation by Michelle Barnes

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for all the Teutonic languages was 32,650, that for the Slavic group 36,500, that for the Latin group 40,200, and that for the Indo-Iranian group (Bengali, Persian, Sanskrit, etc.) 43,100. It is commonly believed that French is a terse language and, compared to its cousins, Italian and Spanish, it actually is, but compared to English it is garrulous, for it takes 36,000 syllables to say what English says in 29,000. Dr. Kirkconnell did not undertake to determine the average size of the syllables he counted, but I am confident that if he had done so he would have found those of English shorter, taking one with another, than those of any other language.

To most educated foreigners it seems so simple that it strikes them as almost a kind of baby-talk. To be sure, when they proceed from trying to speak it to trying to read and write it they are painfully undeceived, for its spelling is almost as irrational as that of French or Swedish, but so long as they are content to tackle it *viva voce* they find it strangely loose and comfortable, and at the same time very precise. The Russian, coming into it burdened with his six cases, his three genders, his palatalized consonants, and his complicated pronouns, luxuriates in a language which has only two cases, no grammatical gender, a set of consonants which (save only *r*) maintain their integrity in the face of any imaginable rush of vowels, and an outfit of pronouns so simple that one of them suffices to address the President of the United States or a child in arms, a lovely female creature *in camera* or the vast radio hordes of a Father Coughlin. And the German, the Scandinavian, the Italian, and the Frenchman, though the change for them is measurably less sharp, nevertheless find it grateful too. Only the Spaniard brings with him a language comparable to English for logical clarity, and even the Spaniard is afflicted with grammatical gender.

As I have said, the huge English vocabulary is likely to make the foreigner uneasy, but he soon finds that nine-tenths of it lies safely buried in the dictionaries, and is never drawn on for everyday use. Its richness in synonyms is hardly his concern; he is not trying to write English poetry but to speak plain English prose. That it may be spoken intelligibly and even gracefully, with very few words has been demonstrated by Dr. C. K. Ogden, the English psychologist. Dr. Ogden believes, indeed, that 850 words are sufficient for all ordinary purposes, and he has devised a form of simplified English, called by him Basic, which uses no more. Of his 850 words no less than 600 are the names of things, which leaves only 250 for the names of qualities and actions, and for all the linguistic hooks and eyes that hold sentences together.

Does this seem too few? Then it is only to those who have forgotten one of the prime characteristics of English—its capacity for getting an infinity of meanings out of a single word by combining it with simple modifiers. Consider, for example, the difference between the verbs *get*, *to get going*, *to get by*, *to get on*, *to get wise*, *to get off*, *to get ahead* and *to get over*. Dr. Ogden proposes to rid the language of a great many verbs—some of them irregular, and hence difficult—by substituting such compounds for them. Why, for example, should a foreigner be taught to say that he has *disembarked* from a ship? Isn't it sufficient for him to say that he has *got off*? And why should he be taught to say that he has *recovered* from the flu, or *escaped* the police, or *obtained* a job? Isn't it enough to say that he has *got over* the first, *got away from* the second, and simply *got* the third?

Dr. Ogden is not much upset by the incongruities and irrationalities of English spelling. For one thing, his list of 850 words, being made up mainly of the commonest coins of speech, avoids most of them; for another thing, he believes that the very eccentricity of the spelling of some of the rest will help the foreigner to remember them. Even the schoolboy, as we all know, seizes with on such bizarre forms as *through*, *straight*, and *island* with fascination

s to get, to get going.

erness, and not infrequently he ters them before he masters such netically-spelled words as *first*, *orrow*, and *engineer*. In my own th, far away in the dark backward abysm of time, the glory of every ng American was *phthisic*, with English proper name, *Cholideley*, a close second. Dr. Ogden poses to let the foreigners apting Basic share the joy of huntdown such basilisks. For the rest, leaves the snarls of English ling to the judgments of a just d, and the natural tendency of all gs Anglo-Saxon to move toward ltimate perfection. . . .

But as English spreads, will it be able to maintain its present form? Probably not. But why should it? The notion anything is gained by fixing a guage in a groove is cherished only pedagogues, perhaps the stupidclass of literate men on earth. ry successful effort at standardiza, as Dr. Ernest Weekley has well , results in nothing better than asculation. "Stability in lange," he adds, "is synonymous with *mortis*." But such efforts, fortuely, seldom succeed. The schoolam has been trying since the olution to bring American Enh to her rules, but it goes on uting and coruscating in spite of like the vigorous organism it is. guess is that it will eventually quer the English of England, and pread its gaudy inventions round globe. When Macaulay's New lander stands at last upon the ribs London Bridge, it will be in lusty erican, not in embalmed London Oxford) English, that he will e his polite regrets.

his guess indeed is rather too to be quite sporting. English has n yielding to American for fifty s past, and since the turn of the ury it has been yielding at a contly accelerated rate. The flow of elties in vocabulary, in idiom, n in pronunciation, is now overlmingly eastward. We seldom ow an English word or phrase more, though we used to borrow

l of, and to get over.

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...ny for the English take in our in... almost as fast as we can ...ish them. The American movie, I suppose, is largely responsible for ...e change, but there are unques...onably deeper causes too. English, subjected to a violent policing in the Eighteenth Century, has scarcely recovered; it is still a bit tight, a bit stiff, more than a little artificial. But American, having escaped that policing and become quickly immune to the subsequent schoolma'am, has gone on developing with almost Elizabethan prodigality. All the processes of word-formation that were in operation in Shakespeare's England are still in operation here, and they produce a steady stream of neologisms that he would have relished as joyfully as he relished the novelties actually produced in his time, for example, *lonely*, *multitudinous*, *dwindle*, and *bump*.

The English, from the Age of Anne onward, have resisted the march of American with a mixture of patriotic watchfulness and moral indignation, albeit with steadily decreasing effectiveness. . . . The main attack began in 1787, when the *European Review* fell upon the English of Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia*, and especially upon his use of *to belittle*, apparently his own invention. Thus it roared:

> *Belittle!* What an expression! It may be an elegant one in Virginia, and even perfectly intelligible; but for our part, all we can do is to *guess* at its meaning. [A fling at another Americanism.] For shame, Mr. Jefferson! Why, after trampling upon the honor of our country—why trample also upon the very grammar of our language? . . . * Freely, good sir, will we forgive all your attacks, impotent as they are illiberal, upon our national character; but for the future spare—O spare, we beseech you, our mother-tongue!

. . . [S]oon all the other English reviews of the time, and especially the *Edinburgh*, the *Monthly Mirror*, the *Critical*, the *Annual*, and the *British Critic*, were heavily engaged. The *Annual* . . . denounced "the torrent of barbarous phraseology" that was pouring from the new republic, and the *Monthly Mirror*, forgetting the Treaty of Paris, moaned and beat its breast over "the corruptions and barbarities which are hourly obtaining in the speech of our trans-Atlantic *colonies*." But the most violent of all the periodical alarmists was the *Edinburgh*, then edited by the bitterly anti-American William Gifford. In almost every issue Gifford warned his readers that the toleration of Americanisms would ruin the English language irrevocably, and it was also he, I believe, who spread the story that the Americans were preparing to abandon English altogether, and to use Hebrew (or Greek, or some unnamed Indian language) in its stead.

The English travelers who began to swarm in America after 1800, and especially after the War of 1812, gave willing aid in this benign work, and scarcely one of them failed to record his horror over the new American words that he encountered, and the unfamiliar American pronunciation. Captain Basil Hall, who was here in 1827 and 1828, went to the length of making a call upon Noah Webster, then a septuagenarian, to lodge his protest.

"Surely," he said, "such innovations are to be deprecated?"

"I don't know that," replied Webster stoutly. "If a word becomes universally current in America, why should it not take its station in the language?"

"Because," answered Hall, with a magnificent resort to British complacency, "there are words enough already."

This hostility continues into our own day. At regular intervals the London dailies and weeklies break into sonorous complaints against the American invasion. The latest inventions of the Hollywood gag-writers are seized upon as proofs that the language is fast going to pot in this country, along with the sub-species of the human race that speaks it. Even the relatively cautious and plainly useful simplicities of American spelling (as in the *-or* words, for example) are sometimes denou... with great rancor. But it is real... late for the English to guard the... ty of their native tongue, for so... Americanisms have already go... it that, on some levels at least... now almost an American dial... has often amused me to cou... Americanisms in articles writ... put them down. There are hu... of them in daily use in Englan... many have become so familia... an Englishman, on being chal... for using them, will commonly... that they are actually English.

Thus a note of despair reve... self in the current objurgation... there are Englishmen who b... that the time has come to c... mise with the invasion, and e... welcome it. The father of th... American party seems to hav... the late William Archer, wh... saying so long ago as 189... Americans had "enormous... riched the language, not onl... new words, but (since the Am... mind is, on the whole, quick... wittier than the English) wi... and luminous colloquial meta... The late Dr. Robert Bridges... Laureate from 1913 until his... in 1930, was of like minc... Archer, and of late there hav... influential recruits to the p... among them, Richard Aldi... Wyndham Lewis, Edward S... and Virginia Woolf. "In En... said Mrs. Woolf not long ag... word-coining power has lapse... When we want to freshen our... we borrow from American—... *cock*, *rambunctious*, *flip-flop*, ... *good mixer*. All the expressiv... vigorous slang which creeps i... among us, first in talk, later i... ing, comes from across the At...

I turn to Dr. Ogden's list ... "international" nouns for th... vocabulary—and find that ... than nine of them are Americ... English. I turn to Professor Ich... list of English words that ha... taken into Japanese—and An... isms bristle from every page. ... enough, the conquest of the v... English, if it ever comes off, w... ly be a conquest by American.

* *Author's ellipses.*

American—...rambunctious, flip-flop, booster, good m...

WATCH THE ANIMALS

By Alice Elliott Dark



We had a trying re-
ionship with Diana
ck. She was a moneyed
ıe blood, the descen-
nt of a signer, who
ıld have been one of
old guard except that
spurned the role. In-
ad, she was interested
animals to the point of
session, which in our
t of the country was
ing a lot. There were
among us who had-
mourned a loyal dog
put out scraps for a
y cat or developed a
ooth working rela-
nship with a horse.
imals had a place in
lives, to be sure, and
took seriously our re-
nsibilities toward
m. But Diana went
ther and always had.
For decades she'd chosen the com-
y of other species over compan-
ship with her own kind, a prefer-
e we naturally took as a
ction. So after she was diagnosed
h lung cancer and she began to seek homes for her menagerie in the event of her death, we didn't line up at her door. Why should we? We owed her nothing. Yet the woman was fading, and we'd known her all our lives. On the telephone, in the clubs, shops, and churchyards, we tried to decide what to do.

She first came around to plead her case in autumn, when the lanes swelled with bright leaves. We couldn't help but examine her for signs of the illness, but nothing much showed; she'd always been spare. Her eyes shone blue as ever, that was the main thing. She appeared without calling first, the way we used to do when we were liable to be having tea or drinks in the afternoon and could easily accommodate company. Now we were busy, but we didn't turn her away. Years of curiosity assured her a vigorous welcome.

"Let's sit outside," she said. "I've got the dogs, and I need a smoke." She noticed our raised eyebrows. "Well, I've got no reason not to smoke anymore, do I? I was planning to start again anyway when I turned eighty, but my schedule has been moved up a bit."

That was typical of her sense of humor—black, direct, laced with a stubbornly nonconformist aroma. We didn't smile, but she didn't care. "Where are your bird feeders?" she asked as we walked around to the back. "It's going to get cold soon."

Her voice rasped now rather than boomed, but it was still forceful. "You put the porch furniture away already? But it's only October! Oh,

e Elliott Dark is the author of Naked to Waist, *a collection of stories. Her sec- collection,* In the Gloaming, *will be lished by Simon & Schuster in January. work is included in* The Best Ameri- Short Stories of the Century.

ration by Jeffrey deCoster

all right then, we'll sit on the grass."

She always brought along at least two of her dog pack and spoke to them in a high whine, to which they responded with a great deal of tongue-wagging enthusiasm. "Stop smiling!" she'd command. They'd shiver with pleasure. Often, she kissed them on their mouths.

When we were all settled and mugs of tea had been handed around, she made her play.

"I'm leaving money to cover their expenses," she told us. The days were over when it was considered impolite to talk about money, but she made her offer sound like a bribe. It was yet another example of how clumsy she was with people.

"I'll need a promise in return," she continued. "I don't want to have to look up from where I'll no doubt be burning to see them shunted around. If you take them, you keep them for the duration."

We said we'd think it over, then changed the subject. When would she begin treatments? we wondered.

"Statistically, my chances aren't much better with chemo and cutting than they are just twiddling my thumbs, so I'm not going to let them touch me." She shook her head in a manner that conveyed her thorough disapproval of standard medical remedies. Good old Diana. It was a conversation stopper. We fumbled to pat the dogs.

"They're incredible, aren't they?" She grinned at our attention to them. "I've got all the dogs working as therapy animals in nursing homes. They can relate to anybody. What heart they have, considering how they were treated. We should all be more like dogs when we grow up."

When we compared notes on these visits, we couldn't help but bristle. It wasn't that it was unheard of to put conditions on a request, or to shore up a good deed with a financial benefit, but to do so successfully required finesse and subtlety. People want to believe they are high-minded and generous, not greedy and bought. A good monger could have offered us the same deal in terms that would have us not only clamoring to agree to it but also feeling grateful she'd come to us.

Diana created no such feeling. The only positive we could find in her pitch was that at least she understood that her animals required incentives to make them palatable. Most of them were not pure breeds or even respectable mutts. She collected creatures that others had thrown away, the beasts left on the side of the highway or confiscated from horrific existences by her contacts at the ASPCA; the maimed sprung from labs; the exhausted retired from dog tracks; the unlucky blamed for the sins of the household and made to pay with their bodies, appetites, well-being. Immigrants from hell, she called them, and made a mission of acknowledging these crimes, beginning with naming them for their misfortunes. Thus a cat who'd been paralyzed by a motorcycle was called Harley; a dog whose leg had been chopped off by its owner earned the name Beaver Cleaver; a kitten whose eyes had been sewn shut as part of a research grant went by Kitty Wonder; and so on.

She took these animals that otherwise would have ended up euthanized at best, and she trained them and groomed them and nursed them and fed them home-cooked foods until—we had to admit—they bore a resemblance to the more fortunate of their species. They behaved, as far as we could tell. But from a practical standpoint, could they ever be considered truly trustworthy? Who knew what might set them off?

We had our children and grandchildren to consider, and guests, and pets of our own. It was not a commitment that could be made in a hurry. We told one another pretty much what we'd told her—that we'd think about it. That seemed a reasonable approach, everything considered. What else could she expect?

For a while we didn't see her much, but she became the central topic of conversation, a level of attention she'd earned several times before, usually when her books came out and we'd read or hear in interviews about her anti-hierarchical theories of nature, her view of animals that countered the harsh interpretations science ascribed to their behavior, a her sorrow at the ways of the world- i.e., *our* world. She wasn't as co tentious now, but we didn't belie she'd softened underneath; perha she was finally being a little sma that was all. She wanted a favor, a she knew that she wasn't likely to g it if she didn't participate to some c gree in normal human relations.

For the benefit of younger gene tions and those new to town, at dinr parties and on Sunday walks, we peated her story—that is, how her e ly years had seemed to us. Her chil hood didn't offer much. Her pare were jolly enough, if often absent, b so were a lot of ours. She went to M Dictor's, also like a lot of us, and s rode, skated, danced. In fact, she w popular—with the boys, naturally, b cause of her looks, but also with t girls, among whom she was known a good egg. Her coming-out party w of the spare-no-expense variety, a she shone even in the requisite ivo a hard color to wear; but she overca it with tan arms, the radical touch a bracelet clasped high on her bic and her thick brown hair worn lo and loose.

We assumed she'd follow the pa we all walked: marriage to someo like-minded, a house of her own b similar to her parents', childr raised with the traditions that she membered fondly, all the little hab that connect one generation to t next. Nothing we could see in h indicated she was headed anywh but in that direction. Then h brother, the heir, died in a saili accident, and her direction change

Her parents had no other ch dren, so her father had to face t prospect of leaving all that mon albeit in trust, to a woman. He le be known far and wide that he w not happy about this. He never s a word about losing his son, but t death of the line and his name— hand strayed north to massage aching heart when he spoke of it.

"Don't be ridiculous," we t him. "Diana will have children, a they'll be your descendants."

"But they won't be Fricks," he s dolefully.

We felt sorry for Caroline, h wife, and could only imagine t

le of second-class citizenship in ich she must live. Our efforts to ng his thinking into the modern rld made no dent, however. He d only a few years later, full of -pity to the end. We hoped Caro- e would then become a merry low, but as often happens, she fol- ed him shortly to the grave.

Diana got everything.

She had suitors, of course; beauty l money are an attractive combi- ion. Every so often a fellow would he believed he was getting some- ere with her, but it never panned . When an interviewer later asked y she'd never married, she replied t from childhood she knew she l a vocation and couldn't afford distraction of human love—spo- as if she were a nun. But her call- was low rather than high, down he level of the animals, and we couldn't help but think it a delusion and a waste.

he was in her early twenties en her first book appeared, an an- opomorphic children's tale, sim- yet effectively illustrated, that ght on well enough to lead to an- er, and more after that, until the es was a standard in every nurs- , a basic christening gift. The rld loved them; we alone were ivalent. How could we not be? e characters were a barnyard of fa- iar types, replete with our habits belittled by suggestions of in- eding and snobbery. We saw our- es drawn with a harsh, loveless and felt stung by her portrayal, ecially as we were *proud* of her.

We never spoke to her about our se of injury, however. As we did n our own children, we showed at support we could while we ted for the day when she'd come is offering thanks or forgiveness erhaps a smaller token of recon- ation—a recognition, in any case. Meantime, she bought a piece of l close to town and made it into ntleman's farm, pruning the trees y until she had rolling vistas and ting in a pond and an off-limits of sod next to it to accommo- e the nesting habits of Canadian se. In her forties, she took in a se- of foster children and brought

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SOLUTION TO THE AUGUST PUZZLE

P	O	I	N	T		D	R	A	W	S	A	
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S	E	X	I	S	T	S	I	N	T	E	R	

NOTES FOR "PUZZLE ABOUT NOTHING":

The empty square stands for either the word SPACE *or the word* BLANK. *Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).*

ACROSS: 1. p(O)int; 6. a sward (rev.); 12. reve(a)l; 14. (t)aunt; 15. *; 17. *; 18. since-r.-e.; 19. *; 21. be-be; 24. *; 26. ale-c(lear); 28. chi(cago); 29. w-E.T., E.T.'s; 32. rot-ate; 33. car-l-bou(ght) 34. nu (homonym); 36. n-Wang (rev.); 38. W(I'd)e-Opens; 42. (s)elect; 43. m(use)e; 44. B.(all)S.; 45. kn-eeler; 46. (athlete)s-exists; 47. inter (second definition).

DOWN: 1. p(l.)ushy; 2. om-in(rev.); 3. hidden; 4. rev.; 5. *; 6. d-eceit*; 7. two mngs.; 8. washbas*-in; 9. sun-belt; 10. anil(e); 11. t(o)-ape; 13. rev.; 16. S-crew; 20. hidden; 22. be-low (pun); 23. homonym; 24. strolle(d)*; 27. counter (second meaning); 28. cr-awls; 30. Met-step*; 31. homonym; 35. in(rev.)-O.B.E.; 37. homonym; 39. (a)men; 40. tues(day)*; 41. homonym; 42. s(a)x.

[illegible] the club for swims. If she [illegible] we'd complain, we disap[illegible] her; instead, we offered to [illegible] alls for them to the schools, [illegible] turned us down flat.

"I believe in public education," she scolded, as if we didn't.

We sighed and went back to waiting, though with diminishing hope.

Perhaps if she'd been average we might not have been so bothered by her hostility. Diana was marvelous, however, in exactly the way we admired most. Hers was an artless, natural beauty that managed to get by the envy of other women while arousing in the men a filial pride—a desire for her success and happiness, as well as for her. We admired her work, too; the spirit of it if not the letter. We looked at her and saw ourselves at our best. She was the sum of our efforts over the last four hundred years in this country, and back into the past to Britain and the continent, Normandy, Saxony, the high, clear springs of our culture. We wanted to be able to trot her out at our ceremonies, to have her bend her long neck to the yoke of our charities and bow before our altars, cut ribbons at our dedication ceremonies, and stand side by side with us at our weddings and confirmations and graduations.

That she cared so little about such gatherings was irksome, to say the least. People scrabbled all their lives for just a fraction of what was hers from the start, yet she didn't feel fortunate or grateful or privileged. She preferred to be in her barn prying stones out of her horses' hooves or sitting motionless by a closet door watching a new litter of kittens pump blindly at their mother. Those things were fine, in moderation. It was her excess that we didn't understand. Or maybe it was the opposite; we understood it all too well and were afraid of it.

We'd taken to heart the often repeated caveat from our childhoods that the elders applied to all manner of deviance—*think what would happen if everyone behaved like that!* The consequence was never exactly specified; for [illegible] of us, the implication of chaos and breakdown was enough. We knew our own bad thoughts, and all, knew what we had to suppress. We understood why we couldn't indulge our baser natures or the full range of our whims; we might lose what we had if we did. How had it happened that Diana didn't understand what was at stake?

The final straw came when Diana published her autobiography. At last we learned her gripes about us, and they cast a wide net. She recounted various instances of cruelty she'd observed as a child, among which were incidents that had bothered us, too. None of us had applauded Harold Johnson's shooting of his dog for eating the Thanksgiving turkey, nor were we amused when someone nailed a cat through its feet to a plank of wood. Yet did she extend to us any credit for empathy and shock? No. We were a town without pity, a callous bunch who didn't realize, as she did, that animals have feelings and souls. Would we get rid of one of our children for taking a long time to be toilet trained or shedding too much? Would we call the police on a stranger for asking directions? Yet we perpetrated these evil deeds on animals without thinking twice.

Her arguments were silly, but the book became a hit. Souls, she claimed. That was the crux of what she had to tell the world. As always, she pushed it beyond the beyond.

The next foray in her campaign consisted of a mailing, eight double-sided pages of pictures and descriptions of her menagerie. The cover page sported the title "Full Disclosure," and, as usual, Diana meant what she said. She was certainly no mistress of persuasion—we already knew that. Yet these pages set a new standard in their complete refusal to make even the smallest nod to the principles of salesmanship. Beneath a grainy picture of each animal she described their routines in detail—ear cleanings, pillings, and other noxious chores—as well as offered predictions as to what health problems they were likely to suffer in the future. Then there were their habits and eccentricities: this one had to drink from the tap in the kitchen, that one slept under the covers by Diana's knees, and on and on. For the armchair behaviorists among the document offered interesti anecdotal evidence of how creatu adapt to hardship and abuse ver luxury and pampering—not to m tion what it revealed about Dia No wonder she never went out!

After receiving these pages, called to ask how she was. "Not b with the minor complication of st four lung cancer," she replied.

Wasn't she doing anything at a

"I'm killing the pain. Of cou they're queer about that, never w to give you enough. What differe does it make if you become addic to opiates when you're riddled w the big C? I have my sources, thou Veterinary drugs are easy to come b

We told her we knew lots of d tors and had ins at the univers hospital if she'd like us to make a calls. She responded by lecturing on birds and their need of wate the winter; we could buy solar-h ed birdbaths from such-and-such alogues.

"So no decision yet?" she pron ed.

Not yet, we replied.

"Don't wait too long, or I won' around to hear it. But no pressure

Ha ha ha.

Then she surprised us. We wer church for the children's choir vice on Christmas Eve aftern and were settling ourselves to tune of the organist's prelude w Diana walked in and took a place the aisle two-thirds of the way b For the next few moments the fieldstone nave rippled with elb ings and turnings around and h tiltings; immediately we begai compose comments for later al how she was the second-to-last son we expected to see there, as old joke went—the last being J The organist struck the chord for processional, but we took a l longer to stand than was custor as we watched her kneel all the to the ground to say her pri prayer. How beautiful she was— picture of devotion, like Jenn Jones in *The Song of Bernade* Then we stood, and she disappe beneath taller heads as the chil came up the aisle clad in the ga the ancient Israelites à la Italian

val painting: drapes, drapes, es. They made faces and batted he frankincense that one of the s swung dramatically in a censer, we gave them the usual pleased, uraging smiles as they passed.
Ve loved them best, better than thing, but at that moment we e grateful when they were finally up front posed in the familiar eau so that we could gawk at Di- It appeared that she'd bought a suit for the occasion; we hadn't her legs in years. She participatully in the service and afterward ed the crowd in the vestry who e waiting for children and grandren to drop backstage the raits and constraints of their holy onae. We assumed she wanted to gratulate them on their perforces, to play the village eccentric peaking to them exclusively, but turned quite amiably to us. ch wonderful music," she said.
We have a new organist," we ined her, though in fact he may e been well down the line since was last there.
Lovely," she said. Then the chil- appeared and loudly gave their lers' versions of the pageant. Di- was lost in the mayhem as we ed outside.
ark had fallen by then, but the was strangely balmy; there was a moon in the purple sky. It wasn't Currier & Ives Christmas we all as the ideal, but it was Christnonetheless. Our church was of fieldstone. In the precincts of churchyard, we may as well have in the home counties. Even the eyard did not betray us; the s went back far enough to afford claim to a history and a past. knew that the teenagers some- went there at night to try to k themselves—but that seemed mpulse the flip side of Sunday ning, and the rector ignored as long as they did no harm.
any of us took a detour before g to our cars and walked for a moments down the narrow path- among the markers. Here were parents, grandparents, ancestors. pite of our tacit assumption that here and now was the end of it, ound ourselves addressing them in our minds. "It's Christmas Eve again," we informed them, "and, as always, everything and nothing has changed." We didn't go in much for putting flowers on the graves, but it was seemly to stop for a moment of acknowledgment. It was a moment of calm before the revels, part of our yearly ritual.

Then Diana walked past us and made her way to the Frick family plot. We saw her bow her head and her hands rise to her face. We winced. We'd all had the thought when standing by those graves that we'd be there soon enough ourselves, but for Diana the time was imminent. She wasn't toying with history, as we were, but staring directly at her own extinction. It was natural, yes, but still awful. When she rejoined us, we could see the disease in her. Without benefit of the flattering church light, she appeared emaciated, her skin thin and gray.

"We're having cocktails at the Gardeners'. Why don't you come?" We didn't like the idea of her going home to an empty house. Not on Christmas. Even by choice.

She smelled like our adolescent girls who put vanilla on their pulse points in the summer.

"I thank you very much," she said, "but I have mouths to feed."

She said this plainly, imbuing it with no hint. Yet the spirit of the day was in us, and the favor she'd asked seemed logical rather than an imposing chore.

Laddie Phillips spoke first. "Look," he said. "I'll take that greyhound. Rescued from a dog track, was he?"

Mina Jones, never one to be outdone, instantly said she'd take two cats—*at least*, she added, affording her room to maneuver in case anyone displayed a more impressive generosity.

Ben Knowlton, home from college, asked for the pit bull.

"The Staffordshire terrier," Diana instructed. Then, as if coaching herself to be agreeable, she gave a shake of her head that ended in a softening of her expression. "But perhaps it's a good thing to say pit bull. You and she can be ambassadors for the breed."

And so it went until nearly every animal was spoken for and promises made to find placements for the rest.

"So how about that drink?" we offered again. There was a pause. How could she refuse? She couldn't, and, finally, she understood that. She followed us out of the parking lot.

The next morning, after all the presents had been opened and the wrapping paper was blazing in the fireplace, we felt the usual letdown, not the smallest part of which was regret for having acted so impulsively with Diana. By lunchtime, however, we felt ourselves again and glad of our gesture. We'd opened a door that had been locked for decades. It seemed a good omen for the new year.

After that, we began calling to ask how she was. Soon, without calling first, we stopped by to drop off leftovers. We offered to take her dogs for a walk so she didn't have to go out in the rain. In other words, we did all in our power to show her that even if she had never taken our side, we were nevertheless on hers.

At first, predictably, she declined, and when we wouldn't hear of it, she flat-out refused our ministrations.

"Go away," she'd shout when we knocked on her windows. It was quite a picture, seeing this frail shrinking creature waving her bird arms at us, as if she could keep us out. We no longer took it personally. She was dying, and there was no time to dwell on slights or insults, no room for the luxuries of holding grudges and taking offense. She needed us at last, and her need was as good as an apology. We took her keys to the hardware store and made copies, then set up a schedule of rotating shifts so that except for at night after we'd tucked her into bed she was never alone. It was a lot of work, but it was what we'd do for any sister or mother or aunt; it was simply right.

The one difficulty was her habit of sleeping with all the dogs in her bedroom. We didn't think it was safe; if any one of them knocked her over, her bones would surely shatter. Before we left we put them in their cages, but when we arrived the next morning there they were, on her bed and all along the walls like wainscoting. No matter how patiently we explained the danger to her, she per-

[illegible] waking downstairs at [illegible] hearing them up.

[illegible] going to have to put you [illegible] home if you don't take [illegible] yourself," we told her. We [illegible] out of exasperation, the way [illegible] told the children that Santa [illegible] wouldn't come if they were bad.

"Dogs go off on their own to die," [illegible] said.

"You're not a dog." It was like talking to a child, and we became childish ourselves, doing it. We wanted to wring her skinny neck.

"Leave me alone," she said.

We were tempted, but we couldn't. She had no one else.

One early spring morning the house seemed unnaturally quiet. Usually Diana had let the dogs out by the time we arrived. It was the one part of her old routine she maintained even after she'd become too weak to manage their heavy bowls of food and water anymore. In our experience, she'd never kept them waiting past seven. And so we knew.

We weren't squeamish, yet we tiptoed up the stairs and approached her room with trepidation. We needn't have worried, though. The scene, when we finally faced it, was peaceful. Diana had that mythic look of death that apes sleep, while the absence of her singular spirit made the room feel empty. The only disturbing note was that the dogs were still with her—the large ones in their customary spots along the walls and the smaller creatures arrayed around her on the bed like a wreath. When we entered, they eyed us lugubriously.

"Out!" we commanded, but they didn't move.

Then we forgot them for some time as we began to piece together details we'd overlooked at first glance. We pulled the curtains and, in the early light, saw that a crust of powder ringed her lips, and scattered on the bedside table and the floor below lay dozens of gelatin capsules, all of them opened and empty. How typical of Diana to do things her way, regardless of any constraints of law or ethics. Yet we didn't disapprove of her for it. It was her choice, we decided, as we would want it to be for ourselves. There was no reason for anyone else to know, however. The world at large isn't always as understanding as one's own kind, and we feared they might judge her weak or criminal. We cleaned up the pill bottles, washed out the glass, and tucked the note she'd left in a pocket for disposal at home. She hadn't written much anyway, just three words: *Watch the dogs*. It was an odd exhortation, as we'd already agreed to it. It reminded us, though, that they were still in the room.

"Shoo!" we ordered, with no luck. Then someone recalled the ironic command Diana used when she wanted them to hop in their crates. It might at least get them downstairs, where we could deal with them more easily.

"Prison time!" we said, imitating her singsong way of speaking to them. The phrase got *some* results; they stood and walked to the door. Then they stopped, though, and simply stared. Was there another command we should be giving? We racked our brains. Meanwhile, it was eerie how they looked at us. It was as if they understood they'd never see her again, and that within the day they'd be in strange houses, separated from one another, adjusting to new circumstances and people and demands.

"Prison time!" we said again.

This time they seemed ready to obey, but not before taking what appeared to be a last look back at Diana. Was it possible they had an inkling of what was happening? No doubt they recognized death; but the idea that they might feel grief was another matter. That was a notion from Diana's realm, not ours. We'd interpret the dogs' baleful behavior as consternation at a disruption in their routine. Diana would say they were bereft. Who was right? It occurred to us that the greatest tribute we could pay her would be to give her, for once, the benefit of the doubt. (Perhaps the only tribute, for she'd always said she wouldn't be caught dead having a funeral.) And why not? What could we lose by extending them our empathy; what would we gain by holding back? We afforded them a moment of silence. What went on during that time we would never know. The way t[illegible] looked at us afterward, though [illegible] didn't believe in an afterlife, n[illegible] corporeal one at least, but in spi[illegible] ourselves, we hoped she could se[illegible]

Finally we coaxed them out [illegible] and began to notify everyone. [illegible] man at the *New York Times* had [illegible] on Diana already and rang bac[illegible] verify the details.

"Name of hospital?" he asked.

Oh no, we said, no hospital, [illegible] of that. On the contrary, the end[illegible] quite soulful, what we'd all like w[illegible] the time comes—to die at h[illegible] during sleep, surrounded by frien[illegible]

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1 NBC (Los Angeles)/CBS (Los Ang[illegible] ABC (N.Y.C.)/*The Complete Directo[illegible] Prime Time Network and Cable TV S[illegible] 1946–Present*, Ballantine (N.Y.C.); **2** Sports (N.Y.C.)/NBC Sports (N.Y[illegible] **3,4** Harvard Eating Disorders Ce[illegible] (Boston); **5,6** The National School [illegible] ty Center (Westlake Village, Calif[illegible] City University of New York (N.Y.C[illegible] Psychemedics Corporation (Cambr[illegible] Mass.); **9** Wyoming Methampheta[illegible] Initiative (Cheyenne, Wyo.); **10** A[illegible] (Washington); **11** Orange County Di[illegible] Nine Medical Examiner's Office (Orl[illegible] Fla.); **12** State Attorney's Office (T[illegible] hassee, Fla.); **13** State Senator Rodn[illegible] lis (Austin, Tex.); **14** Southern Cent[illegible] Human Rights (Atlanta, Ga.); **15** T[illegible] A&M University (College Sta[illegible] Tex.)/California Department of Foo[illegible] Agriculture (Sacramento, Calif.); **16** Ulrich Mueller, University of T[illegible] (Austin); **17** The British Weights Measures System (Edinburgh); **18** Spencer International School (Lon[illegible] **19** *Scottish Sun* (Glasgow); **20** Pal[illegible] Teamworks (Los Angeles); **21,22** A[illegible] (N.Y.C.); **23** Amnesty Internati[illegible] (N.Y.C.); **24** Federation of American[illegible] entists (Washington); **25** Taipei Ecor[illegible] and Cultural Representative C[illegible] (N.Y.C.); **26** Cuban Interest Se[illegible] (Washington); **27** Motael Clinic (Di[illegible] donesia); **28** Kaiser Permanente Div[illegible] of Research (Oakland, Calif.); **29** New-York Historical Society (N.Y.C[illegible] Prof. Saul Cornell, Ohio State Univ[illegible] (Columbus); **31** Bureau of Indian A[illegible] (Washington) /Franklin Delano Roo[illegible] Library (Hyde Park, N.Y.); **32** Bus[illegible] President, Inc. (Austin, Tex.); **33,3** [illegible] fice of the Governor (Tallahassee, [illegible] **35** Fox News/Opinion Dynamics [illegible] (N.Y.C.); **36,37** Buchanan 2000 (Mc[illegible] Va.); **38** Office of Sen. Orrin H[illegible] (Washington); **39** Bubbles (Washing[illegible]

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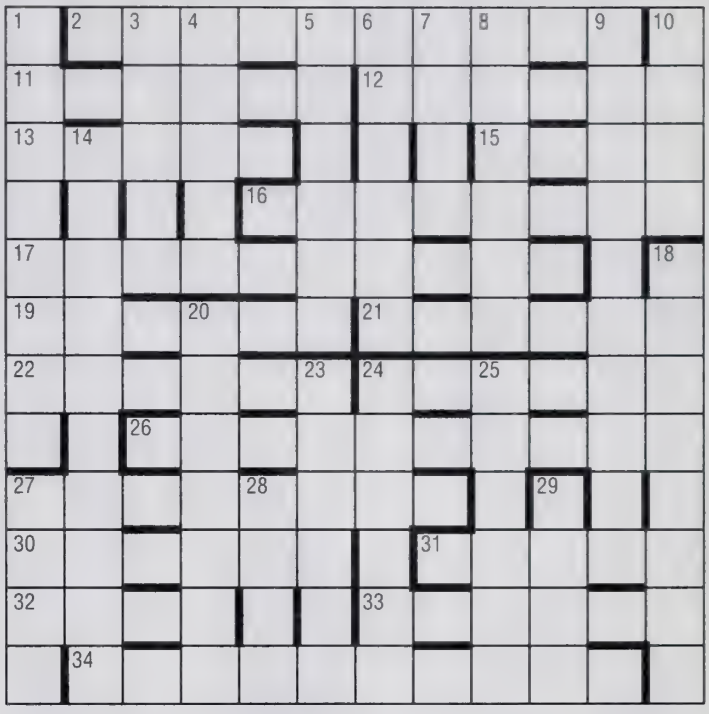
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PUZZLE

Printer's Devilry

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.
(with acknowledgments to Afrit of The Listener*)*



Each clue is a passage (one or two sentences) from which the printer has removed a hidden answer, closing the gap, taking liberties with punctuation and spacing, but not disturbing the order of the remaining letters. For example, the sentence *Gosh, are stoppers ever ingenious—they keep you from spilling liquor!* conceals the word PERSEVERING. Removing it, the printer might offer as a clue: *Go shares to pen IOUs—they keep you from spilling liquor*. Each passage, when reconstructed, makes sense, and each clue is full enough to hint at what the subject is about. Note that, as in the example, none of the clues gives a definition of the hidden word.

Answers include four proper names: a place, a geographical adjective, a man's name, and a famous musician. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 93.

ACROSS

2. Doth, as a credo, rat? O riotous! I can gel, I can dairy whether 'tis chorale or chamber piece (10)
11. What U.N.-United States Rams get into, where, kin to a field, it's every male for himself (6)
12. She changes doctors, often her curler. Gist: "I's curing her asthma!" (6)
13. The truth is that old folktale, though the cliché may seem that the aged need extra rest (5)
15. I can, while listening to ammunition ice sweaters—20 with classical FM (4)
16. Good news for Manhattan lover's new test! Find Samara, so no need to worry about red dye #3 (8)
17. Thought he, "Testimony of Clinton was the definition *offal-sing* was to the U.S. public." (10)
19. The quality of a painter's ear, then tones, depends on the, um, being in his landscapes (6)
21. The Coast Guard responds to any—so store-sales (6)
22. In Pennsylvania, if you can't stay putrid, eat rain, not hail (road system only) (6)
24. A tour? Zoom! Any people want to see our tan, dermal odorous young swine from Malaysia? (6)
26. Their regard, less from regardless example, shows hog ate son—repeating a colloquial error (10)
27. You will see Nob in dust—ant, if ying—against her child in an Indian court (8)
30. Inane, nope! An ambassador ships a redesired post—sandlots of diplomats hold out for one (6)
31. Moslems no longer hate to seethe in fight. I? Me, too (5)
32. The movie with the most chilling fever: "I"—shadowy choice—ran down my spine (4)
33. We're shot. Ours "extra-depict." I rely on hearing of new anti-porn laws (6)
34. A neglected son might miss his fat, ending boy scout meetings alone (10)

DOWN

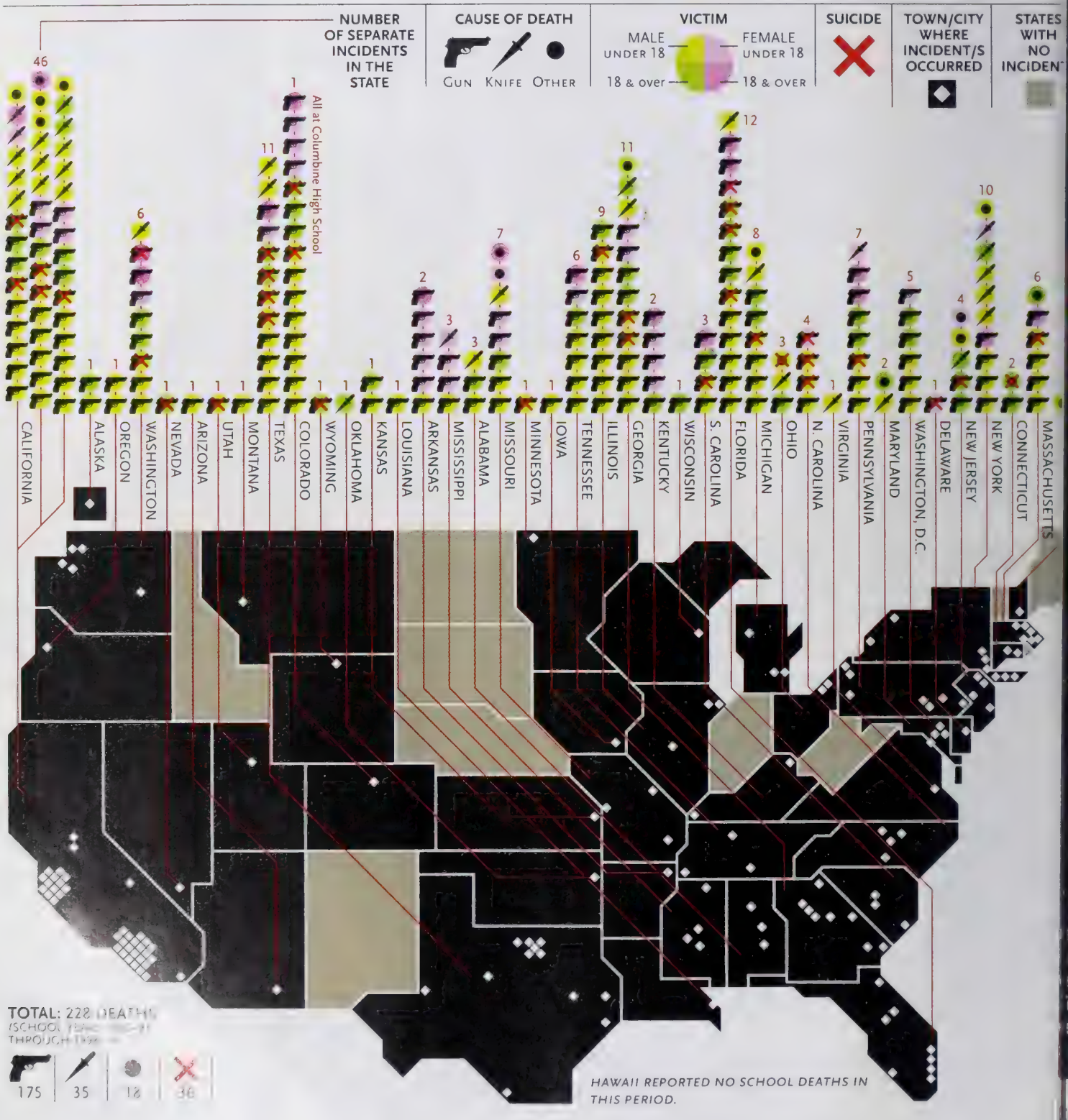
1. Just as Florentines turned to spin a chrome pendent on a string: be an Oriented cuisine (8)
3. For the lonely violin is, tan or chest, Rome (5)
4. Becoming "Thebes Tinfoils" is big bust! O me! Present a bigger challenge! (5)
5. When it comes, Tows is the cleverest game (6)
6. Lucrezia would be, in Gabon, done poisoning (6)
7. In business, when giving a Managua rani cities, like contracts help (4)
8. Muscle tone is hard for one alone to keep in the mats—exercise to get her daily (6)
9. In fogs, crew's lacking, so narrow sore lines (10)
10. Cows give mom ego at Sal's, "odor am scant" (4)
14. Working, Guy Swan, too, keep their coffee hot! (10)
18. Pursuing the perfect cream: lead, a skin care protocol, led with aloe (8)
20. Not the Ames Bros., or the partial Ames, or the quai there—specially noted Ames solo (7)
23. One frosty mornin', Gina, Parisian *gare*, covered the windows—a hoary story! (6)
24. Driving N.Y., to last overnight then, goon! (6)
25. They vowed eternal love but somehow four—Ned, out to bet, ill Monday (6)
27. Any operatic deed's one normal. Ike parts—he can build a career up on (4)
28. He's her best while beau since they're broken up (4)
29. A raft best gives one an equal shot at winning (4)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Printer's Devilry," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by September 6. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the November issue. Winners of the July puzzle, "Gremlins," are James A. Sark, Westland, Michigan; Shirley Spieckerman, Fort Worth, Texas; and Ruth Sutch, Largo, Florida.

BEYOND COLUMBINE



espite the outcry over the multiple killings at schools in Kentucky, Arkansas, Oregon, and Colorado in the la two years, these incidents represent less than half of all violent school deaths during that period. Although th annual number of fatalities—on campus, at off-campus school events, and in transit to and from school—h dropped since the early Nineties, the portion involving guns has remained fairly steady. At the same time, th incidence of suicide has increased by a third. Girls, who once accounted for 5 percent of murder victims, no account for 27 percent. In the 1992–93 school year, nearly one in two of all school deaths took place in Ca fornia, Texas, or New York; last year one in six did.



Map by Nigel Holmes, based on information from the National School Safety C



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From left to right:

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LETTERS

Exhuming the Novel

Although I am not named in Jonathan Dee's piquant essay regarding literary graverobbing ["The Reanimators," June], I nonetheless stand guilty of a number of such exhumations myself: three of my eight novels and a good number of my best-known stories are centered around historical figures. I can't presume to speak to the methods and intentions of my fellow novelists, but I can defend my own and perhaps offer a countervailing view of Dee's main argument—that the presence of historical figures in a work of fiction somehow diminishes the imaginative sphere of the novel.

It just ain't so. On the contrary, books such as E. L. Doctorow's *Ragtime* and Robert Coover's *The Public Burning* have opened up new imaginative territory and extended the range of what the novel can do. When my first novel, a fictionalized account of Mungo Park's two expeditions to the Niger River at the turn of the nineteenth century, was released in 1982, my editor suggested that I run a disclaimer at the front of the book, so as to save British historians the trouble of firing off outraged letters to the pu lisher. It reads:

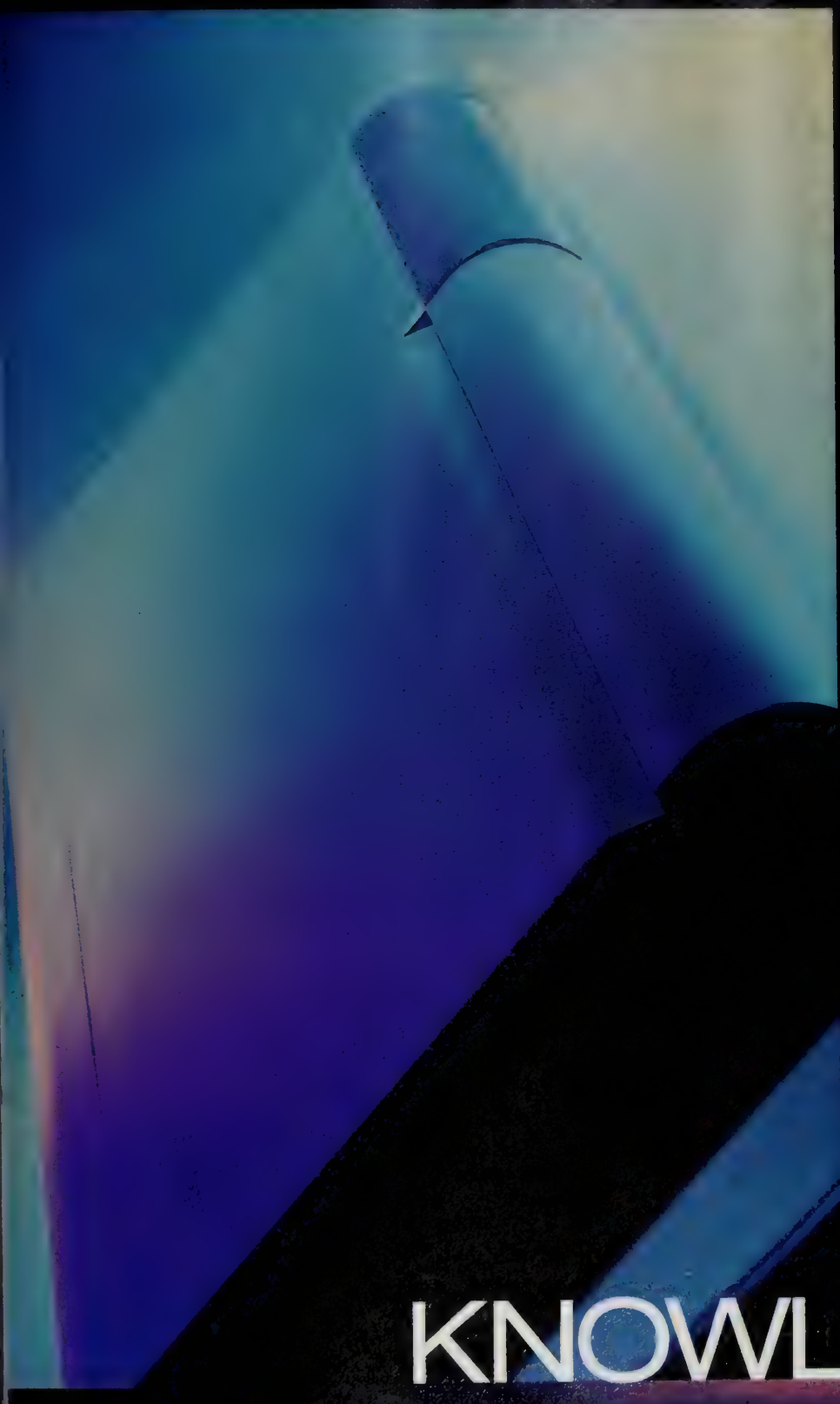
> As the impetus behind *Water Music* principally aesthetic rather than sch early, I've made use of the historical bac ground because of the joy and fascir tion I find in it, and not out of a des to scrupulously dramatize or reconstr events that are a matter of record. I ha been deliberately anachronistic, I ha invented language and terminology have strayed from and expanded up my original sources. Where histori fact proved a barrier to the exigencies invention, I have, with full knowled and clear conscience, reshaped it to my purposes.

In subsequent novels—*The Road Wellville*, which features Dr. Jol Harvey Kellogg, inventor of the co flake, and *Riven Rock*, which de with the spectacularly dysfunctior marriage of Stanley and Katheri Dexter McCormick—I've held to t spirit of that disclaimer. The joy me in using these figures is in holdi up their beliefs and attitudes to t scrutiny of our time, for good sati fun, yes, but also to demonstrate h we've arrived here from there.

And finally, there is a real enga ment in the idea of dramatizing u known or mysterious moments these characters' lives. My st about the bluesman Robert Johns for instance, illustrates how he di There are any number of legend scenarios, but the one that most pealed to me is this: he did a wor wrong, and she poisoned him. the legends collide, but at least

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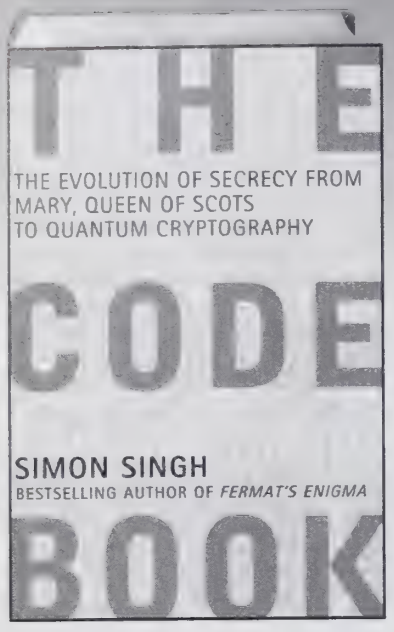
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my telling, we have something definitive, a closure, a story. And isn't this what fiction is supposed to do, tell a story?

T. Coraghessan Boyle
Santa Barbara, Calif.

"Literary graverobbing," as defined by Jonathan Dee, seems hardly a new phenomenon. What is new is the progress made by journalism in documenting historical lives. In offering us an excess of personal detail, it's journalism that finally approached literature, and not vice versa. Literary writers, in turn, draw upon research tools and historic documentation that have never before been so easily available.

Michael Shaara's Pulitzer Prize–winner, *The Killer Angels*, animates such historical protagonists as Robert E. Lee. Does a greater mix of specifics and speculation about famous men make Shaara's a lesser novel of war than Stephen Crane's more fictional *The Red Badge of Courage?*

Felix R. Gorrio
Washington, D.C.

Jonathan Dee errs in his treatment of *The Executioner's Song*. Whatever Norman Mailer's self-aggrandizing motives for terming his book a "true life novel," I find the term apt and even modest. That is, the liberties that Mailer takes with such swagger (doctoring Gilmore's letters, ascribing dreams to Dr. Woods) are the very liberties I warrant that any historian takes surreptitiously, even unconsciously. Dee says that we get Mailer's orchestration of facts and fiction "in place of truth." Had Mailer insisted that the book were entirely true, we would have to pin him with an even bigger God complex than Dee suggests he has. Mailer's deliberate strayings from fact are insignificant compared with the gap that necessarily exists between truth and any historian's version thereof.

Dee worries that the New Journalists' willingness to play with facts has resulted in "lasting harm" to both nonfiction and our idea of reality. Consider Thucydides' note at t beginning of *The History of the Pe ponnesian War:*

> So my method has been, while ke ing as closely as possible to the gen al sense of the words that were act ly used, to make the speakers what, in my opinion, was called for each situation.

Whatever harm was going to inflicted on us by the blurring of f and authorial imagination wo have been achieved at least as ea as 400 B.C., and certainly before t advent of New Journalism in t late 1960s.

Ann McCarthy
Dorchester, Mass.

Jonathan Dee's claim that "rea ty's triumph over the novelis powers of invention is nearly co plete" is accurate though grim, h he surrenders too much ground conceding that movies, unlike n els, "are by their very nature forc into a certain honesty with th audience."

In the end, any author or mov maker who attempts to portray t interior life of an actual human l ing rather than that of an invent character has diminished the act creation in an effort to achiev flawed understanding of one life stead of a metaphorical explorati of the general human condition.

Dee blames the novelist, bu work's audience is equally respon ble for the recent spate of fact-driv narratives: critics accused the fi *Shakespeare in Love* of being histo cally inaccurate despite the scre writer's intention to explore poe inspiration with his script, not present a literal re-creation of t genesis of *Romeo and Juliet*.

The mass hunger appears to be movies that do no more than acco pany a bucket of popcorn and novels that forgo their capacity serious inquiry in uncharted terri ry. It is all too fitting, then, th many readers perceive novels as things that are displayed next candy bars at the local grocery sto

Mike Gensler
The Plains, Va.

en Dispirit

As a teenager, I resent Thomas de ngotita's essay on the murders at lumbine High School and youth lence generally ["The Gunfire Di- gues," July] for the self-assurance h which he claims to know me, same kind of smug self-assurance nibited by those who dominate media, the psychiatrists, politi- , and reporters Zengotita resem- s but so harshly criticizes. None of m knows what is wrong (or right) h today's youth because they are a part of today's youth, and they ve allowed their age and experi- e to limit their worldview instead expand it. They are certainly not lified to tell me why I play vio- t video games, or to label me ei- r "the shooter" or a politically athetic" teen.

As a "geek," I can tell you that ne of us play video games to learn w (or why) to shoot people. For video games do not cause vio- ce; they prevent it. We see games a perfectly safe release from a ysically violent reaction to the ly abuse leveled at us. Games h as Doom are not, as Zengotita gests, "entire environments of tosterone-stimulating violence in ich [we] compensate virtually for ysical inequities." As the motto of online video-game service goes, yber bullets don't kill." It should noted, by the way, that most of makers of these video games are side my generation.

Why is it that when a teen plays a lent video game it's considered moral, but when a group of teens s on body armor and rushes onto otball field to beat the living day- ts out of one another it's consid- d a healthy adolescent activity?

Also, how is the content of video nes worse than the content of ne great literary works? *Lolita*, of rse, is about pedophilia, and *me and Punishment* is a study of rder, as is, in part, *To Kill a Mock- bird*. Are we corrupted by these ts? Is it evil to become so en- ssed in the story that one imag- s seeing Boo Radley's knife plunge o the back of Scout's kidnapper?

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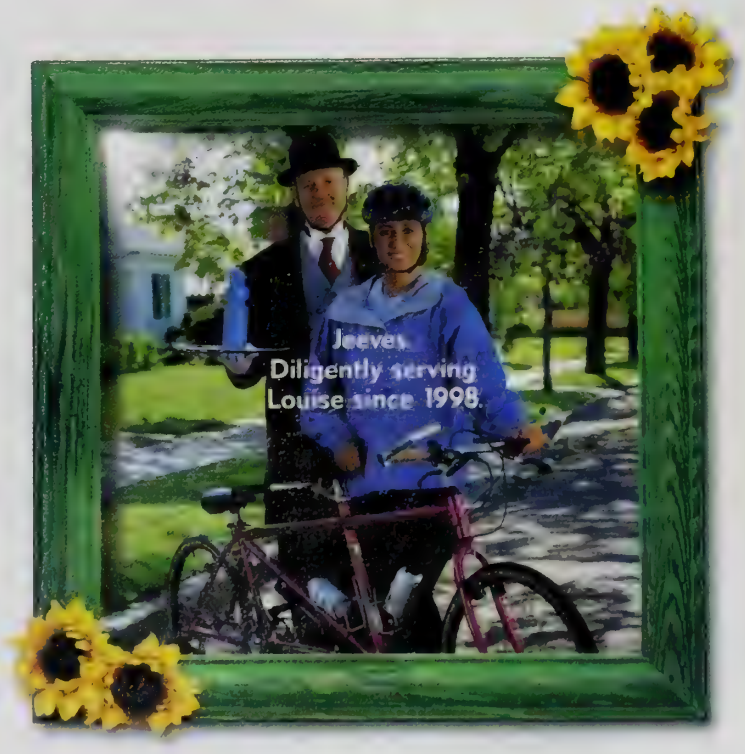
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The so-called experts should put away their pens and spend more time with their children or grandchildren, or better yet, adopt a child who has no home or family. Because there's only one sure way to prevent youth violence, and that is by taking care of youth.

Joe Stavitsky
jamesson@cyberwar.com

When I was a teenager, my parents encouraged me to study the lyrics accompanying the heavy-metal music I worshiped. Because I was given analytical tools that allowed me to place my experiences in a proper context, I was able to extract the positive messages in the music of Megadeth, laugh at the satire of Suicidal Tendencies, and ignore the satanic rumblings of groups such as Deicide. With adequate encouragement and challenges from parents, there's no reason teenagers should be denied full engagement in their own culture, as long as they are aware and critical participants.

Shahryar Sheibani
Toronto, Ontario

Thomas de Zengotita's reduction of the massacre at Columbine High School and his glib description of the "set" and the "cast" of the "show" feel a lot like the kind of "knowingness and irony" that he points to as a symptom of virtual violence. The media may turn a tragedy into a circus, but I prefer a news anchor's "grave-demeanor-reserved-for-inexplicable-evil mode" to Zengotita's detachment. Is it possible to address the cultural and virtual implications of a tragedy while doing justice to the terrible reality of the event itself?

Max Ludington
New York City

Candy for the Credulous

Michael Hirsh argues that America's reverence for "Wilsonian idealism" and open-market economics essentially forced our hand so that we had to act in Kosovo to contain "the damage caused by our own gospel" ["At War with Ourselves," July]. But the notion of an American reverence for Wilsonian idealism is an obscene joke. The past one hundred years have seen a continuous effort by the United States to hammer the rest of the world into something safe and profitable for the American investor. We have destroyed militarist, fascist, socialist, and democratic governments that resisted our influence, and we have supported militarist, fascist, socialist, and democratic governments that played ball. The American Century began with a bloodbath in the Philippines and ends with the ongoing genocide of Iraqi children.

A hundred years ago, anti-imperialist sentiment, a vital political force in the United States, restrained elite ambitions, but the advent of relentless propaganda (invented as a science this century) has changed all that.

Afshin Rouhani
Gilroy, Calif.

That America ever enjoyed a reputation as a "Gentle Hegemon, the enlightened victor of the Cold War," or that the rest of the world was ever "needy for its advice," is candy for the credulous. The only question the world consistently asks is, "How can we stop you from meddling in our affairs without getting bombed, starved, or bankrupted?"

Kenneth Champeon
Chiang Mai, Thailand

The Joy of Copying

I enjoyed Ken Kalfus's story rhapsodizing on the "ditto" copies handed out in school ["A Remembrance of Ink Past," July Readings]. I have often used this method of duplication myself and still have a machine and some supplies for it. The word "ditto" was the name of one of the companies that made these machines. The correct generic name is "spirit duplicator."

I was surprised at Kalfus's recollection that the copies were warm, because the spirit fluid is a mixture of methanol, water, and ethylene glycol. The methanol evaporates quite rapidly at room temperature and should make the fresh spirit cop cool. Incidentally, both t methanol and the ethylene glyc are poisonous. Methanol is som times ingested by people desper for alcohol (grain alcohol is ethan and in sufficient quantities has fa effects on the brain and liver, wh ethylene glycol can be fatal if inge ed (and is also said to taste swe which increases the hazard to sm children and animals).

Still, if inhalation of the fun were a serious hazard, the pers running the spirit duplicator wo get the largest dose. I have run many as 400 copies at a time a never noticed any effect of t fumes, nor have I ever heard of a one becoming ill while operatin spirit duplicator.

Cuyler W. Brooks Jr.
Lilburn, Ga.

A Friend by Any Name

In a July letter responding to t Shakespeare authorship debate which I participated ["The Ghost Shakespeare," April], Derran Cha ton accuses me of "wishful make-lieve" in calling Shakespeare's frie Hamlet Sadler. Like most anti-Str fordians, Charlton blithely igno the vagaries of Elizabethan spelli Hamlet and Hamnet were, strange it may seem to us, variant spellin of the same name. Thus Shak speare's will was witnessed by "Ha net Sadler" but included a bequest "Hamlett Sadler." Although Sad signed himself Hamnet, Shakespe called him Hamlet.

Jonathan Bate
Liverpool, England

Clarification: David Plotz's report South Carolina's video-poker ind try [August] contained an incorr sentence. The line, at the top of third column on page 69, reads: majority of the Democratic-co trolled senate also favored the l [on video gambling], but anti-ga bling senators successfully filib tered." The phrase should ha been "pro-gambling senators." regret any confusion this error m have caused.



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NOTEBOOK

Curtain calls

By Lewis H. Lapham

Prepare the couch; call for wine; crown thyself with roses; perfume thyself; the god bids thee remember death.

—Martial

By noon on Sunday, July 18, four days before the burial at sea, the death and transfiguration of John F. Kennedy Jr. was already old news. The story line hadn't changed since early Saturday morning (the plane missing, the Coast Guard looking for it, the passengers presumed lost), but the television coverage had been virtually continuous for twenty-eight hours on all three networks and all five news channels, and the program directors had exhausted their stocks of tragic sentiment and pious film montage. No angle had been ignored, no cliché left unexamined or unexpressed, nobody who hadn't said goodbye to America's Prince. Aviation experts had been consulted, Barbara Walters had rummaged through the closet of the Kennedy family's sexual confusion, and Dan Rather had wiped away his tears; gossip columnists had placed wreaths of brave remembrance on the altar of departed glory; historians had recalled the kingdom that once was Camelot.

Everything had been done that could be done, but the plane was still missing, and the anchorpersons didn't know what else to say. The time had come to talk of other things, preferably one's self, and for the next four days, while the flags were twice lowered to half-staff at Hyannis Port and the teddy bears propped [illegible] the sidewalk in Tribeca, the conversation turned to the happier memories of those still present—old college acquaintances, once-upon-a-time kayaking companions, doe-eyed journalists—who had known John Kennedy (or if not John Kennedy, then his sister or his dog) in the dear old days when everybody was young and beautiful and pleased to be counted among the friends and guests, the very important friends and guests, on the sailboat or the lawn.

The self-promotions carried forward into print. Introducing Monday's commemorative issue of *Time* magazine, the managing editor, Walter Isaacson, remembered having had lunch with Kennedy at "a tiny Thai restaurant" in Manhattan, just the two of them, talking about fame and destiny. Elsewhere in the magazine Lance Morrow mentioned an intimate dinner at which Kennedy had discussed Egypt and *The English Patient*; Roger Rosenblatt met Kennedy once at Hickory Hill, a family stronghold in Virginia, where he learned, firsthand among the footballs and the celery rémoulade, that "when a Kennedy smiles, the world smiles back, whether it wants to or not"; Peggy Noonan saw Kennedy the day before he disappeared, thinking to herself, "What a star, a natural star . . . King Arthur's son." Similarly fond recollections appeared in every magazine that could reach the newsstand with a special edition, the eulogists quoting Sophocles and John Milton, reminded not only of King Arthur's son but also of Telemachus, Adonis, and Agamemnon, not forgetting to count themselves among the happy few on whom Kennedy once had cast the blessing of his countenance.

The complaints began to be heard on Wednesday, and at first I was surprised both by their tone and by the broad distribution among people of different ages, temperaments, and political beliefs. The news media were still doing their usual swell job of marketing dead celebrity as live product (the plane found in 116 feet of water, the pilot's competence called into question, more grief-stricken relatives), and yet here were people who already had seen enough—literary academics scornful of the futile search for Shakespearean significance, high-minded journalists who begrudged the attention being given to the story, the coverage deemed overwrought, excessive, almost vulgar. What was surprising was the note of resentment in their voices, but it wasn't until Friday, the day of the memorial service in New York City, that I understood the nature of the general objection. I happened to be having lunch with the manager of a Wall Street hedge fund, a man of no small ego, dressed by Rolex and Ermenegildo Zegna and accustomed to betting $20 million on the movement of the Korean won. He put the matter as plainly as it could be put.

"What is this American royal crap?" he said. "And who are the Kennedys that they deserve so goddamn much attention?"

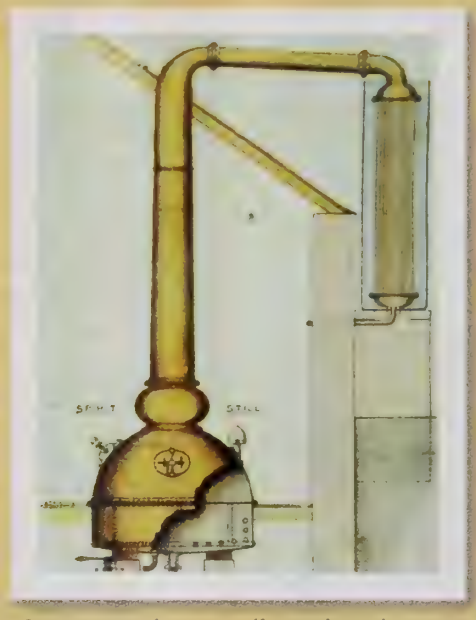
The note of envy in his voice was as unmistakable as it had been in the

ices of the self-regarding journal-
s, but he owned houses in Califor-
a and Hawaii (a man worth $100
llion after all, a friend of Arnold
hwarzenegger's), and so he didn't
ng his spoon on the table, didn't
y out in the wilderness of indiffer-
t Mexican waiters, "Yes, but what
out me?"

An admirable show of restraint, I
ought, worthy of an ancient Ro-
n. With some difficulty we man-
ed to change the subject, but I
ew that he wasn't having an easy
ne of it—on the television screen
hind the bar women with flowers
their hands were praying on the
ach at Martha's Vineyard—and so
ile we spoke of Tiger Woods and
an Greenspan, I wondered how it
ght be possible to appease his van-
. Why should he settle for an obit-
ry when he so obviously deserved
headline? No reason. No reason at
. The news media define death as
competitive consumer good, and
y shouldn't an enterprising under-
ker do the same? Make death as
morous a product as haute cou-
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o knows what fortunes might be
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if they were mere nobodies? Surely
ey would welcome an exit strategy
th dignified and entertaining, a
t hurrah agreeable to the prime-
ne audience and flattering to the
nse of self?

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lls" or "Apotheosis, Ltd.," and the
talogue, as tastefully printed as the
es by Saks Fifth Avenue or the
rwegian Cruise Line, might list the
ailable deaths under the headings
listorical," "Literary," "Cinematic,"



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"The civic-minded gentleman will find at least one of his acquaintances glad to lend a hand as surrogate for Aaron Burr."

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"A romantic aloha, offered only once a year, in early April, for large groups of trusted friends who share an appreciation for Old World luxury and a love of the sea."

Although most patrons probably would choose to associate themselves with royalty ("The Anne Boleyn," "The Princess Di"), a number of other historical stagings might prove popular ("The Joan of Arc," "The Abraham Lincoln," "The Nelson Rockefeller"); so also, among the fictional possibilities, "The Anna Karenina," "The Ahab," "The Little Nell," "The Jay Gatsby," "The Sonny Corleone."

All superb selections, of course, made to order and designed to satisfy the most discriminating taste. "The Ahab" surely would attract a following among serious environmentalists, "The Julius Caesar" among literary intellectuals with a refined sense of irony. White sperm whales might not be easy to come by, especially during the summer months off the New England coast, but in no season would it be difficult to recruit eight or nine novelists willing to stab to death, at a moment's notice and free of charge, another writer of their own age whose book remained on the *New York Times* bestseller list for longer than two weeks.

The announcement of the company's initial stock offering almost certainly would raise moral as well as legal questions, and would-be investors could expect a period of preliminary quibbling in the churches and the courts, also indignant speeches in Congress and forceful protests from the American Medical Association. Fortunately for all concerned, the news and entertainment media establish the order of the nation's priorities, and eventually their interest would prevail. Television knows no higher form of dramatic art than death as live broadcast, and the industry apologists can be relied upon to make the inspirational arguments—the American people ennobled by frequent proofs of courage, relieved not only of boredom but also of their hypochondria and chronic fear of extinction, their knowledge of history and literature improved by regular exposure to some of the greatest human stories ever told.

The production contract for "Glorious Goodbye" undoubtedly would run to many pages of small print, guaranteeing various intensities of media coverage, distinguishing between different classes of service, specifying the various arrangements for supporting cast, for the refreshments and the souvenirs. "The Marie Antoinette," for instance, could be performed in Yankee Stadium in the presence of a jeering mob, or modestly at home in Southampton in front of a few invited guests; if at Southampton, some sort of permit presumably would be required from the town council; if at the stadium, some sort of agreement with George Steinbrenner about the rights to the billboard advertising of the guillotine. The disposition of the subsidiary rights would need to account not only for film and music video but also for the market in instant relics—fragments of the car wreck, wisps of blood-stained lace, the fatal cup.

Anticipating points certain to be raised by the lawyers or the publicity people, I made a list of amenities likely to be offered at additional cost.

PAPARAZZI
On foot: $6,000 (for a party of twelve)
On motorcycles: $12,000

NAVAL VESSELS
Admiral's launch: $50,000 (by the day)
Destroyer: $200,000 (by the hour)

CATCH IN THE THROAT
By Barbara Walters: $100,000
(for a suite of four)

GRIEF-STRICKEN COUSINS
$50 (the pair)

MILITARY COSTUMES
Roman: $100 (various colors)
Napoleonic: $500 (mostly hats)
Nazi German: $25,000
(Waffen SS)

RENDING OF GARMENTS
By the editors of Time *magazine:*
$300 (by the yard)

METAPHORS
By the editors of Time *magazine:*
$300 (by the adjective)

SONG
By Franz Schubert: $3,000
By Elton John: $300,000

TEARS
By Dan Rather: $5,000 (per tear)

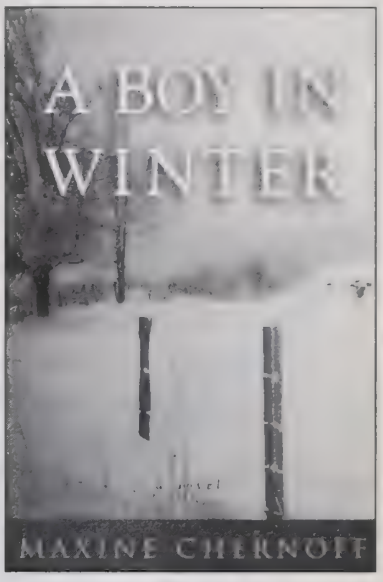
Large-scale productions requiring e supplementary deaths of other ople ("The Romeo and Juliet," he George A. Custer") would pre- nt legal questions for which the ıpreme Court might be slow to es- blish clear precedents, but most of e obstacles probably could be over- me by generous distributions of sh. Custer made his last stand at e Little Big Horn with a troop of 50 cavalrymen, in the Big Sky untry of Montana now fashionable nong our own latter-day heroes of e western plains, among them Ted ırner, Charles Schwab, and Ralph auren. Should any one of those ntlemen choose to depart under e flags of freedom, I'm sure that he uldn't begrudge generous consid- ations to the heirs of the doomed lunteers. Assume that most of the en in the ranks would be illegal migrants, convicts serving life ntences, or welfare recipients bur- ned with incurable disease, and it uld be argued that their loss was e country's gain. The National rk Service shouldn't have much uble rounding up an impressive mber of interested Native Ameri- ns; the afternoon's excitement uld draw a paying crowd at least large as the ones attending major lf tournaments; the network lucky ough to acquire the broadcast hts could sell the commercial seg- ments to Chevrolet trucks and the National Rifle Association; the gift shop could look forward to a brisk demand for empty shell casings and broken arrows.

Smaller and more exclusive entertainments might serve as fund-raising events in the manner of museum or theater benefits. The patron donates his or her death to a blameless cause, everybody enjoys a convivial evening at the Waldorf-Astoria or the New York Public Library, somebody suitably important offers a memorable toast (prices available on request), the patron slits his or her wrist at the head table, calmly bleeding to death in a golden bowl (courtesy of Cartier or Harry Winston), while the company grieves and Pavarotti sings. The more costly the substance consumed, the larger the contribution to charity, the bolder the headlines, the more beautiful the mystery of transcendence.

Once deemed socially de rigueur, the farewell banquets should encourage heroic feats of conspicuous consumption on the part of philanthropists (statesmen and movie stars as well as the merely rich) wishing to make a last favorable impression on Liz Smith and their fellow Americans. Who could display the best linen, provide the finest Damascus steel, shed the most blood? Who could afford "The Pearl Harbor," or was daring enough to make the fashion statement implicit in "The Jesus of Nazareth"?

A marvelous attitude, of course, consistent with the healthy spirit of competitive enterprise that makes the country great, but possibly conducive to frantic scenes—the one in which the woman who has planned for "The Anna Karenina" discovers that Mrs. Astor has selected "The Catherine the Great," or the awful moment in which Donald Trump's accountant tells him that he can afford "The Jack Ruby" or "The Lee Harvey Oswald" but not "The John F. Kennedy." The unpleasantness fortunately would soon pass (with any luck by 10:00 P.M. that same evening), and the society as a whole would stand to gain from the increased levels of effort and the higher prices paid for dinner tickets. ■

Accidents happen.
Healing needs a push.



"This is a finely observed, poignant story by a writer who knows a great deal about the intricate lives of families and, finally, the helplessness of parental love. What is most sobering about *A Boy in Winter* is that there are no 'bad people' in it, only flawed and loving ones, and yet tragedy visits and takes its hostage. Maxine Chernoff hears their voices perfectly as they reach for comprehension and forgiveness."

—Rosellen Brown

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HARPER'S INDEX

Number of years since 1997's Balanced Budget Act set discretionary spending caps that spending has not exceeded them : 0
Percentage change in domestic discretionary spending required through 2002 to fund Congress's proposed tax cuts : – 18
Portion of these tax cuts that will go to corporations : 9/10
Ratio of the cost of building an F-22 fighter jet to that of upgrading an F-15 to twice the F-22's effectiveness : 1,500:1
Value of Pentagon-brokered U.S. arms sales last year to Taiwan, expressed as a percentage of such sales to Israel : 92
Year in which some of the nuclear "secrets" that Congress alleges China stole were published in the U.S. : 1984
Percentage of Americans who say they're not sure whether the U.S. or Slobodan Milosevic won the war in Kosovo : 40
Number of Vietnam-era helicopters that the U.S. donated to Mexico for drug control between 1996 and 1997 : 73
Percentage of them that the U.S. agreed to take back last summer after Mexico found them defective : 100
Factor by which the 123,500 acres of coca that Colombia reports eradicating last year exceeds CIA estimates : 4
Weeks after Pakistan vowed last July to rid a disputed territory of Pakistani rebels that India downed one of its planes : 6
Estimated number of illiterates in India's population as it reached one billion last August : 300,000,000
Number of European countries with a lower adult literacy rate than that of England : 2
Amount a clerical error has cost the British government in excess payments to the Queen since 1991 : $31,500,000
Legal fees paid by Princess Diana's memorial fund this year to stop the Franklin Mint's sale of Diana souvenirs : $48,000
Ratio of daily queries on burial at sea received by the Coast Guard last August to those received a year earlier : 3:1
Minimum number of U.S. Army bases in which space has been reserved for Wiccan soldiers' seasonal rites : 8
Chances that one of the ten bishop-approved Catholic exorcists practicing in the U.S. was approved since 1993 : 9 in 10
Number of times CBS's press release for *Jesus*, the miniseries, mentions the "billions" of Christians He inspired : 2
Number of times it mentions or implies that He was Jewish : 0 (see page 24)
Minimum number of TV markets in which last August's FCC vote will allow networks to own more than one station : 50
Days after the FCC vote that a TV executive told the *New York Times* that he was eager to play the "duopoly game" : 1
Amount of corporate funding or advertising accepted by the Pacifica Radio Network's five stations since 1949 : 0
Number of days last July that Pacifica locked out the entire staff of Berkeley's KPFA over internal politics : 17
Hours after the Woodstock riots last summer that a participant told a reporter he couldn't wait to see them on TV : 6
Number of the 10 billion plastic Coke bottles distributed in the U.S. each year that are made from recycled material : 0
Number of confirmed deaths caused by doctored Halloween candy given to children by strangers : 0
Number of confirmed deaths caused by doctored Halloween candy given to children by their relatives : 1
Chance that an American who contracted rabies from a bat since 1981 survived the illness : 0
Chance that the victim noticed being bitten : 1 in 20
Percentage of the 2.3 million gallons of blood Americans could donate each month that they actually do : 0.1
Gallons of untreated sewage that spilled onto L.A.'s streets last June after a sanitation plant's Y2K test : 1,200,000
Number of tires found along the Mississippi River since 1997 by an Illinois man bent on cleaning it : 1,916 (see page 36)
Billions of gallons of water that the GOP reported released into a New Hampshire river in July for an Al Gore visit : 4
Billions of gallons actually released, and average amount released into the river each day, respectively : 1.67, 1.9
Percentage by which a year of drought had lowered the Potomac River by last August : 60
Number of federal candidates publicly declared to have "crossed a Rubicon" while campaigning this year : 3
Number of days last August that Iowa hosted both the GOP presidential straw poll and the National Hobo Convention : 1
Number of contestants who vied there for the title of 1999 Hobo King : 3

Figures cited have been adjusted for inflation and are the latest available as of August 1999. Sources are listed on page 94.
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MOST PEOPLE SEE A KID WHO'S BOUND TO MAKE TROUBLE.



Beneath the baggy clothes is usually
kid who loves challenging gravity. And
than causing problems, he may be creat
solutions—by working with city official
develop a municipal skate park.

Monitor readers know this thanks to a
story in our Wednesday "Homefront" sec

In typical fashion, we looked beneat
surface views to present a bigger picture, w
the cynicism so common in today's report
As we do on everything from kids to Kos

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A GUIDE TO HOME, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY.

Home front

Going with the grain
Award-winning furniture-maker John Hein turns exotic woods into masterpieces.
Page 13



An Irish 'fry-up'
A hearty stick-to-your-rib breakfast in Dublin is a true test of what Irish cuisine is all about.
Page 16

Neighbor to Neighbor

By David Clark Scott

Calculus of chores

Call it the new math of chores. Optimum household harmony won't be achieved by working couples if they divide the chores in half.

Rather, each spouse should do 45.8 percent of the laundry, cleaning, shopping, and dishwashing, says Claire Bird, a Brown University sociologist. The [illegible] per cent should be [illegible] off to the kids. [illegible]

The key question [illegible] under or over the 45.8 percent mark? (Don't feel compelled to answer. My Dearest.)

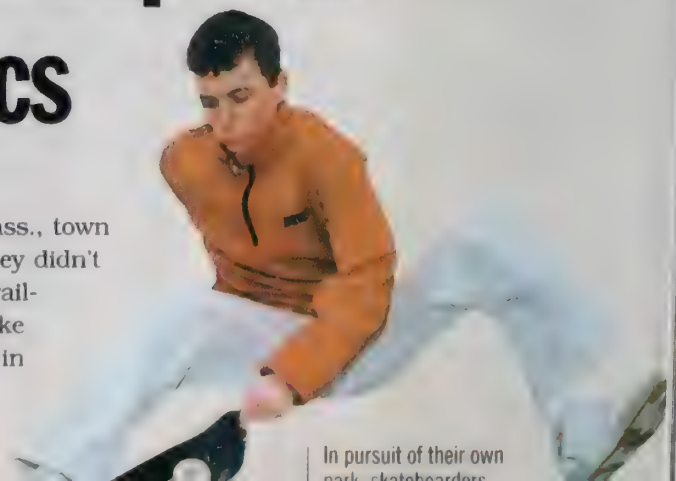
Professor Bird [illegible] to dual income U.S. homes [illegible] estimate they do about 67 [illegible]

A half-pipe leap into local politics

By Ross Atkin
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Two years ago, Plymouth, Mass., town meeting member Russ Shirley didn't know a "half pipe" from a "rail-slide." And Adam Drexler, like most teenagers, had never set foot in a town meeting.

But the unlikely union of two worlds – the youthful freewheel-



In pursuit of their own

READINGS

[Essay]

WRITERS AFOOT

By Edward Hoagland, in the Summer issue of The American Scholar. *This essay will appear as the introduction to* Best American Essays 1999, *published this month by Houghton Mifflin. Hoagland's most recent book is* Tigers & Ice.

Essays are how we speak to one another in print—caroming thoughts not merely in order to convey a certain packet of information but with a special edge or bounce of personal character in a kind of public letter. You multiply yourself as a writer, gaining height as though jumping on a trampoline, if you can catch the gist of what other people have also been feeling and clarify it for them. Classic essay subjects, such as the flux of friendship, "On Greed," "On Religion," "On Vanity," or solitude, lying, self-sacrifice, can be major-league yet not require Bertrand Russell to handle them. A layman who has diligently looked into something, walking in the mosses of regret after the death of a parent, for instance, may acquire an intangible authority, even without being memorably angry or funny or possessing a beguiling equanimity. He cares; therefore, if he has tinkered enough with his words, we do too.

An essay is not a scientific document. It can be serendipitous or domestic, satire or testimony, tongue-in-cheek or a wail of grief. Mulched perhaps in its own contradictions, it promises no sure objectivity, just the condiment of opinion on a base of observation, and sometimes such leaps of illogic or superlogic that they may work a bit like magic realism in a novel; namely, to simulate the mind's own processes in a murky and incongruous world. More than being instructive, as a magazine article is, an essay has a slant, a seasoned personality behind it that ought to weather well. Even if we think the author is telling us the earth is flat, we might want to listen to him elaborate on the fringes of his premise, because the bristle of his narrative and what he's seen intrigue us. He has a cutting edge, yet balance too. A given body of information is going to be eclipsed, but what lives in art is spirit, not factuality, and we respond to Montaigne's human touch despite four centuries of technological and social change.

Montaigne's *Essais* predated by a quarter-century Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, which was probably the first novel. And the form of composition Montaigne gave a name to would not have lasted so long if it were not succinct, diverse, and supple, able to welcome ideas that are ahead of or behind the blurring spokes of their own time. But whereas a novelist is often a trapezist, vaulting from book to book, an essayist is afoot. Not a puppet master or ventriloquist, he will sound recognizable in his next appearance in print. There is a value to this, though Don Quixote as a figure outshines any essay. Imperishably appealing, he is an embodiment, not speculation, and we can simply call him to mind, much as we remember Conrad's Kurtz, in *Heart of Darkness*, and Dickens's Oliver Twist, though the regimes up the Con-

Advertisement

THE FALUN GONG SHOW

From a press release issued by the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C., on July 22, the same day the Chinese government banned Falun Gong, a spiritual movement that blends traditional Chinese breathing exercises with elements of Buddhism and Taoism. On April 25, 10,000 practitioners of Falun Gong held a vigil to protest persecution by Chinese police; it was the largest illegal demonstration in Beijing since the 1989 democracy rally in Tiananmen Square.

Cases of dire consequences caused by Falun Gong to the psychological and physical health of people are innumerable, according to facts collected by certain departments. Serious results have been reported, including sickness, handicaps, and even death.

Since beginning the practice of Falun Gong, many people have lost their appetites, some appeared to be disorganized in words and behavior, and some became paranoid. Still others found themselves suffering from hallucinations. A number of people jumped into rivers or off buildings. Some even cruelly injured or killed relatives and friends.

Ma Jianmin, a retired worker from the Huabei oil field in north China, insisted that he had a "wheel of law" in his stomach. Then, one day in 1998, Ma died after he cut his abdomen with a pair of scissors to look for the "wheel."

Official Gao Encheng, who became a leader of a Falun Gong practicing group in Kaixian County of Chongqing, got the idea that he had become "immortal." Gao killed himself by jumping off a building while holding his son in his arms.

Liu Pinqing was a senior agronomist who had won a top prize given by the Ministry of Agriculture. Liu attempted to burn himself to death on February 4, 1999. He finally committed suicide two months later by jumping into a well.

Li Ting, a graduate student, killed his parents with a dagger on March 20.

Wu Deqiao, thirty-six, a clerk with the Wujiang supply and marketing cooperative in east China's Jiangsu Province, chopped his wife to death with a kitchen knife when she tried to stop him from practicing anymore.

go River and in London aren't now the same.

An essayist's materials are drawn primarily from his or her own life, and he knits a skein of thoughts and impressions, not a made-up tale. An epic drama such as *King Lear* is thus not his province even to dream about. His work is humbler, and our expectations of him are less elastic than of novelists or poets and their creations. They can flame out in a flash fire, surreal or villainous, if the story is compelling or the language smacks a bit of genius. We accept different behavior from Céline or Genet, Christopher Smart or Ezra Pound, than from Dr. Johnson. Norman Mailer can stab his wife and William Burroughs can shoot his, and somehow we don't blanch. They "needed to," one hears it said. Their imaginations must have got the better of them. But if an essayist had done the same it would have queered his legacy. He is supposed to be the voice of reason. Although modestly chameleon as a monologuist (and however much he wants to recalibrate it), he is an advocate for civilization. He doesn't murder a foe in the street, like the sculptor Benvenuto Cellini, or get himself slain in a tavern brawl, like the playwright Christopher Marlowe, or gut-shot, like Pushkin, in a duel. A murderer or madwoman quarantined in a book on the bedside table can provide excitation and cautionary reading, but an essayist, being his own protagonist, should be faceted rather like a friend. We might give him our keys and put him up in the guest room. He won't be stealing the silverware and debauching the children, and, after sleeping on our problems, he will sit at the breakfast table in the morning sunshine and tell us what we ought to do. Or, at the outside, if—like the master essayist Charles Lamb—his sister has slaughtered his mother, he will devote the next thirty-odd years to piecing together a productive existence for himself and her, not despairing like an aficionado of the Absurd.

Essayists are not Dadaists, and in the endgame that may be in progress—with our splintering attention span, our hiccuping religions, staccato science, and spinning solipsism—they may prove useful. Do we human beings have a special spark of divinity? And if so, as we mince our habitat and compress ourselves into ever tighter spaces, having always claimed that there couldn't be too much of a good thing, how many of us are finally going to constitute a glut of divinity? Judeo-Christianity hasn't said. Nor did "the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God," which Thomas Jefferson invoked at the beginning of our Declaration of Independence. Or Emerson's rapturous prescription in *Nature* in 1836 that an intelligent



Portrait of the Artist, *by Eric Fischl, was on display in June at Mary Boone Gallery in New York City, where Fischl lives.*

observer should become "a transparent eye-ball . . . part or particle of God," amid nature's ramifying glory. Now, man threatens to become a divinity doubled, redoubled, and berserk ad nauseam. The essay's brevity, transparency, and versatility, however, should suit this age of reconsideration.

Essays are a limited genre, because the writer will suggest that life is more than money, for example, without inventing Scrooge; that brownnosing demeans everybody, without the specter of Uriah Heep. Candide, Starbuck, Injun Joe, Moll Flanders, and Becky Sharp led lives more farfetched than an essayist's, whose medium is mostly what he can testify to having seen or read. Working in the present tense, with common sense his currency, "This is what I think," he tells the rest of us. And even if he speaks about alarming omens, we feel he'll be around tomorrow, not leap headlong into life and burn to a crisp at thirty-two or twenty-eight, like Hart Crane or Stephen Crane, or wind up forlorn in a railroad station fleeing his wife, as Tolstoy did when dying. The limitations are reassuring as well as tethering.

James Baldwin didn't metamorphose into an arsonist or a rifleman when he warned against race war in *The Fire Next Time*. And George Orwell deconstructed colonialism in essays considerably more nuanced than *Heart of Darkness*—supplementing though not supplanting Kurtz's immortal line, "The horror! The horror!" In a way, it's easier to visit a headwaters area of the Nile or Congo and find conditions not substantially improved since independence when you've read Orwell as well as Conrad on human nature, because these nuances prepare you better for disillusion. Conrad's picture was so stark, surely never again would the world see comparable scenes!

Ripples sway us—traffic tie-ups on a cloverleaf, online stock swings, revenge-of-the-rainforest viral escapees—at the same time that our proud provincialism is called upon to bend the



Eddie's Invite, *by Fiona White, was on display last fall at the Art Connoisseur Gallery in London. She lives in Sydney, Australia.*

mind around Islam's surging claims, Latino vigor and disorder, chaos in Africa, and a Chinese-puzzle future. In a famine belt along the upper Nile, I've seen child-size raw-dirt graves scattered everywhere beside a poignant web of paths of the sort that starving people pace. A scrap of shirt or broken toy was laid on top of each small mound to personalize the spot; and hundreds of bony, wobbling children who had survived so far ran toward me (a white-haired white man) to touch my hands in hopes that I might somehow be powerful enough to bring in shipments of food to save their lives. Their urgent smiles were giddy or delirious in skulls already outlined under tightened skin. I interviewed the Sudanese guerrilla general who was in charge of protecting them about what could be done, but he was delayed a little that afternoon because (I found out later from an Amnesty International report) he had been torturing a colleague by pounding a nail through his foot.

Essayists, in dealing with the present tense, are stuck with the nuts and bolts of what's going on. And what do you say about [illegible] on the Nile, which I believe was a forerunner, not an anomaly? I expect an epidemic of endgames, and disintegration in other forms. Essayists will become "journeymen," in a new definition for that hackneyed term: out on the rim, seeing what's in store. The cataract of memoirs being published currently may be a prelude to this—memoirs of a cascading endgame. Yet essayists are not nihilists as a rule. They look for context. They feel out traction. They have a stake in society's survival, breaking into the plot line of an anecdote to register a reservation about somebody's behavior, for instance, in a manner that most fiction writers would eschew, because an essayist's opinions are central, part of the very protein that he gives us. Not omniscient like a novelist, who can create a world he wants to work with, the essayist has the job of finding coherence in the world that we already have. This isn't harder, just a different task.

"Art is not truth. Art is a lie that makes us realize truth," as Picasso said; and to capture within an imagined story some petal of human longing and defeat is an achievement irresistibly appealing. Essayists, by denying themselves that license to extravagantly fudge the facts of firsthand observation, relegate themselves to the Belles Lettres section of the bookstore, neither fiction nor journalism, because

they *do* partly fudge their reportage, adding the spice of temperament and a lifetime's favorite reading. The fracases they get into are on behalf of democracy, as they see it, and their iconoclasm commonly leans toward the ideal of "comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable," which journalists used to aspire to. Like a short-story writer, an essayist is after the gist of life, not Balzacian documentation. Not just confessional, a good essay is driven by the momentum of an inquiry, searching out a point, such as *are we divine?*—an awfully big one for the lowly essayist, but it may be the question of the coming century.

Essayists also go to the fights, or rub shoulders on the waterfront, get divorced, nibble canapés, playing off their preconceptions of a celebrity or a politician against reality. They will examine a prejudice or dare a pie in the face for advancing an out-of-fashion idea. Or they may simply saunter, in Thoreau's famous reading of the word, *à la Sainte Terre*, to the Holy Land, or *sans terre*, at home everywhere—maybe only to the public library to browse among dead friends.

A solo voice welling up from self-generating sources, or what Thoreau once called an "artesian" life, has not been the dominant mode of expression for the past half-century, though essays now are reappearing in unexpected places: on the airwaves and in newspapers, as corrective colloquy or amusing "occasionals." Paralleling the flood of memoirs that are coming out, the essay is in revival. And the two genres do overlap, though for essays a narrative is not an end in itself, as it can be in a memoir.

The most civil of the literary arts, yet also a "book of the self," "spying on the self from close up," essays are versatile enough that in the same piece, "Of Experience," in which Montaigne says that "death mingles and fuses with our life throughout," he tells us that he can't make love standing up and speaks considerably about his kidneys, urination, and bodily "wind." Wholehearted, supple, an essayist over time may tell you everything you might want to know about him and stretch that measurement a bit, the way a friend or spouse or partner gradually does, until nothing about the living package of that person turns you off. If you know the anguish, joy, and bravery somebody has experienced, you can also share his episodes of shame and indigestion.

Like you, an essayist struggles with the here and now, the world we have, with sore and smelly feet and humiliation, a freethinker but not especially rich or pretty, and quite earthbound, though at his post. Like Thoreau later on (according to Emerson's report), Montaigne says that at a dinner party, "I make little choice at table, and attack the first and nearest thing." He is not much for show and affectation, but nonetheless he eats so zestfully he sometimes bites his own fingers. Maybe that is how to live. Eat of life with such brio that you're not afraid to bite your fingers.

[Testimonial]

SATCHMO'S HOME REMEDY

From a previously unpublished "Open Letter to Fans" by Louis Armstrong, dated June 1, 1970, in Louis Armstrong: In His Own Words, *to be published next month by Oxford University Press. The manuscript was discovered among Armstrong's papers, which are housed at the Louis Armstrong House & Archives at Queens College in New York City.*

Well folks, here I am. Home at last. I've just gotten out of the Beth Israel Hospital after being there *twice* for fatigue—run-down body, exhaustion, and a kidney ailment that affected my heart and liver. My doctor, Gary Zucker (a great man and a jazz fan), he worked hard over me and took me out of my crisis. He took me out of intensive care *twice*, which is something very seldom heard of with *any* human being. While I was in intensive care and was coming back to normal life again, I talked to Dr. Zucker whenever he visited me—he and I would have some heart talks. Knowing that he was also one of my dear fans, I felt at ease talking to him. The first thing that I said to Dr. Zucker was: "Doc, God bless you and I love you. Now there's one more thing that I'd be very happy if you'd okay it. And that is Swiss Kriss. Because, Doc, the kind of laxatives that they've been giving me hasn't worked me at all. It has been *four days* now and I haven't been to the john (the toilet).

"My mother, Mary Ann (May Ann for short), she always told me and my sister, Mama Lucy: 'You may never get rich, but no drastic ailments will ever take you off this earth.' At the same time, she would be giving us a 'physic' (a laxative), some herbs that she picked up by the railroad tracks in New Orleans. She'd bring those leaves home, ground and grind them down to almost a powder, and would give me a large tablespoonful on my tongue. And a tablespoonful to Mama Lucy and a heaping tablespoonful for herself. Then she would run three large glasses of

...om the water faucet or hydrant, and pass ...ful to us, and one for herself, and down ...atch we went to bed. The next morning ...en we awakened, Ohh! we had such a ball ...ing to be the first one to get to the toilet, *pull that lever*, and get that good eye opener."

So, after explaining all of this to Dr. Zucker, I asked him to okay the herbal laxative, which happens to be Swiss Kriss, which I've been taking for many, many years. He automatically picked up the telephone and called my wife, Lucille Armstrong, and told her that she could bring all of the Swiss Kriss he needs to Louis Armstrong's room, because he prefers it to the laxatives that they serve here in the hospital. And Lucille, who was the discoverer of Swiss Kriss by reading Dr. Gaylord Hauser's health book, *All About Herbal Laxatives*—it was a pleasure to Lucille to bring our laxative, which helped me to recuperate. Beautifully.

After a few days of taking Swiss Kriss in a beautiful private toilet and *wailin'* on time, hitting it on the *nose*, everybody commenced to noticing the rapid improvement in me. My skin, my weight gaining, and everything—appetite—were much better. So the patients as well as the nurses became inquisitive about Swiss Kriss. Since Lucille brought quite a few sample packages, I had enough to give everybody who wished to try it. And the *head nurse* at the Beth Israel Hospital, who was very strict to the chart she carried around, *consulted* me concerning Swiss Kriss and was about to hit that telephone in my room and talk to Dr. Zucker when I told her, as she put the phone back on the hook. I said to her, "Honey, Dr. Zuck has given me permission for Swiss Kriss. Everybody in this hospital is taking it and having beautiful results—jumping over hurdles at laxating times—and they're all happy. Feeling good. Now, Nurse, if you were smart, *tomorrow* when you have your day off"—I handed her a small box of Swiss Kriss—"take a large tablespoonful just before you hop in bed. Put it on your tongue and rinse it down with a large glass of water. Two glasses is better. The more liquids the better. A little nip afterward if you desire. As long as it's anything wet."

The head nurse did as I told her, that she must try Swiss Kriss her *personal* self, and then there won't be anybody that could change her ...ind about it or turn her ever against it. And ...as I figured she would, she came to her own ...sions. The next night when she came on ...first stop that she made was my private ...came in looking at me straight into ...ing her finger at me at the same ..."...you a *naughty* boy." ...beautifully, looking as pretty and ...iss Kriss is just wonderful. I feel cleaned and great." Coming from her I was very happy. She was just about one of my toughest customers, I do believe.

[Transcript]

POP! GOES THE WEASEL

From a July 23 broadcast of New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's weekly radio show on WABC-AM. On June 29, the city's Board of Health issued a directive banning pet ferrets, and over a hundred other animals considered to be "wild, ferocious, fierce, dangerous or naturally inclined to do harm."

RUDOLPH GIULIANI: We're going to go to David in Oceanside.

DAVID GUTHARTZ: Hello, Mr. Giuliani, we speak again.

GIULIANI: Hi, David.

GUTHARTZ: Let me introduce myself again: David Guthartz, executive president of New York Ferret's Rights Advocacy. Last week when we spoke, you made a very disparaging remark to me: that I should get a life. That was very unprofessional of you. Here we're trying to get something seriously done—

GIULIANI: I, I—

GUTHARTZ: Without you talking over me, we're trying to get something very seriously done—

GIULIANI: David, you're on my show. I have the right to talk over you.

GUTHARTZ: But we're trying to get an important issue taken care of where the city is violating state law, and I asked you last week if you care about the law.

GIULIANI: Yes, I do care about the law. I think you have totally and absolutely misinterpreted the law, because there's something deranged about you.

GUTHARTZ: No, there isn't, sir.

GIULIANI: The excessive concern that you have for ferrets is something you should examine with a therapist, not with me.

GUTHARTZ: Don't go insulting me again!

GIULIANI: I'm not insulting you. I'm being honest with you. Maybe no one in your life has ever been honest with you.

GUTHARTZ: I happen to be more sane than you.

GIULIANI: This conversation is over, David. Thank you. [Guthartz is cut off.] There is something really, really, very sad about you. You need help. I know you feel insulted by

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but I'm being honest with you. This excessive concern with little weasels is a sickness. There are probably very few people who would be as honest with you about that. But you should go consult a psychologist or a psychiatrist, and have him help you with this excessive concern, how you are devoting your life to weasels. Something has gone wrong with you. Your compulsion about it, your excessive concern with it, is a sign of something wrong in your personality. I do not mean to be insulting. I'm trying to be honest with you, and I'm trying to give you advice for your own good. I know you. I know how you operate. I know how many times you called here this week. Three or four o'clock in the morning, David, you called here. You have a sickness. I know it's hard for you to accept that, because you hang on to this sickness, and it's your shield, it's your whatever. And I know you're real angry at me, you're going to attack me, but actually you're angry at yourself, and you're afraid of what I'm raising with you. And if you don't deal with it, I don't know what you're going to do. But you called here excessively all week, and you called here at three o'clock in the morning. And four o'clock in the morning. Over weasels. Over a ferret.

So I know this is difficult, and tomorrow one of the newspapers will write how mean I am and how cruel I am and all this other stuff, but I believe, because my father and mother taught me this, that you should be honest with people. And I am giving you the benefit of fifty-five years of experience, having represented hundreds and in some cases thousands of people on either side in the courtroom, having handled insanity defenses and cases. You need help! And please get it! And you don't have the right to call here at three o'clock in the morning, harass the people on my staff, because of your compulsion. So, David, see what you can do to get help. But we can't help you. We don't have the professional expertise to help you.

Now we're going to move on to Richard in the Bronx.

[Mission]

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

From a description of services offered by the Alibi Agency Ltd., a company based in Lancashire, England. The Alibi Agency donates a portion of its profits to charities benefiting children from broken homes.

Many of us have occasion to stray from our long-term partners, to dally in a brief sexual relationship with a third party. But with modern communications, it has become increasingly difficult to do so without risk of detection. Public knowledge of such a relationship can put an incredible strain on all parties concerned: family life, the home, the business, and your children's welfare can all be put on the line.

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We offer a full and professional alibi service: We'll send invitations for corporate events, seminars, or sporting events to your home, then telephone you or your wife to confirm bookings. If someone tries to contact you, our receptionists will take the call as a hotel receptionist, for example, or a golf-club secretary. We will let the caller hear us try to page you, then offer to take a message when you can't be found. If we know where you are, we can even ring you while the caller is on hold, then patch the call through as if it were to your "room." We also take care of payments for hotels, meals, or gifts, then bill your credit card for car repairs or software purchases.

Most sexual affairs are inconsequential to your long-term relationships. Our aim is to provide total peace of mind for you and your family.

[Plot Summary]

JESUS CHRIST, SUPERSTAR

From a press release distributed by CBS in July that appeared in the July 22 edition of The New York Observer.

Jesus, a four-hour miniseries about the extraordinary life and mission of Jesus of Nazareth, starring Jeremy Sisto (*The Sixties*, *White Squall*), is currently in production in Morocco and will be broadcast on the CBS television network in May 2000—the two thousandth anniversary of the birth of Jesus.

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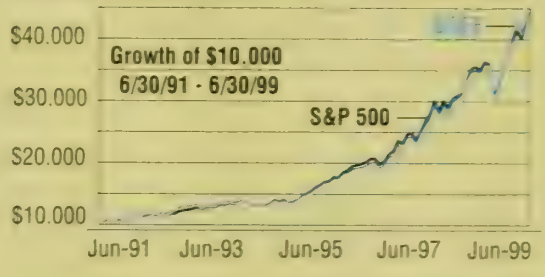
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Jacqueline Bisset (*Joan of Arc, The Deep*), Jürgen Krabbe (*Prince of Tides, The Fugitive*), Debra Messing (*Will & Grace*), Armin Mueller-Stahl (*Shine*), David O'Hara (*Braveheart*), and Gary Oldman (*Bram Stoker's Dracula*) also star in the epic drama about the man Christians believe to be the son of God and the Messiah. The miniseries reveals how Jesus, during His relatively short life, grew from a simple carpenter to a man whose spiritual teachings and loving ways continue to inspire billions of followers—nearly two thousand years after His crucifixion. The drama explores Jesus's relationship with His mother, Mary (Bisset), and earthly father, Joseph (Mueller-Stahl), His twelve apostles, His devoted friends and followers, such as Mary Magdalene (Messing), and His cousin, John the Baptist (O'Hara). It also illustrates the politically charged times during which Herod is the unpopular ruler of Galilee and Roman governor Pontius Pilate (Oldman) rules over Judea, to the disdain of the Jewish leaders and residents.

The production begins with the young, likable carpenter Jesus living a simple, happy life with Mary, Joseph, His extended family, and friends, despite the oppressive Roman occupation of their region. It is following Joseph's death that Jesus embarks upon His spiritual destiny.

After fasting for forty days and nights in the desert—while rejecting the temptations of Satan (Krabbe)—Jesus begins to share His wisdom and vision with others. Word of His rousing Sermon on the Mount, compassionate ways, and spectacular miracles—such as turning water into wine, casting evil spirits from the possessed, and healing the sick—draws numerous new followers to this charismatic leader. Jesus ultimately chooses twelve apostles to be His special helpers. Jesus is also devoted to His disciple Mary Magdalene, a former prostitute who is reformed by His teachings.

Meanwhile, as Jesus's popularity increases, the various leaders begin to feel threatened by Him. The religious leaders fear His influence and believe Him to be a false messiah; the egotistical Herod worries that He is the outspoken John the Baptist reborn, and the arrogant Pilate perceives Him as a source of trouble.

Jesus continues to preach and remain steadfast in His beliefs, undaunted by the knowledge that He will be crucified for His actions. After an emotional, deeply symbolic Last Supper with His apostles, Jesus is arrested and meets His fate. It is ultimately the sly Pilate who makes a show of complying with the frenzied chants of numerous chief priests and locals to have Jesus crucified. The willing, forgiving Jesus is put to death at the age of thirty-three. His loving message, however, continues to survive and thrive in billions of Christians throughout the world.

[Tax Deductions]

E-Z FILING FOR E-Z LADIES

From an information guide prepared by the "special audit" unit of New Zealand's Inland Revenue Department, the country's federal tax collection agency, "to assist in answering questions from sex workers." The special audit unit collects taxes on income from illegal activities, such as drug sales, prostitution, fraud, theft, money laundering, kickbacks, extortion, and bribes. It has assessed over $200 million in taxes since its inception.

Sex workers can describe their occupation on Inland Revenue Department forms as Contractor, Consultant, Commission Agent, Hostess, Receptionist, Entertainer, or any other similar description. They can reduce the amount of tax owed at the end of the year by deducting certain expenses from their business as private operators. The various expense items are explained below. Please note that this is by no means an exhaustive list.

CONSUMABLE ITEMS

The total cost of consumable items is an allowable deduction. These include condoms, lubricants, gels, oils, tissues, bubble bath, dairy whip, and other similar items used when providing a service to a client.

CLOTHING

Clothes that will be used only when earning income may be deducted. Examples would be lingerie, costumes, and any see-through garments.

STOCKINGS/MAKEUP/HAIR CARE

Although these are not usually an allowable deduction for other industries, given the nature of the job, the Inland Revenue allows private operators to claim a portion of their expenditure on these items. If they buy a certain type only for work (such as patterned stockings), it can be fully claimed.

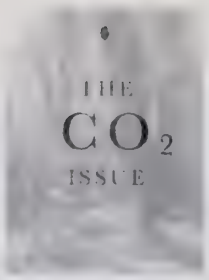
MOTOR VEHICLE

For each business trip, they must record the date, the distance traveled, and the reason for the trip. Travel from their residence to their place of work (e.g., a parlor) is a private expense and is not deductible.

PRIVATE EXPENDITURE

Some expenses are generally considered to be of a private nature and therefore are not tax deductible. These include gym fees, drugs and drug rehabilitation, fines, and associated legal fees.

ou may have been seeing on the television news e effects of this heat wave on kids and old people d families and it's really been very hot," Vice esident Al Gore told 5th graders at a science camp ck in August. "Because the atmosphere of the ole earth is warming up, it's more common now have these very, very hot days."



Is this true? Last November, Greening Earth Society pubhed an online report by the Director of Arizona State niversity's Office of Climatology. Dr. Robert C. Balling, combed nearly 50 years of National Oceanic and mospheric Administration data searching for a trend in 3 heating and cooling "degree days." If very hot days are ore common, cooling degree days should be increasing. ey're not.

There is no trend. "Despite all the publicity about increasing mean temperatures, increasing extreme high temperatures, and an increase in the frequency, duration, and magnitude of summer heat waves," Balling reports, "cooling degree days in the United States have declined slightly."

Get the facts. It's not whether humans affect climate; we do. The objective of the Rio Treaty is to prevent dangerous human interference with climate. Even though well-meaning people disagree, we find no reasonable basis to believe humans are triggering climate apocalypse. Our information is on-line. You can call us toll-free. Greening Earth Society will send you a free booklet, *The CO2 Issue*, and information on what you can do to help balance the climate change debate. Greening Earth Society is funded by consumer-owned utility companies, concerned citizens, and Western Fuels Association.

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MEDICAL EXPENSES
Private operators can claim industry-specific medical expenses, such as HIV and STD tests. Further, medical expenses that may be deductible depending on the circumstances include pregnancy tests, abortions, and cosmetic surgery.

[Translations]

VOGUE WORDS

From "Key Phrases Related to Beauty," by Hajime Kamei, in the December issue of Pacific Friend, *an English-language monthly published in Tokyo.*

Nama-ashi

This term refers to women who go out wearing shoes but no socks or stockings. The term *su-ashi* was used until the early 1990s, when *kogyaru*—high school girls who dye their hair brown and go around town in loose white socks—began to use the term *nama-ashi* instead. The "nama" in *nama-ashi* is used in such phrases as *nama-yasai* (fresh vegetables) and *nama-zakana* (raw fish).

When coeds and female office workers decide to imitate the *kogyaru* and go out without wearing any stockings, to their surprise they find it enjoyable. You might overhear a conversation like this between two women discussing the matter:

"Oh, you're not wearing any stockings, are you?"

"No, I'm not. In summer, it's more comfortable this way. You should try it."

"No, not me. My legs are too pale."

"Not at all! It's okay to let people see your natural self. That's what *kogyaru* do."

"Really? Well, in that case maybe I should try it."

Kogao/Kojiri

The ratio of the head to the entire body of an average Japanese is *rokutoshin*, or 1:6. The term *hattoshin* (1:8) was once a very fashionable word, and even today it is considered the ideal proportion. Japanese women believe that a *kogao* (small face) ensures a well-proportioned body. To make their faces look as small as possible, they specially arrange their hair and wear shoes with thick soles. Japanese women have also come to idealize *kojiri* (making one's hips look small). The ultimate hips, in their view, are symmetrical and tight.

A conversation between two women discussing a new employee might sound like this:

"Don't you think she's cute? She has a small face and small hips, and nice full breasts."

"You've got it all wrong. You don't realize how much effort she has to exert to look like that."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, she has to wear a tight girdle around her waist and hips to make them look small. She uses pads inside her brassiere to make her breasts look larger. And she opts for long pants to make her legs look longer and her face smaller."

Smaller is often better in Japan, and the same seems to hold true with the way Japanese women value their physical appearance.

[Essay]

MY MIND'S-EYE CAMERA

From The Spectator: Talk About Movies and Plays with Those Who Made Them, *by Studs Terkel, published in September by The New Press.*

As I awaken after a hard day's night, I open one squinty eye and turn toward the window. I see, or imagine I see, a sliver of sun racing like crazy through the trembling leaves. It is not the warming, rising sun that worshipers kneel toward on salubrious mornings. There is something moonily cool and sickly pale about this one, and ominous. It is Kurosawa's sun.

Both eyes open now, I stare at the greenery. It is that early morning in *Rashomon* as the woodcutter trudges through the forest. The man stops abruptly. Stares. A woman's hat on a bush, a man's hat on another. Entangled on a third, a rope. Boy, you know something horrible has happened.

Something *has* happened. I've overslept. Damn that Benadryl. "Rise and shine." It is Laurette Taylor in Amanda Wingfield's "blue dress, sort of beaten up with an eggbeater." I feel as rotten as her son, Tom, who has heard that cheery reveille on too many mornings. I stumble toward the bathroom. A finger of water at one eye, a finger at the other; and I'm on my way. I'm Henry Hull as Jeeter Lester in *Tobacco Road*. When he did that turn, the audience laughed. When I do it, nobody is laughing; certainly not me.

Recently, I suffered a small accident. On my way to the bathroom, I slipped on a wayward



The Accident, by Paul Fenniak, was on display last spring at Forum Gallery in New York City. Fenniak lives in Montreal.

dumbbell lying in my path. It is a bad neck sprain, requiring a cervical collar. As I stare into the bathroom mirror, I am Erich von Stroheim as Captain von Rauffenstein, the German commandant of the prison camp in *Grand Illusion*. I call out to one of the French officer-inmates, Captain de Boieldieu, a fellow aristocrat, who is on the roof helping two other prisoners escape: "Captain Boieldieu, have you gone insane? I do not want to shoot you. Please come down, I beg of you."

"*You* come down, breakfast is getting cold." It is my wife.

As I walk toward the bus on my way to work, I have a habit of humming, whistling, or ta-daing a piece of music, any song or passage. It makes the time go faster. It may be that poignant German folk song "Der Treue Husar," about the soldier who will be forever faithful to his dead sweetheart. Instantly, the image appears of the young girl in the final scene of *Paths of Glory*, Stanley Kubrick's film adaptation of Humphrey Cobb's World War I novel. It is the tavern in a town near the front that has passed from German hands to the French. The soldiers are having one last fling before being sent to the slaughter. They push a frightened German girl toward the stage, and we hear the expected whooping and hollering. She begins softly to sing, hardly audible because of the noise around her. As the tone of longing and loss comes through, we see the faces of the soldiers. They are listening. They may not know the words, but a sense of longing, and loss, overcomes them.

On another morning jaunt, I'm rasping an old Japanese tune, "Uta No Gondola," or "Song of the Gondola," the recurring theme of Kurosawa's movie *Ikiru* ("To Live"). The elderly civil servant, dying, needs one meaningful deed to justify his life. He sings of passing from youth to old age. It is a hurtful sound, from deep in his throat. Although I can't get this wistful melody out of my head (I'm humming it now, as I type), it is the film I remember.

Some sixty years ago, at the old auditorium in Chicago, I heard Lucienne Boyer, the celebrated

French chanteuse, sing "Plaisir D'amour." I was [illegible] way, way up in the second balcony. She was the star of Balieff's *La Chauve-Souris*. I was knocked out. But when I hum what is now a popular café song, it is the movie *The Heiress* that immediately comes to mind. In this adaptation of a Henry James novel, Fran Warren sings the tune as "My Love Loves Me." As I'm crooning it on my way to the bus, it is not Lucienne Boyer I see but Montgomery Clift, the predatory suitor, having the door slammed on him by Olivia De Havilland.

I leave the bus and approach my workplace—a monstrous piece of modern kitsch architecture. The subterranean caverns are labyrinths that disorient me daily. I am a shuffling old Theseus in need of Ariadne and her ball of thread as I pass through a funhouse of hair stylists, videogame parlors, fast-food emporiums, and places with charming French names. To hasten my dark journey, I whistle the blind flower girl's song from Charlie Chaplin's *City Lights*: "Who Will Buy My Violets?"

I am often lost in this frozen tundra, as the catatonic young pass me by. I seek the attention of someone to help me find the way. Taking a cue from the blind flower girl, I become Conrad Veidt, as Cesare, the somnambulist, in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. I hold forth my hand, brushing it softly against the wall, and slowly, slowly stalking *misterioso*. Once in a while, a young woman pauses and gently shows me the way. It is a rare moment.

For years I have been addicted to cigars. I attribute the habit to a Soviet movie of the mid-1930s, *Chapayev*. This people's hero was a self-educated peasant general who rallied his bewildered, raggle-taggle army of *muzhiks* by charging forward on his trusty stallion in the manner of George Armstrong Custer and Crazy Horse. I was impressed by this scene, but not nearly as much as I was by the enemy, the trained Cossacks. As they marched forward in formation, their rifles and bayonets at the ready, they were smoking cigars! The subtitle read: "The Psychological Attack." I was bowled over.

The next day I bought my first cigar, a fifteen-cent Bock panatela. From that first hitherto-forbidden puff, I was delightedly hooked. Whether it was a nickel Red Dot cigar, smoked in the john of the PX at Fort Logan, Colorado (while the younger recruits were engaged in calisthenics in the blustery mountain air), or blowing smoke rings on an H. Upmann given to me by a generous member of the Chicago mob, I felt like I belonged.

A friendly doctor once told me there's nothing wrong with having a cigar now and then. That's when I remembered Chaplin in *City Lights*. The little tramp is embraced by a drunken millionaire and then booted out when the rich man sobers up. In one scene, Charlie reclines in the back seat of a chauffeured Rolls-Royce as he spots an old bum on the sidewalk reaching down for an abandoned cigar butt. Charlie jumps out, shoves the old boy aside, picks up the butt, and hops back into the Rolls. Inspired by Charlie, I slice my cigar into three butts and thus am able to puff away daily—my now-and-then cigar.

On occasion, I have a late-night rendezvous at the refrigerator with yesterday's cold chick-

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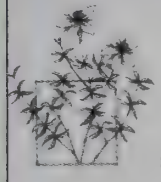
PROCEED WITH CAUTION

From "Today's Not Opposite Day," a poem by Charles Bernstein, in the 1999 issue of New American Writing. *Bernstein is the author, most recently, of* My Way: Speeches and Poems, *published earlier this year by the University of Chicago Press. He lives in New York City and Buffalo.*

Readers are cautioned that certain statements in this poem are forward-looking statements that involve risk and uncertainties. Words such as "bluster," "rotund," "interstitial," "inebriate," "guerrilla," "torrent," "prostrate," and variations of such words and similar expressions are intended to identify such forward-looking statements. These statements are based on current expectations and projections about the aesthetic environment and assumptions made by the author and are not guarantees of future performativity. Therefore, actual events or performances may differ materially from those expressed and projected in the poem due to factors such as the effect of social changes in word meanings, material changes in social conditions, changing conditions in the overall cultural environment, continuing aesthetic turmoil, risks associated with product demand and market acceptance, the impact of competing poems and poetry distribution systems, delays in the development of new poems, imagination capacity utilization, and genre mix and media absorption rates. This author undertakes no obligation to update any projective statements in this poem.

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[Letter]

MY STRUGGLE

From a March 3 letter to Ilich Ramírez Sánchez, the Venezuelan terrorist known as Carlos the Jackal, from Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez, in response to a previous letter from Ramírez, who is serving a life sentence in France for murder and who has called on his supporters to kill one American or Israeli for each day he remains in prison. Chávez, a former paratrooper who spent two years in prison for a 1992 coup attempt, was elected last December and now rules Venezuela largely by decree. He has threatened to dissolve the Venezuelan congress and supreme court and has convened a constitutional convention that will likely expand his powers and his term in office. Translated from the Spanish by Paul Reyes.

Citizen Ilich Ramírez Sánchez, Distinguished Compatriot,

Swimming in the depths of your letter of solidarity I could hear the pulse of our shared insight that everything has its due time: time to pile up stones or hurl them, to ignite revolution or to ignore it; to pursue dialectically a unity between our warring classes or to stir the conflict between them—a time when you can fight outright for principles and a time when you must choose the proper fight, lying in wait with a keen sense for the moment of truth, in the same way that Ariadne, invested with these same principles, lays the thread that leads her out of the labyrinth.

Our liberator Simón Bolívar, whose theories and example are fundamental to our doctrine of revolution, whispered briefly this question before he passed away: "How will I find the way out of this labyrinth?" We agree with Bolívar that Time delivers miracles only to those who maintain a righteous spirit, to those who understand the true meaning of things. There is no measure of distance or time that can undermine these thoughts of our Caracan hero.

I feel that my spirit's own strength will always rise to the magnitude of the dangers that threaten it. My doctor has told me that my spirit must nourish itself on danger to preserve my sanity, in the manner that God intended, with this stormy revolution to guide me in my great destiny.

With profound faith in our cause and our mission, now and forever!

—Hugo Chávez

[Prophecy]

PARIS ISN'T BURNING

From 1999: Fire from the Heavens, *a book by French fashion designer Paco Rabanne, in which he predicts that Paris will be destroyed by the Russian space station Mir. Rabanne, who warned that the catastrophe would occur in late July or early August, based his predictions on the following lines from Nostradamus: "In thousand nine-hundred ninety-nine, seven months,/A king of terror will come from heaven." Translated from the French by Donovan Hohn.*

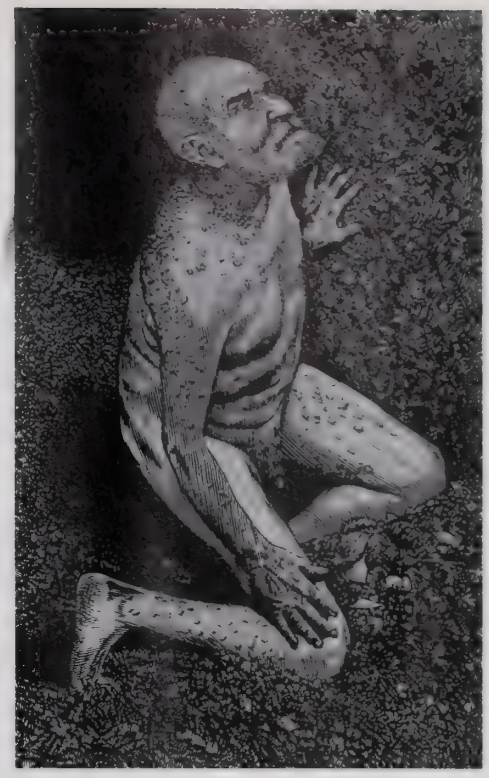
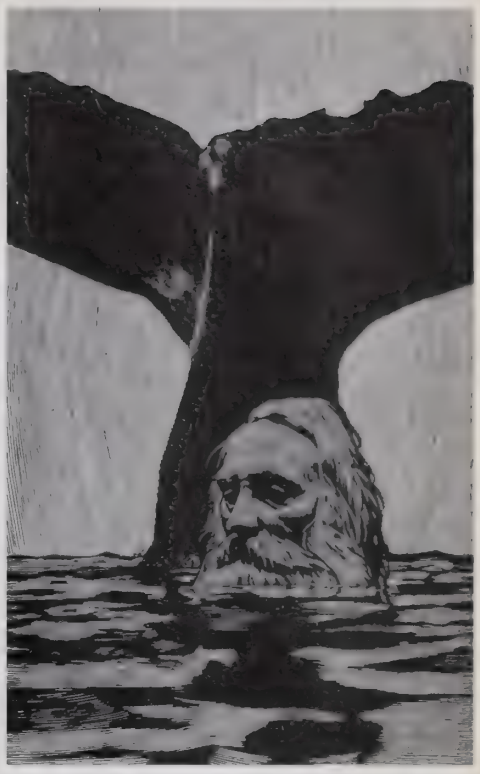
The sun has turned Paris into a cauldron. From dawn to dusk news reports speak of the heat. Some cool off by soaking their calves in basins, others seek the shade lavished by the foliage of gardens or by the parasols of sidewalk cafés. Everyone dresses as lightly as possible. Certain young women push this to the extremes of decency, revealing without the slightest inhibition their lures. Here, a postcard happiness attracts ever-larger waves of tourists. Paris is a mirage of pleasures, more or less ephemeral, that everyone wants to believe is eternal since it renews itself immutably year after year. Although misery exists, one endeavors to make peace with it, to not notice it too much. And although the capital of France hasn't always been spared the assaults of a willfully sacrilegious modernity, it has never known those tremendous destructions that in many other places have made a *tabula rasa* of the past.

Suddenly, the unthinkable. A blinding flash. An incredible shock wave radiates across a hundred square miles. Windows and facades shatter onto passersby tetanized with fear. A moment later, a wind full of burning, ravaging dust sweeps through the streets.

Structures of all sorts—apartment buildings, houses, bridges—crack, wobble, and collapse in an apocalyptic crash. Other buildings disappear instantly into the yawning chasms of the Swiss cheese that is the Parisian underground, and roadways are suddenly eviscerated by monstrous precipices from which dozens of cars tumble, while dozens more jam into each oth-

en. As I gnaw at the drumstick, I am Charles Laughton's Henry VIII, having a go at it with a capon. It is the film's last shot. I am squinting at my mind's-eye camera as guiltless as the wayward monarch.

And so to bed.

The Death of Jezebel," "My Life Is Wind," and "And the Sea Stopped Raging," by Barry Moser, from an illustrated edition of the Bible published this month by Pennyroyal Caxton Press and Viking Studio. Moser lives in western Massachusetts.

er. Gas lines explode and you can hear conflagrations ignite one after another, deafening or muffled depending on how far away they are. Fires spread with lightning speed. Columns of smoke begin to rise, darkening the sky.

Countless thousands of sirens, dogs, and men howl at death.

Everywhere, panic. Faces covered in blood, haggard people running in all directions, the wounded dragging themselves, crowds in paroxysms of terror. Those telephone booths that remain standing are assaulted in vain; broken electrical wires contribute more still to the disorganization of the city, which falls little by little into the anarchy of an Armageddon.

Out of the dark depths of the Métro, in intermittent waves, crazed Parisians ascend and, momentarily blinded by their return to daylight, become aware of the amplitude of the disaster. Behind the demolished facades, survivors dangle at the edge of the void crying for help. The beginning of twilight arrives, and an acrid odor—the odor, in truth, of a funeral pyre—diffuses itself. From the tops of burning buildings, from the banks of the Seine, or from what's left of the bridges of Paris, living torches throw themselves into the void. Dantean, surrealistic vision: not even the river can extinguish the flames that devour them.

An ink-black night falls over the city. Besides the generators still capable of dispensing a little light and the fires that continue to crackle among the debris, only flashlights and the headlights of cars allow people to penetrate the darkness. The sinister ululations of sirens, mingling with the moans of the near-dead, succeed in compelling all who can to flee this nightmare as quickly as possible. But how can one extract oneself from this desolation, how can one find one's bearings in this inextricable tangle of girders, of iron and broken glass, of rubbish and smoking carcasses, even with the energy of desperation?

[Advice]

BEFORE THE LAW

From a chronicle of prison life written by Grigory Pasko, a journalist and captain in the Russian navy who was jailed in Vladivostok in November 1997 for exposing the navy's practice of dumping nuclear waste at sea. Pasko was released in July under a new amnesty law. Translated from the Russian by Eve Conant.

It is much better for you if you read this before they come after you. That way you have a chance to prepare yourself both psychologically

and materially. It makes no difference who you were: a prosperous businessman, a worker, a chief, a military man, or a journalist. All Russian citizens can be divided into two categories: those who are already in jail, and those who soon will be there.

The first thing you should do is to gather up what we call "the gambling den," a large duffle bag that convicts use to carry their belongings from cell to cell. I advise you to put the following items in your bag: a sailor's striped shirt, sweatpants, cotton and woolen socks, handkerchiefs, sheets, pillowcases, towels (two), a blanket, a toothbrush and toothpaste, soap, laundry detergent, shaving items (except cologne), a brush, a box of matches, ten packs of unfiltered cigarettes for the other convicts and several packs of filtered cigarettes for yourself (though if you smoke, I advise you to quit now), a spoon, a metal plate, a mug, a water boiler, needle and thread, paper for letters, notebooks, envelopes, a pen and additional ink, nail cutters, and some food. You will need long-lasting products such as onions, garlic, lard, broth cubes, fast-cooking pasta, sugar, butter, croutons, and tea. The more, the better.

Oh yes, it's also not a bad idea to prepare a mattress and a blanket from the very beginning. Our prisons are poor, and it is rare that you will get anything decent there.

So you are almost ready. Gather everything together in your gambling den and put it in a corner of your bedroom or in your office. Now you must wait. If you wait, they will definitely come. If you don't wait, they will come anyway and you won't be prepared. They can come at any time—at night when you're in bed with your wife or while you're visiting friends or sitting in a café or standing in line at a kiosk buying cigarettes or waiting for an airplane at the airport (as in my case). There is one thing they will always have in common: they will be brutal. They will handcuff you and take you to the police station, where they will begin the psychological pressure. Then they will beat you and put you in a cell, usually at your regional police department. Then they will take you out, beat you again, and interrogate you. Expect regular beatings. My advice: do not resist, but whether you are guilty or not guilty, always remain silent. You just have to survive the first seventy-two hours, after which they have to get you a lawyer.

Expect to receive a maximum sentence, both for your initial confinement and after you have been convicted. In my case, I was accused of treason, which means up to two years in isolation during the investigation and then up to ten years in a labor camp.

Of course, it's very difficult to get used to this idea at the beginning. Memories of your free life—your friends and your wife and your children—will torment you. (It's hard to say which is better, to have a family or to be alone. Perhaps it's better to be alone, then you won't have to worry about your family.) Try not to think about it. Just get it into your head right away that you have nothing: no apartment, no family, no car, no job, no rank. You are nothing.

[Essay]

BLACK HUCKLEBERRIES

From Wild Fruits, *a previously unpublished manuscript by Henry David Thoreau, to be published next month by W. W. Norton & Company. Thoreau began writing* Wild Fruits *in the autumn of 1859 and left it unfinished at his death in 1862.*

Black huckleberries begin to be ripe July third (or generally the thirteenth), are thick enough to pick about the twenty-second, at their height about the fifth of August, and last fresh till after the middle of that month.

This, as you know, is an upright shrub, more or less stout depending on the exposure, with a spreading bushy top, a dark-brown bark, red recent shoots, and thick leaves. The flowers are smaller and much more red than those of the other species. It is said to range from the Saskatchewan to the mountains of Georgia, and from the Atlantic to the Mississippi in this latitude; but it abounds over but a small part of this area, and there are large tracts where it is not found at all.

I observe green huckleberries by the nineteenth of June, and perhaps three weeks later, when I have forgotten them, I first notice on some hillside exposed to the light, some black or blue ones amid the green ones and the leaves, always sooner than I had expected, and though they may be premature, I make it a point to taste them and so inaugurate the huckleberry season. In a day or two the black are so thick among the green ones that they no longer incur the suspicion of being worm-eaten, and perhaps a day later I pluck a handful from one bush, and I do not fail to make report of it when I get home, though it is rarely believed, most people are so behind-hand in their year's accounts.

Early in August in a favorable year the hills are black with huckleberries. At Nagog Pond I have seen a hundred bushels in one field, the

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drooping over the rocks with the weight of them, and a very handsome sight they are, though you should not pluck one of them. They are of various forms, colors, and flavors: some round, some pear-shaped, some glossy black, some dull black, some blue with a tough and thick skin (though they are never of the peculiar light blue of blueberries with a bloom), some sweeter, some more insipid, and so on—more varieties than botanists take notice of.

If you look closely at a huckleberry you will see that it is dotted, as if sprinkled over with a yellow dust or meal which looks as if it could be rubbed off. Through a microscope it looks like a resin which has exuded, and on the small green fruit is of a conspicuous light-orange or lemon color, like small specks of yellow lichens. It is apparently the same with that shining resinous matter which so conspicuously covers the leaves when they are unfolding, making them sticky to the touch—whence this species is called *resinosa* or "resinous."

[Litter]

ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE HEARTLAND

From an inventory of trash retrieved between June 1997 and August 1999 from the banks of the Mississippi River by Chad Pregracke, founder of the Mississippi River Beautification and Restoration Project. Pregracke is currently cleaning the Illinois River.

Bags of trash	1,432
Bed springs	6
Campers	4
Freezers	16
Gasoline tanks	80
Hide-a-bed	1
Hot-water heaters	20
Jacuzzi	1
Motorcycles	4
Picnic tables	2
Propane tanks	182
Refrigerators	108
Sinks	33
Steel drums	546
Stoves	59
Televisions	47
Tires	1,916
Washing machines	14

We have in the northern states a few wild plums and inedible crab apples, a few palatable grapes, and many tolerable nuts; but I think that the various species of berries are our *wild fruits* which are to be compared with the more celebrated ones of the tropics, and for my part I would not exchange fruits with them; for the object is not merely to get a ship-load of something which you can eat or sell, but the pleasure of gathering it is to be taken into the account.

What is the pear crop as yet to the huckleberry crop? Horticulturists make a great ado about their pears, but how many families raise or buy a barrel of pears in a year all told? They are comparatively insignificant. I do not taste more than half a dozen pears annually, and I suspect that the majority fare worse even than I. But Nature heaps the table with berries for six weeks or more. Indeed, the apple crop is not so important as the huckleberry crop. Probably the apples consumed in this town annually do not amount to more than one barrel per family. But what is this to a month or more of huckleberrying to every man, woman, and child—and the birds into the bargain. Even the crop of oranges, lemons, nuts, raisins, figs, quinces, and so on is of little importance to us compared with these.

In May and June all our hills and fields are adorned with a profusion of the pretty little more or less bell-shaped flowers of this family, commonly turned toward the earth and more or less tinged with red or pink, and resounding with the hum of insects, each one the forerunner of a berry, the most natural, wholesome, and palatable that the soil can produce. This crop grows wild all over the country—wholesome, bountiful, and free, a real ambrosia. And yet men, the foolish demons that they are, devote themselves to the culture of tobacco, inventing slavery and a thousand other curses for that purpose, with infinite pains and inhumanity go raise tobacco all their lives, and that is the staple instead of huckleberries. Wreaths of tobacco smoke go up from this land, the only incense which its inhabitants burn in honor of their gods.

Blueberries and huckleberries are such simple, wholesome, and universal fruits that they concern our race much. It is hard to imagine any country without this kind of berry, on which men live like birds—still covering our hills as when the red men lived here. Are they not the principal wild fruit?

What means this profusion of berries at this season only? Nature does her best to feed her children, and the broods of birds just matured find plenty to eat now. Every bush and vine does its part and offers a wholesome and palatable diet to the wayfarer. He need not go out of

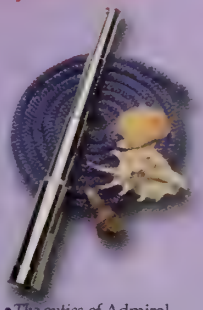
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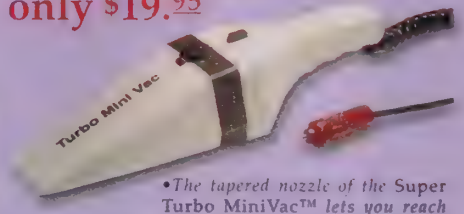
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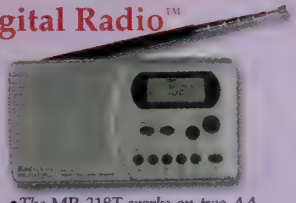
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[illegible] to get as many berries as he wants, of various kinds and qualities according as his road leads him over high or low, wooded or broken ground: huckleberries of different colors and flavors almost everywhere, the second kind of low blueberry largest in the moist ground, high blueberries with their agreeable acid when his way lies through a swamp, and low blackberries of two or more varieties on almost every sandy plain and bank and stone heap.

When I see, as now, in climbing one of our hills, huckleberry and blueberry bushes bent to the ground with fruit, I think of them as fruits fit to grow on the most Olympian or heaven-pointing hills. It does not occur to you at first that where such thoughts are suggested is Mount Olympus, and that you who taste these berries are a god. Why, in his only royal moments, should man abdicate his throne? You eat these berries in the dry pastures where they grow not to gratify an appetite but as simply and naturally as thoughts come into your mind, as if they were the food of thought, dry as itself, and surely they nourish the brain there.

Occasionally, in still summer forenoons—when perhaps a mantua-maker was to be dined and a huckleberry pudding had been decided on—I, a lad of ten, was dispatched to a neighboring hill alone. My scholastic education could be thus far tampered with, and an excuse might be found. No matter how scarce the berries on the near hills, the exact number necessary for a pudding could surely be collected by eleven o'clock—and all ripe ones, too, though I turned some round three times to be sure they were not premature. My rule in such cases was never to eat one till my dish was full, for going a-berrying implies more things than eating the berries. At other times, when I had companions, some of them used to bring such remarkably shaped dishes that I was often curious to see how the berries disposed of themselves in them. Some brought a coffeepot to the huckleberry field, and such a vessel possessed this advantage at least, that if a greedy boy had skimmed off a handful or two on his way home, he had only to close the lid and give his vessel a shake to have it full again. There was a Young America, then, which has become Old America, but its principles and motives are still the same, only applied to other things. Sometimes, just before reaching the spot, every boy rushed to the hillside and, hastily selecting a spot, shouted, "I speak for this place," indicating its bounds, and another, "I speak for that," and so on; and this was sometimes considered good law for the [illegible] field. At any rate, it is a law similar to [illegible] which we have taken possession of the territory of Indians and Mexicans.

I once met with a whole family—father, mother, and children—ravaging a huckleberry field in this wise. They cut up the bushes as they went and beat them over the edge of a bushel basket till they had it full of berries, ripe and green, leaves, sticks, and so forth; and so they passed along out of my sight like wild men.

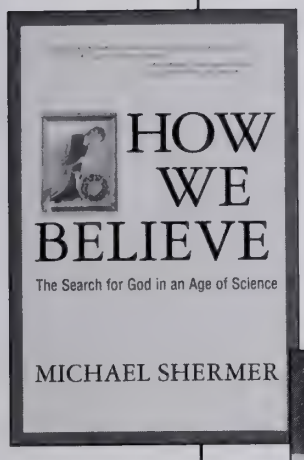
I well remember with what a sense of freedom and spirit of adventure I used to take my way across the fields with my pail, some years later, toward some distant hill or swamp, when dismissed for all day, and I would not now exchange such an expansion of all my being for all the learning in the world. Liberation and enlargement—such is the fruit which all culture aims to secure. I suddenly knew more about my books than if I had never ceased studying them. I found myself in a schoolroom where I could not fail to see and hear things worth seeing and hearing, where I could not help getting my lesson, for my lesson came to me. Such experience, often repeated, was the chief encouragement to go to the Academy and study a book at last.

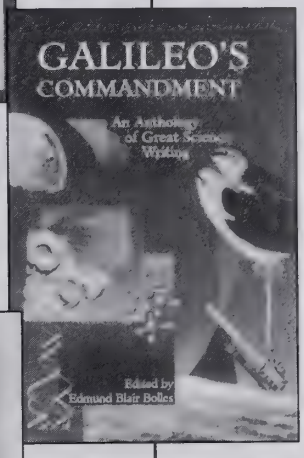
But, ah, we have fallen on evil days! I hear of pickers ordered out of the huckleberry fields, and I see stakes set up with written notices forbidding any to pick there. Some let their fields or allow so much for the picking. *Sic transit gloria ruris*. I do not mean to blame any, but all—to bewail our fates generally. We are not grateful enough that we have lived a part of our lives before these things occurred. What becomes of the true value of country life—what, if you must go to market for it? It has come to this: that the butcher now brings round our huckleberries in his cart. Why, it is as if the hangman were to perform the marriage ceremony. Such is the inevitable tendency of our civilization, to reduce huckleberries to a level with beef-steaks; that is, to blot out four-fifths of it or the going a-huckleberrying, and leave only a pudding, that part which is the fittest accompaniment to a beef-steak. You all know what it is to go a-beef-steaking.

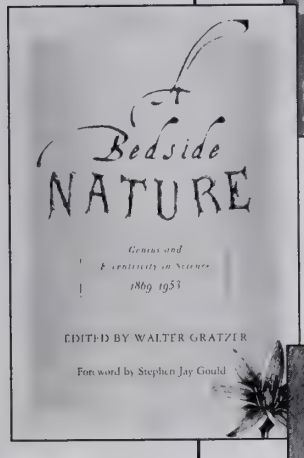
What sort of a country is that where the huckleberry fields are private property? When I pass such fields on the highway, my heart sinks within me. I see a blight on the land. Nature is under a veil there. I make haste away from the accursed spot. Nothing could deform her fair face more. I cannot think of it ever after but as the place where fair and palatable berries are converted into money, where the huckleberry is desecrated. It is true, we have as good a right to make berries private property as to make wild grass and trees such; it is no worse than a thousand other practices which custom has sanctioned; but that is the worst of it, for it suggests how bad the rest are and to what result our civilization and division of labor naturally tend. ■

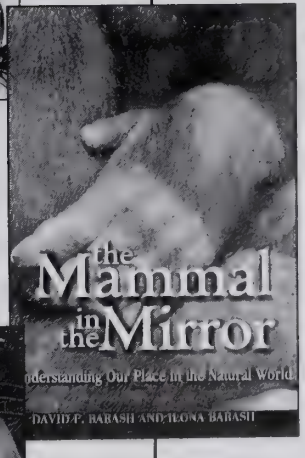
Just think.

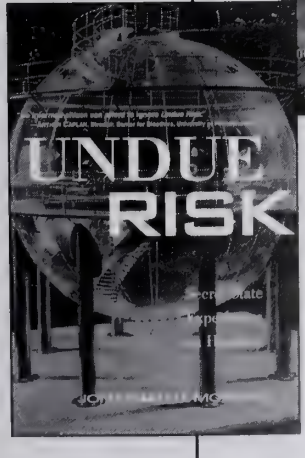
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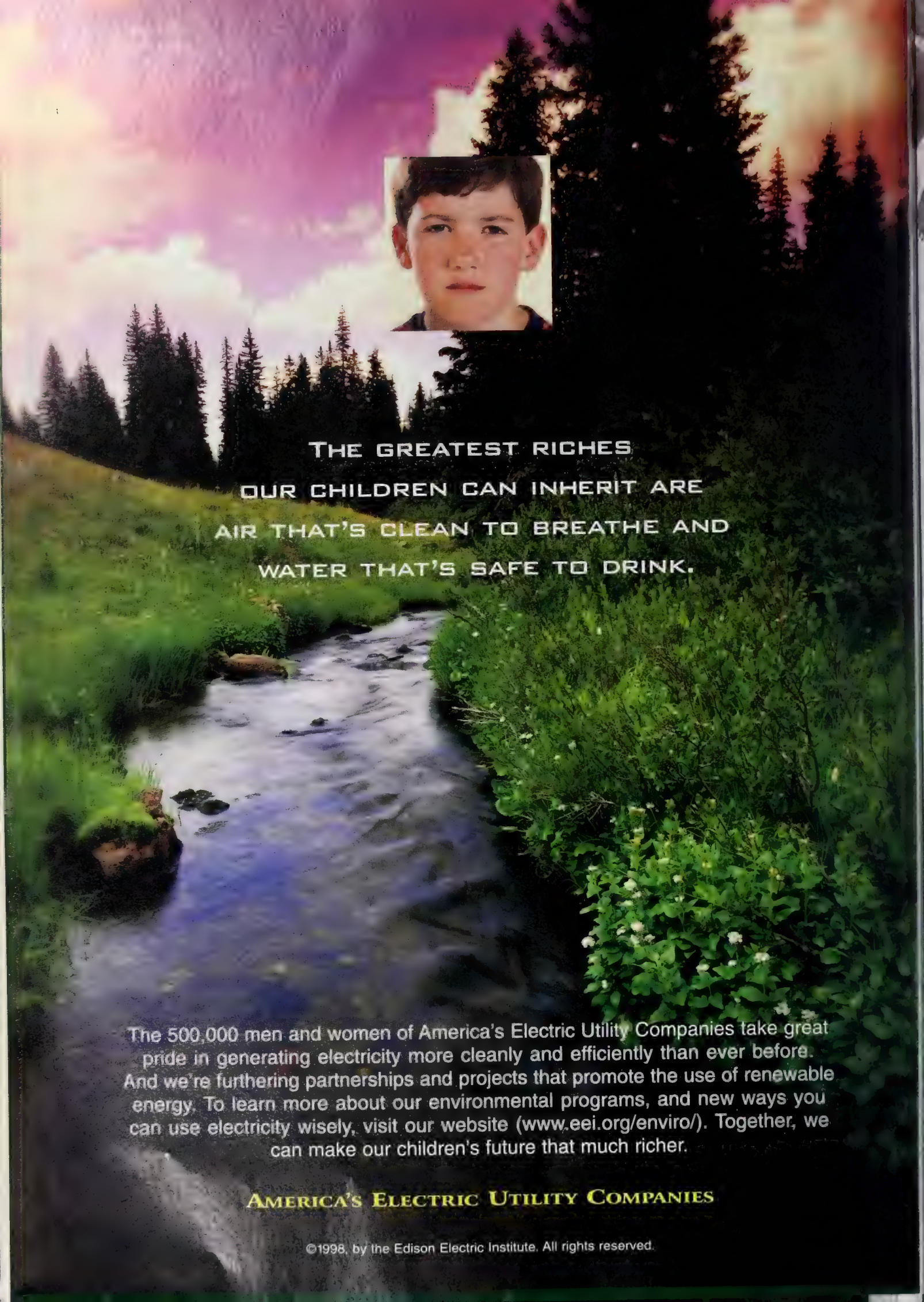
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The Kingdom of Apples

Picking the fruit of immortality in Washington's laden orchards

By David Guterson

The state of Washington is divided north to south by the great wall of the Cascade Range, a formidable barrier of high ridges and peaks rising from the Canadian to the Oregon border, dense with snow and conifers. West of these mountains lies terrain confirming what visitors expect of Washington—green forests, gray light, mist-covered saltwater, rain falling on a citizenry liberal in its sensibilities. To the east, though, lies arid steppe, the sage lands of the mythic American West, a country of Republicans, wheatgrass, and rattlesnakes vaguely reminiscent of west Texas. In hue it is auburn, tan, and dun, broken by canyons of willow and sumac, bleached by the sun, desiccated. Whatever dies here remains like a warning—the mandible of a cow, the scapula of a horse, the feathers left from a coyote kill, the hide of a mule deer on the ground like a cloak, empty, vermin-infested. A hint of the lethal rides on the wind, in the desperate, waterless grass of the steppe, in the languorous stillness of afternoon, and in the futile expanse of the sky. Most prominent is the odor of sagebrush—*Artemisia tridentata*, named for the virgin huntress, Artemis, goddess of wild nature—its clean, astringent, and erotic fragrance freshly powerful at the hour of dawn.

It is in this unexpected northern desert that Washington's much-touted apples are grown, those apples available from Djakarta to Paris that signify and evoke the state in the way oranges conjure Florida and pineapples Hawaii. Washington's orchards are profoundly vast, and travelers familiar with the quaint apple provinces of, say, upstate New York are often astounded by the scale of them, by the magnitude and sweep of their lay across the hills, and by the sheer volume of 52 million apple trees growing from Omak to Walla Walla and from the eastern slopes of the Cascades far into the arid sage lands.

On my side of the state, the wet, west side, the chief industry now is the invention of soft-

David Guterson is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine *and the author of two novels,* Snow Falling on Cedars *and, most recently,* East of the Mountains. *His last piece for the magazine was a short story, "The Drowned Son," which appeared in the February 1996 issue.*

Illustrations by Stan Fellows

AT 7:00 A.M., A PINK LIGHT HOVERS OVER THE ORCHARD, AND AS THE PICKERS SET THEIR LADDERS IN THE GRASS, THE APPL TRUCKS RUN ON HIGHWAY 2 LIKE OLD-FASHIONED TOYS

ware, followed by the manufacture of airplanes. There are still loggers and fishermen about, but the policy of state government is to retrain them, when willing, for jobs in the high-tech and service sectors. The east side, though, is still the kingdom of apples—fruit of immortality, Johnny Appleseed, Aphrodite, Avalon, and Eve. Each fall they are handpicked, 12 billion apples, in a harvest that passes through the land like a fever, and in which I have participated for the past three years in the guise of a novelist conducting research.

The pastoral of Washington's apple country is a fine illusion, sweet to indulge. What is more inviting to the urban dweller than the sight of apple trees hung with fruit? What is more beautiful than an orchard?

On September 4, 1998, early in the harvest season, I rise before dawn at Clarke and Clarke Orchard, a mile west of Peshastin, Washington, where eighty acres of pears and apples grow on a gentle south-facing slope above the Wenatchee River. Doug Clarke, a big, bearded man in his early forties who starts his day with white bread and jam, coffee, and a Marlboro Light, has let me sleep on the deck of his log house at the tail of Anderson Canyon, and now, in the dark, we head into his orchard, a day of picking apples in front of us.

The year's El Niño–inspired weather has been less than kind to the burgeoning crop, a cool wet spring wreaking havoc with the bloom, a summer heat wave burning the young fruit, etching brown spots into the skins of apples wherever they face the sun.* This sunburn has been hard on Doug Clarke's Jonagolds—30 percent have succumbed to it—and has kept his Red Delicious apples from achieving the full blush that markets desire; what's more, the vast majority of his fruit is smaller than he would prefer. Clarke, though, is fortunate: Peshastin higher in elevation and therefore cooler th the giant orchards eastward in the Colum Basin, where sunburn can be devastating. Mc the frigid autumn nights in Peshastin, wh sits in the last, trailing foothills of the Cascac allow him to grow five varieties of pears tl might sustain him through a lean apple seas

The night before, as we sat on his deck, tening to the sprinklers run in the orchar Clarke had discoursed knowledgeably on t implications of temperature for apples; it v too cool here for Fujis, Braeburns, Winesaps Granny Smiths, none of which mature prom ly enough to beat autumn's first freeze. T entire apple country, he explained, could quantified and mapped in terms of "h units"—a measurement, in essence, of amount of heat in an orchard during a giv day—a piece of information so vital to grow that it is broadcast throughout the growing s son on local radio stations. Peshast orchards, this late in the season, have accur lated about ten days less heat than the orcha in the desert eastward, which means t Clarke has less sun to work with but also m information. By checking on the condition fruit to the east, Clarke can anticipate wh his own fruit is headed. He can see eve before they happen.

We make our way to his maintenance sh where we meet Jose Reyes, Javier Saldá Salvador Saldána, Pedro Cerros, and Refu Rodriquez. Here, at first light, we lean aga tractors, four-wheel-drive Massey-Ferguso each equipped with forklift spears, that will used to haul full fruit bins from the orchard roadside for pickup. Like many fruit picker Washington, the crew on the Clarke orchar of Mexican descent, "resident aliens" hol registration receipt cards, though Jose, Jav and Salvador will all be citizens before the year under the provisions of a federal amn program mandated in 1986. Once, most of apple pickers in Washington were Dust B refugees from Oklahoma and Kan Depression-era unemployed from as far soutl Texas and Arkansas, and drifters f Appalachia. Labor shortages during World II pulled many of them into manufacturing j engendering the government's bracero progr

* *Orchardists have come up with a variety of means to protect fruit from sunburn. A few hang giant shades over orchards, immense sails that catch the wind and cast shadows across the trees. Others pump water through sprinkler heads that cast a cooling mist above their orchards. Frost, too, is battled with water. On cold spring nights when frost is imminent, growers run irrigation sprinklers until sheaths of ice coat the apple blossoms. As water freezes, it gives off heat—just enough to protect each bud enclosed in its skin of ice.*

hich brought farm workers north from Mexico. In the shed, the crew gathers ladders and cking bags, jugs of water and plastic sacks of od, and heads up into the orchard. The idea day is to harvest Galas, sweet and juicy ssert apples, leaving behind the unripe fruit be picked at a later time. Essential to this rk is a fine discrimination of each Gala's base lor, the shade of green, blond, or gold that derlies the reddish, dappled hue promi-nt on its surface. A green Gala will not en properly once removed from the eblood of its tree, and a Gala picked llow and overripe will not keep for any ration. A highly palatable and durable la has a blond background counte-nance, and it is this that the picker's eye ust distinguish, underneath the surface d, from shades of yellow and green.

We walk under fruit-heavy limbs, rough johnsongrass and pigweed, then between rows of Galas. Doug Clarke has ree and a half acres in this variety, each anted with over 500 trees, or five times e number in a traditional orchard—the acious, open sort of orchard his father, Ed arke, established here forty-seven years o. All over the state, such dense plant-gs are in vogue, and the grand, spreading es we associate with orchards are being lled up and replaced with crowded dwarf es trained to spindles, guy wires, and llises in the European fashion. These w plantings, which look like vineyards, eld larger, more efficient harvests, but in is year of relentless sun, Doug Clarke members the old days wistfully, when enty-foot spacings and majestic canopies eant less loss to sunburn.

At 7:00 A.M., a pink light hovers over icle Ridge, and the pickers set their lad-rs in the grass. A train of the rlington Northern line follows the north nk of the Wenatchee River; on the south nk, like old-fashioned toys, apple trucks run Highway 2. Somewhere to the east, a heli-pter is spraying, the drone of its rotors sound-g rough, its engine in need of a tuneup. In nother block of the Clarke orchard, arcing rinklers shower the fruit, tangents traveling so edictably it is possible to walk through the art of them, dry, given proper deference to eir timing. It is cool yet, but by 8:30 the sun filtering through the limbs and begins to dry e dew. The pickers stop to pull off their rub-r boots and change into low-top sneakers. fter an hour and a half of work, each has a full n or more of Galas and has earned $25, at ast, minus social security and worker's com-nsation. On an average day, a picker can fill five bins with Galas worth $125 in wages.

With the sun the white apple leafhoppers come out, ethereal insects the size of mosquitoes, sleekly long and almost transparent, pale harvesters of orchards too, that use their piercing tube-like mouths to suck chlorophyll out of leaves. Leafhoppers cast their excrement on fruit and dapple leaves an unsightly yellow-white but by comparison to other pests are



insignificant to orchardists. Pickers, though, are irritated by them. By nine o'clock, in the rising heat, they are lodged in our ears, noses, and mouths. When a ladder is moved, a thousand take flight, and the tick of their tiny wings is audible, a faint friction in the breeze.

It is eighty-five degrees in the orchard, and at lunch everyone seeks shade. The pickers sit beneath apple trees or under Ponderosa pines along an irrigation ditch where chokecherry and wild rose thrive, elderberry, snowberry, and blackberry. Clarke and I eat peanut butter on white bread and canned bean soup in his kitchen. His children, Kelly and Mason, are at school, and his wife, Sue, is at her in-laws' house, keeping the orchard's books.

Clarke smokes another Marlboro Light and volunteers that he sometimes has days when the orcharding business prompts him to pop a considerable number of antacid tablets. His Galas, he says, produced $1,200 an acre in 1997, or $4,200 in pre-tax profit, but this summer's El Niño heat suggests a gloomier forecast. Temperatures over ninety degrees slow down the growth of Galas, so his fruit is especially paltry. The ideal crop is small in volume but composed of big and deeply red apples; the present harvest is just the opposite, a profusion of undersized,



bland-colored fruit. What's more, Clarke is losing trees to fire blight, a disease, he says, he must treat like gangrene—by cutting out entire trees—or risk the death of his orchard.*

Clarke works his fingers through his beard—a habitual mannerism, especially after meals—and presents for me a pocket history of his life as a Gala grower. Guessing they might be a profitable variety at the turn of the century and beyond, he'd placed the order for his trees, Imperial Galas on a hardy dwarf rootstock, in 1985. Three years later the trees arrived, and he planted them high on his orchard slope—pulling out old Red Delicious cultivars—to minimize exposure to frost. There were long days drilling holes

** Many diseases found in orchards bear names that are frankly descriptive of symptoms: powdery mildew, sprinkler rot, perennial canker, apple scab. Fire blight, which blackens leaves, is caused by* Erwinia amylovora, *a bacteria that attacks the tree's inner bark, especially during spring rains. Highly communicable and highly virulent, it spreads from blossoms to twigs to limbs with great rapidity. Fire blight's symptoms were noted by orchardists in upstate New York in 1790; today it appears in forty countries, almost around the world. A notable exception is Japan, which has resisted efforts to open its domestic market by rigorously inspecting—and ultimately rejecting—the vast majority of Washington's fruit, fearing it will spread disease.*

with a tractor augur at five-foot intervals, then planting the trees, backfilling, tamping with a hand shovel, and laying irrigation pipe. Clarke put in hundreds of treated-wood supports, anchors, tighteners, and high-tensile wire. When he was done, he'd spent $30,000.

It took three years to break even on these trees, but the job of maintaining them in a productive state has been perpetual. In February Clarke prunes out their suckers; in March and April, he sprays against insects; in May, he begins blossom thinning. Throughout the summer he irrigates, and by September he is picking. A normal work week is fifty hours; at harvest time, it's eighty.

In 1980, at age twenty-five and fresh out of ag school, Clarke made more money working as a field man for a fruit-packing warehouse than he has made most years as an orchardist. He earns about $30,000 annually, after risking more than $500,000, sometimes as much as $600,000—a yearly high-stakes bet. For a while, Clarke had a pinched nerve in his neck until he began to accept that the weather, as well as many other things—among them, the global economy—was simply beyond his dominion.

This feeling of helplessness is widespread these days, among Washington's orchardists, some of whom have not turned a profit since 1995. For three consecutive seasons growers have been assailed by market forces—a tariff war with Mexico, devaluations of Asian currencies, fresh competition from a vigorous and burgeoning Chinese apple industry—that have cast a pall of impending doom over the orchard country. China produced enough apples last year to fill close to 1 billion standard boxes, *four* times what the United States produced, and now drives the global market for juice-concentrate apples, its superabundance of low-grade culls pulling prices down.* Further, China has taken advantage of the currency woes besetting Asian economies, selling Fujis in Thailand, for example, at less than half the cost of Fujis from Washington. Sales of Washington apples are down by a third in Thailand since 1997. Sales in Indonesia, once the third-largest importer of Washington apples, are 25 percent of what they once were.

Equally injurious to Washington growers are the consequences of a recent tariff war with Mexico, long the state's leading apple market outside the United States. Alleging that

** In 1994, China produced 583 million boxes of apples, or twice what the United States produced. By 1998 China's production had grown 68 percent, and in the next six years it is expected to reach 1.5 billion boxes, or 40 percent of the world's production.*

AFTER A DAY OF PICKING APPLES, I CARRY THEIR MEMORY INTO SLEEP, CONTINUING TO HARVEST THEM, DRIVEN BY SOME SYNAPTIC COMPULSION, A SHADOW LABOR, A DREAM

Washington was dumping apples in an effort to ush out domestic growers, Mexico imposed a 01 percent tariff on all U.S. Delicious apples in eptember of 1997. Since then, Washington owers have lost $100 million and are now signed to a trade agreement that reduces their are of the Mexican market indefinitely.

At home, high-density plantings and new chards have undermined the balance of supply d demand, fomenting an atmosphere of crisis. ne hundred and four million boxes of apples ere forecast for the harvest of 1998, for a pro- cted market of only 90 million. There are too any trees and too many orchards as a result of e same unwarranted optimism that overheat- the U.S. economy throughout the late ghties and Nineties. Companies planted vast ldings in central Washington, partly to write f the losses inherent in any orchard's startup hat tax loophole has since been closed), partly an investment in orchard land that will pay f not when the apples are marketed but when e land, someday, is sold. Meanwhile, business- controlling not only the growing of apples but eir packing, storing, and marketing have und that vertical integration—power over erything from tree plantings to sales—makes charding losses an acceptable expense in an herwise profitable operation.* Small chardists like Doug Clarke are left to worry at their expenses per box—planting, spraying, uning, thinning, irrigating, picking, packing, erhead—might be higher than the market n return. So maybe today's Galas are not orth picking. Maybe we should take an tended lunch, let these apples rot.

Despite the grim economic news, we once ain confront the fruit, the leafhoppers, and e late-summer heat. The pickers work up a nsiderable sweat, but this doesn't seem to fect their morale or slow them perceptibly. vo wear handkerchiefs on their heads; the hers wear billed field caps. Their hands move rapidly through the fruit, their forefingers sever the stems deftly, their bags swell against their bellies so that they look like pregnant women. Within two days, they'll be picking Anjou and Bosc dessert pears, eventually Clarke's Red and Golden Delicious, and finally, at the tail end of the season, his Romes and Jonagolds.

It is mundane, repetitive labor, romantic primarily to travelers who view it from the windows of passing cars. For the next sixty days, these men will work, reaching under and around tree limbs, and standing on their three-pointed ladders they will feel the weight of the fruit in their bags pulling them toward the earth. I, too, have felt this weight and have fought the battle with tedium—but always as someone who can quit at any time, convince himself that his business lies elsewhere, rest in the shade, take notes. It is not for me what it is for them, though we all bury our faces in the leaves and forget the world behind us. We find bizarre, misshapen apples wedged between the suckers. Twigs and bark whorls scratch our hands; the detritus and litter fall of trees festoon our heads. Always, we work from the top down, so as not to carry loads of apples toward the higher fruit. We finish building each load on the ground, then slide our apples gently into bins, avoiding bruising and denting, as if apples were eggs.

At first the mind stays close to this work, until it becomes second nature. Then the picker merely witnesses his labors, once removed, elsewhere. Time passes in a daze of heat and inexorable exhaustion. In the afternoons, exhaustion takes precedence, and the picker unwillingly returns to a present in which he is still picking apples. They fill the world like a fragrant punishment, too much of a very good thing.

By the close of a day of picking apples, I, for one, carry their memory, sometimes in my sleep. I shut my eyes and see them there, in among the interstices of leaves, and while I rest I harvest apples, driven by some synaptic compulsion, a shadow labor, a dream. It is as Robert Frost wrote in "After Apple-Picking":

> Magnified apples appear and disappear,
> Stem end and blossom end,
> And every fleck of russet showing clear.
> My instep arch not only keeps the ache,
> It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.
> I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.

n 1997, the year of the last agricultural census, an elite percent of apple growers controlled 62 percent of ashington State's orchard acreage. At the same time, 626 small orchardists—or nearly two thirds—con- lled a mere 10 percent. Between 1992 and 1997, the nd toward more land in ever fewer hands has accelera- d: the number of orchardists engaged in growing apples creased by 8 percent, while the total acreage given over apple growing rose by more than one fifth.

IN THE CONTROLLED-ATMOSPHERE ROOMS—DARK, FRIGID TOMBS SEALED BY HEAVY DOORS—THE APPLES REST IN SUSPENDED ANIMATION, READY TO AWAKEN WHEN THE MARKET BECKONS

And I keep hearing from the cellar bin
The rumbling sound
Of load on load of apples coming in.

At the end of the work day, when it finally arrives, the pickers are glad for the imminence of twilight. Ladders slung across their shoulders, they thread their way through the rows of trees, hauling their rubber boots and canvas bags, their empty water jugs. They pass out of the orchard and into the light dappling a curve in the two-lane road that runs from Leavenworth to Peshastin. A forklift is loading a truck with filled bins. A pale moon has emerged in the sky. Starlings veer over the treetops, bank gracefully, then disappear.

Fifteen miles east of the Clarke orchard, straddling the gray breadth of the Columbia River, the town of Wenatchee sits in a bowl of high auburn hills. Its outlying neighborhoods are tidy and quiet, the homes with deep porches and sheltering willows, but downtown are stoplights in inordinate number, numerous gaudy fast-food outlets, thronged parking lots and strip malls. Wenatchee bills itself as the Apple Capital of the World, is home to an annual Apple Blossom Festival, and each May, amid much revelry, anoints a local high school girl its Apple Blossom Princess. On its outskirts, fruit trees flow toward it from arid heights, the green fingers of apple orchards penetrating the edge of town, mingling with yards and homes.

In the late 1870s, a Wenatchee man named Philip Miller rode a mule two hundred miles to Walla Walla and returned with enough apple nursery stock to start a commercial orchard.* Miller put in an irrigation ditch that headed in the Squilchuck Creek and sold water rights b the "miner's inch" (a measurement of eleve gallons per minute). Others soon discovere that Wenatchee's rich volcanic soil, once irri gated, was highly conducive to fruit growing Dry wheatfields and sage lands were feverishl converted to apple orchards, and, in the firs decade of the new century, the Great Northern Railroad line was hauling boxes of Wenatche apples three thousand miles to New York City.

The valley of the Apple Capital of the Worl is today home to farm-machinery retailers, agri cultural chemical companies, the Washingtor Growers Clearing House and the Washingtor State Horticultural Association, attorneys adver tising Se Habla Español, beekeepers offering pol linating hives, a diver who specializes in irriga tion-pump inspections, a Chamber of Commerce and a prominent newspaper that both use the apple as their logo. Manufacturers of bins and boxes; suppliers of spindles, trellises, and wire purveyors of fruit pollens and fruit-packing sup plies; irrigation-ditch consultants; apple researcl laboratories; restaurants called The Apple Bir and The Apple City Burger Barn; and, finally enormous industrial complexes—known locally as packing sheds—devoted to the bagging, box ing, sorting, storing, and selling of fruit.

Stemilt Growers is one of these complexes owned and operated by the Mathison family, ar extended clan with orchards and facilities scattered across the state. Holding over 3,000 acres and managing 8,000 more, the Mathisons are among Washington's largest growers: their Wenatchee packing operation, in 1998 processed 6 million boxes of apples, 600,000 of pears, and 1.5 million of cherries.

Orchardists may grow and tend the state's ap ples, but their paychecks, in the end, are signed by packers, who therefore exert a dominating influence over which varieties orchardists will raise the acreage orchardists will devote to each, the techniques and practices of horticulture they will use, and the dates they will conduct their harvests. Some orchardists control their own destinies by packing and marketing through cooperatives, but most are contracted to packers-for-profit, whose trucks collect the orchardists' filled bins and whose ability to process and sell apples makes them indispensable and powerful. Many packers, like Stemilt, pack fruit from their own con-

** The incongruous endeavor of growing apples in the desert—a place where rainfall is just sufficient for the sustenance of bunchgrass and sagebrush—began in the middle of the nineteenth century, at approximately the time that the Oregon Country was ceded to the United States by Great Britain. The history of fruit growing in the Northwest has been suffused with myth ever since. One story has it that grafted trees were brought overland from the new state of Iowa and planted by settlers in Milwaukie, Oregon, in 1847. The trees made the journey, apparently, in covered wagons with canvases that could be unfurled to the sun and rain: traveling nurseries.*

siderable holdings as well as the fruit of others.

These vertically integrated companies understand that in years when supply outpaces demand there is more money to be made in packing apples than in merely growing them. Companies with the resources to engage in both can weather losses, watch small orchardists struggle and decline, then buy their land out from under them at bargain-basement prices. In this manner, orcharding in Washington has become, increasingly, corporate. The small family operation must either find a tangential niche—early-season pears, organic Winesaps, a new variety like the Cameo—or declare bankruptcy.

At Stemilt, packing is a gargantuan enterprise, a tightly organized, high-speed endeavor that goes forth with unceasing monotony in a complex covering fifty-five acres. The fruit is washed, rinsed, and dried; culled for defects; waxed for market; sized, graded, and stickered. The din of the machines; the clinical work lights; the catwalks, conveyors, forklifts, and bins; the smell of soap and carnauba wax, of cardboard, cold fruit, and trodden leaves—in this clattering world of traveling apples, hundreds of women sort and pack, bag, or rapidly place fruit in trays, rotate acting as "apple turners" and "catchers" of filled trays. For the most part, they do it expeditiously, with frank speed, flashing hands, and the unconscious dexterity of experience, for an average wage of $9.38 an hour.*

Boxes are bar-coded, sealed, set on pallets, and wrapped in polyurethane, then tagged in the name of recordkeeping and stamped by state inspectors. Some go immediately into refrigerated trucks and are trundled off to world markets, but far more go into controlled-atmosphere storage, a chilly domain of mostly male workers, some dressed in arctic gear, others in insulated coveralls, all laboring with a dense mist spewing from their maws. The forklift drivers here, generally speaking, take unabashed joy in driving recklessly. They remind me of snowmobilers.

Centuries ago, orchardists discovered that apples stowed in caves, where low temperatures are relatively constant, remained pleasing to the palate for many months. Growers in the upper Midwest once packed their apples in barrels of sawdust and submerged them in lakes at freeze-up, resurrecting the fruit at spring thaw to put it on the market. Apples, traditionally, were stored in cold cellars, hand-dug pits, heaps of straw. Most apples, though, were sold fresh in autumn, until the advent of controlled-atmosphere storage made it possible to harvest fruit in September and eat it the following August. In 1947, a Washington grower named Francis Marley and a tree-fruit researcher named Archie Van Doren converted a shed to an airtight room, filled it with



freshly harvested apples, reduced the temperature to thirty-one degrees, decreased the level of oxygen from the 21 percent in the atmosphere to under 2.5 percent, and in May put crisp apples on the market at $9.10 a box—nearly three times their autumn price. They sold readily, and by the 1960s Washington had more controlled-atmosphere storage than any fruit region in the world. That is why, in the middle of July, it is possible to buy a Washington State apple at a market in Taipei or Philadelphia.

Stemilt has 152 controlled-atmosphere rooms, all of them explicitly nightmarish—dark, frigid, immense tombs sealed by heavy sliding doors and filled with enough silent sleeping produce to sustain Washington State through the apocalypse. These chambers of suspended animation arrest an apple's respiration,

** The average wage for packing-line workers in Washington was $7.84 in 1997. Stemilt and another packer, Washington Fruit & Produce Company, have recently battled the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, which has sought to unionize the packing industry, thus far without success.*

its post-harvest imperative to slough carbon dioxide as its starches metamorphose into sugars. The conditions in each room have been separately manipulated to ensure that these apples, so gravely comatose, will awaken precisely when the market beckons—the Winesaps in March for London and Bangkok, the Fujis in May for Dubai. The particular mix of temperature, humidity, nitrogen, oxygen, and carbon dioxide is so critical to this market timing that Stemilt maintains its own department devoted to research, development, and the fine-tuning of storage.

Standing in front of Stemilt's Room 50, which holds 1,850 bins of sleeping apples, I scrawl "Snow White" in my notebook. According to the Brothers Grimm, Snow White slept the sleep of the living dead in a glass coffin embossed with gold letters after one bite of her stepmother's poisoned apple. Room 50's apples seem, too, like victims of a vindictive spell, a vast exercise in cryogenics. Yielding to the science of preservation, they will be awakened not by a prince's kiss but instead by the signing of a purchase order. Meanwhile, as these apples sleep, geneticists are attempting to clone a new apple whose flesh will not turn the slightest tint of brown when cored, sliced, or peeled. One of these, we might expect, properly stowed in controlled-atmosphere storage, its DNA sufficiently revised, could be eaten fresh a century from now by consumers yet unborn. The sun of our time feeding children of another. An extravagant curiosity, a faddish gift, a lark.

In the version of creation known as Genesis, God creates fruit very early in his project, immediately after the land and sea but before the sun, before the moon, before Adam, Eve, or the animals. His first exhortation to us is, "Be fruitful," and His first prohibition is against eating fruit from the tree at the center of His garden. Creation's first crisis originates with fruit: when Eve and Adam partake of the produce growing on the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, God sends them to a harsh exile, in part from fear that in His garden they will also be tempted by the Tree of Life, whose fruit confers immortality.

No apples grew in the ancient Fertile Crescent, yet by a persistent brand of cultural consensus we have located them in the Garden of Eden, a projection suggesting the apple's central role in the Judeo-Christian psyche. It is the fruit of immortality and passion from the Middle East to Norway, the fruit that Arthur finds at Avalon, the fruit served in Asgard to the Gods, the fruit of Apollo and Aphrodite. It is also the fruit of death and discord, stolen by Hercules from the daughters of Atlas, engendering the war at Troy.* American mythology includes a forest-spirit known as Johnny Appleseed, whose chosen work, whose destiny, was to make the wilderness safe for democracy by sowing it with apples.** A thing truly American is as American as apple pie. "Mom, dad, and apple pie" is a kind of American oath.

The apple, as oracle, has long been ubiquitous. All over the world its various parts—seeds, peels, cores, flesh—have been hurled, pierced, clutched, sliced, spat, seared, stuck to eyelids, squeezed between fingers, tossed at ceilings, chewed before mirrors, and wedged between the breasts of young virgins—all in search of portents. Scottish girls ate apples in solitude in the hope of conjuring visions of bridegrooms, Moorish sultans tossed apples into harems, amorous Greeks sent bitten apples as tokens of eternal love, women in Kyrgyzstan rolled under apple trees to increase their odds of bearing children. Sicilian girls dropped apples from their windows, praying that marriageable boys would find them; Celtic boys bobbed hopefully for the fruit to know if their love went unrequited. On Chesapeake Bay, divination required apple peels, which were twirled around the head three times and flung, swirling, onto the ground, to be read like bloody entrails.

Purity, beauty, eternal life, sex, love, desire. Destruction, temptation, bewitchment, betrayal, death, evil, sin. "Slice the apple from stem to flower," Frank Browning writes in his fine book *Apples*, "and its female erotic imagery is plain. . . . Slice it horizontally, however, and the five seeds, or pips, at its core describe the points of a perfect pentagram. . . ." An apple, held, is a talisman, magical. A breast, an orb, a shiny jewel, as deeply red as human blood, as anger, as an apple. He's a bad apple. An apple a day, etc. She's the apple of my eye. An Apple is a computer, too. The Big Apple is a city of enticements.

** The Welsh name for Avalon means "Isle of Apples." Arthur, fatally wounded at Camelot, repaired to Avalon as his final sanctuary and there gained eternal life, sustained by magic apples. At Asgard, the goddess Idunn kept apples in a golden casket that were eaten continuously by the gods to maintain their perpetual youth. After the death of Adonis, Aphrodite turned Melus, her priest, into an apple tree. Hence the apple is* Malus, *and, like the pear, is also a pome—a name derived from Pomona, the Roman goddess of orchards.*

*** Land grantees in the Northwest Territories were required, contractually, to plant apple or pear trees as evidence of their earnest commitment to tame the wilderness. An orchard laid out in orderly rows, demanding attention for many years before it produced anything palatable, was a sure sign of permanent settlement.*

IN THE COLUMBIA BASIN, VAST REACHES OF SAGEBRUSH HAVE BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO APPLE ORCHARDS THAT SIT SILENTLY IN THE SUN AND WIND, MILES FROM THE NEAREST TOWN

In mid-October, I cross the Columbia River and head south, into the desert. The people of this place, years ago, were Wanapum, gatherers of bitterroot, ımas, and goose eggs, fishers of salmon and els. At Pna, on the Columbia, in the late nine-enth century, a mystic among them called mohalla led the chants of the Dreamers. The reamers sought trance, were loath to plow round. Their object was to renounce the pres-nt, repudiate agriculture and land ownership, onjure a disappearance of settlers. *Shall I take a nife and tear my mother's bosom?* Smohalla sked in the tule-mat lodge where the cere-nonies of the Dreamers were held. *Shall I dig nder her skin for her bones?*

Pna now lies beneath the river, not far from riest Rapids Dam. The river there has become lake, and the territory of the Wanapum has een carved up and dedicated to military train-ng, nuclear-waste management, and the culti-ation of millions of apple trees along the Vahluke Slope.*

On the east bank of the Columbia, north of riest Rapids at Sentinel Gap and a few miles om the town of Mattawa, lies a makeshift ncampment of tarps and tents, cardboard shel-ers, and ramshackle cars inhabited by migrant uit pickers. The site is owned by the Grant County Public Utility District, which has pro-ided trash bins and a handful of Port-a-otties—the rudiments of American sanitation.

Nobody knows how many people live here, nce the camp's population is constantly in lux; it is a way station for fruit pickers and har-est nomads, who by this time of year are at the orthern terminus of the American West's fruit in. They stay because no one has told them to ave, because no one stops them from bathing the river, burning campfires in the sand and eeds, and sleeping under stray sheets of plastic.

Living conditions for migrant farmworkers laboring in the Columbia Basin—Grant, Adams, and Franklin counties—are generally poor. Apple production in the basin has more than doubled in the past ten years, and much of the recently planted acreage is the property of absentee companies that buy cheap water from the federal government and cheap power from local utilities. Vast reaches of sagebrush have been transformed into apple orchards that sit silently in the sun and wind, far from the near-est town. There is no housing, no laundromat, no health clinic or grocery store for miles and miles around.

In early October of 1998, farmworker advo-cates came to Mattawa, occupied the state's Employment Security Department office, and negotiated by phone with Governor Gary Locke's staff in an effort to improve conditions at the camp along the riverbank. Eventually, bottled water and shampoo were doled out, along with a few other sundries, and more than twenty families were given temporary lodging at a motel fifteen miles north.

Men on their own, though, without families, were left to shift for themselves. In mid-October, I speak to five of them, a group from the state of Sinaloa on Mexico's Pacific coast. They have come north from fieldwork in Bakersfield and Fresno, following the harvest in a battered old Cadillac bearing California plates. While we speak, they lean in a group against its trunk, lean, strong men with their arms folded, tattooed men with brown skin and mustaches, wearing soft, easy smiles. They are all from the same impoverished small town and live there in homes without flush toilets during the winter months.

In early summer, at a Wal-Mart in Southern California, they bought a pair of cheaply made tents, cotton sleeping bags, and cooking gear, and took to the open road. Dressed in sandals, faded jeans, hooded sweatshirts, and tank-top T-shirts, they have been living the lives of wan-derers and fruit tramps for the past five months. Carlos Alberto Renteria, twenty-three, has a wife and two young girls in Sinaloa; his aim is to make enough money picking fruit to install electricity in their home. Martin Castro has seven children; Meichor Saulceda, four; Balentine Lugo, two.

The Slope would grow little but sagebrush and wheat-rass were it not for the Columbia Basin Project, an ndeavor of the Bureau of Reclamation. Water drawn rom Franklin D. Roosevelt Lake—formed in 1941 hen the Grand Coulee Dam was completed—is umped through a series of tunnels and canals to irrigate alf a million acres; the bureau plans to irrigate a half-illion more as the system is improved and extended. Much of the cost is borne by taxpayers and by revenue rom the sale of hydroelectric power, which means that pple growers in this region are significantly subsidized.

THESE MEXICAN APPLE PICKERS HAVE COME NORTH IN THE SPIRIT OF A MODEST ADVENTURE, TO BE AWAY FROM HOME AND FAMILY, FOOTLOOSE IN A STRANGE LAND

Fausto Lopez Valenzuela, nineteen, stopped going to school five years ago and has been picking fruit ever since. He has come north, he explains quietly, in the spirit of a modest adventure, to be away from his home and family, and footloose in a strange land where he doesn't speak the language. Valenzuela, like the others, has lived in this camp on the Columbia for upwards of a month now; he describes the place as "bad for women and young children" but perfectly adequate for him. He lives, he says, on $10 a day and is able to send home at least $300 at the end of every week.*

Martin Castro, the father of seven, adds that one month of picking fruit in Washington will support his family in Sinaloa for three months, if things go well. He and the other men have been picking Red Delicious apples off and on for the past four weeks, and each has made $60–$70 a day, money Castro feels good about. There is housing, he says, in Othello and Mattawa, but there is no point in renting living quarters when the work could run out at any time, prompting the pickers to move along. Besides, he adds, the river camp is safe and quiet and doesn't cost anything. It is warm enough to sleep out of doors, and the Columbia is good for bathing. There are no cholos abroad in the land, no thugs, robbers, or thieves. The men from Sinaloa can leave their things on the ground here while they work at orchards miles away, and no one takes anything.

A pan of eggshells sits in the dust, old leaves blown up against it. A stack of firewood, a crate of farm eggs, a box of salt, a jar of dish soap, a kettle, some newspaper, a lighter, a lockback knife, a half-empty bottle of corn oil. Scraps of cardboard have been thrown over the tents; three towels are hung up to dry. Aluminum soda cans litter the ground near the fire pit these men have scratched out, and an old Eureka vacuum cleaner stands in the middle of their clearing. When I ask about it they laugh at the question: the vacuum cleaner, Saulceda explains, was here when they first came to live by the river, and they have seen no reason to remove it.

An old hubcap, its center ripped out, is nailed to the bark of a cottonwood about ten feet from the ground. This, says Valenzuela, is for basketball. In their free time they play basketball, though, he adds, the ball they like to use "isn't here right now."

They all admit to missing home; they will go back soon, in November. Twice a week they call Sinaloa, using the phone booths at grocery stores. They send money via Western Union. Finally, I ask about hardship, but none of them concurs with that description. "This is an adventure," Valenzuela repeats. "And we are making very good money."

Hours later, just before dusk, I see them again on the Beverly Burke road, passing my car at high speed, the vintage Cadillac bouncing on its shock absorbers, heading north toward George in the last light, Martin Castro laying on the horn, Balentine Lugo waving madly, Fausto Lopez Valenzuela turned toward me in the rear window, smiling and giving me the thumbs-up sign that means, if I understand it correctly, that everything is all right.

In the morning I drive into the Yakima Valley, whose major employers include Tree Top Inc., Stadelman Fruit, Snokist Growers and Del Monte Foods. At Pasco, I cross the Columbia and then the Snake before turning north on the Ice Harbor Dam road toward the Broetje Orchards. With 4,000 contiguous acres, Broetje is one of the state's largest growers and among the small minority that provides worker housing. Its owners, Ralph and Cheryl Broetje, have spent $5.5 million to build eighty homes; twenty-eight apartments, a school, gym, and day-care center; a laundromat, gas station, and convenience store; a chapel and a post office.

The orchards here are of such magnitude they seem, from a distance, a shuddering mirage, an hallucination of the desert. They cover the land in an immaculate sweep, breaking over sage-strewn buttes, falling toward the Snake River. A wanderer is easily lost in their midst, down between rows of Braeburns or Fujis that have no end and lead nowhere, except to other fruit. These orchards are like an invitation, a seduction by 4,000 acres of trees, by

* *A fast apple picker can earn $12 an hour, but the average income for tree-fruit workers in Washington is $7.88 an hour, $3,822 a season.*

apples hanging profusely from limbs, by warm wind stirring leaves. Broetje's pickers, 1,000 of them, fill as many as 6,000 bins a day, but still these orchards look heavily laden, boundlessly vigorous and fertile.

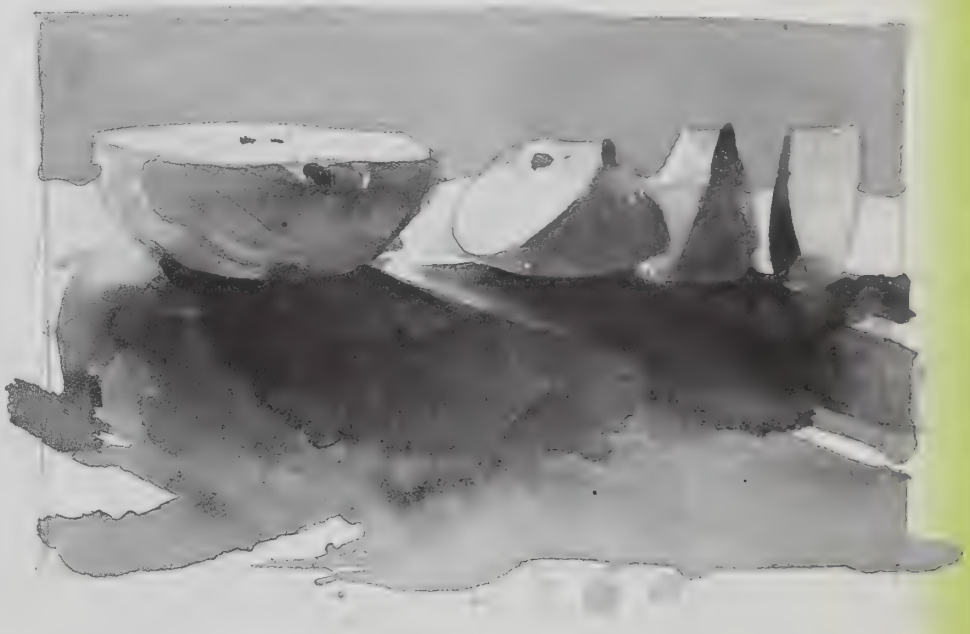
The Broetje Orchards' housing complex, known as Vista Hermosa, has the clean, tidy, stuccoed look of a suburban development in Phoenix or Albuquerque, the homes with green lawns and red-tiled roofs, flower gardens and barbecues. A three-bedroom house with a single-car garage leases for $350 a month; a four-bedroom house, for $400. Garbage is picked up every Thursday, and the tuition at the elementary school, which includes breakfast, lunch, and snacks, is $25 a month. There is licensed day care at $7 a day per child, a soccer field and soccer league, movies on Friday nights in winter, concerts, and community potlucks. Many residents tend small plots of corn, squash, or tomatoes. At the edge of their lawns, the sagebrush begins. The line between irrigated lawn and dry sage stands starkly against the hills.

Vista Hermosa—"Beautiful View"—is a private community, not a municipality; everything here is subsidized by the Broetjes, a deeply religious couple with nine children, six from India, adopted. According to the rules of lease, homes are inspected every three months, and there is no drinking of alcohol out of doors, no parking of abandoned vehicles, no cluttering of driveways or yards, no speeding or "misconduct" or fighting. No alcohol or cigarettes are sold at Jo Jo's Orchard Market, which does rent a handful of videos with G and PG ratings. The chapel offers worship services, the community center runs Bible classes, and once a year in Vista Hermosa there is a Christian Talent Contest.

I ask Ralph Broetje, in his office, if he has heard of the camp near Mattawa, with its Porta-Potties and fire pits, cardboard huts and tents. A self-effacing man of fifty-three who speaks dispassionately most of the time, Broetje nods, strokes his beard, and argues that decent worker housing increases productivity in an orchard by cutting down on turnover and encouraging a stable, motivated workforce that is not disgruntled or disenfranchised. Still, he adds, "if you just look at the bottom line, it doesn't make financial sense to spend so much on Vista Hermosa. But it does make human sense."

The state of Washington, for many years, has not heeded Ralph Broetje on this point. From 1994 to 1996, according to the office of the governor, the state spent no money on migrant housing and stood to one side while migrant workers, literally by the tens of thousands, slept in cars, tents, and shacks throughout the harvest season. Recently, the state improved its record: it spent $1.3 million to transform seagoing cargo containers into living units and $1.7 million on permanent housing for migrant workers. The legislature has slated $40 million to construct housing for 10,000 people over the next ten years.

These measures, while salutary, will also help corporate orchardists realize a considerable savings. Already the recipients of subsidized water and subsidized electricity, they will now have subsidized labor too, with taxpayers underwriting the cost of housing migrant workers. In this way, Washington State secures the dominion of corporate growers and increases the likelihood that small family orchards will continue in their decline. The state doesn't ask of large growers what it did not have to ask of Ralph Broetje,

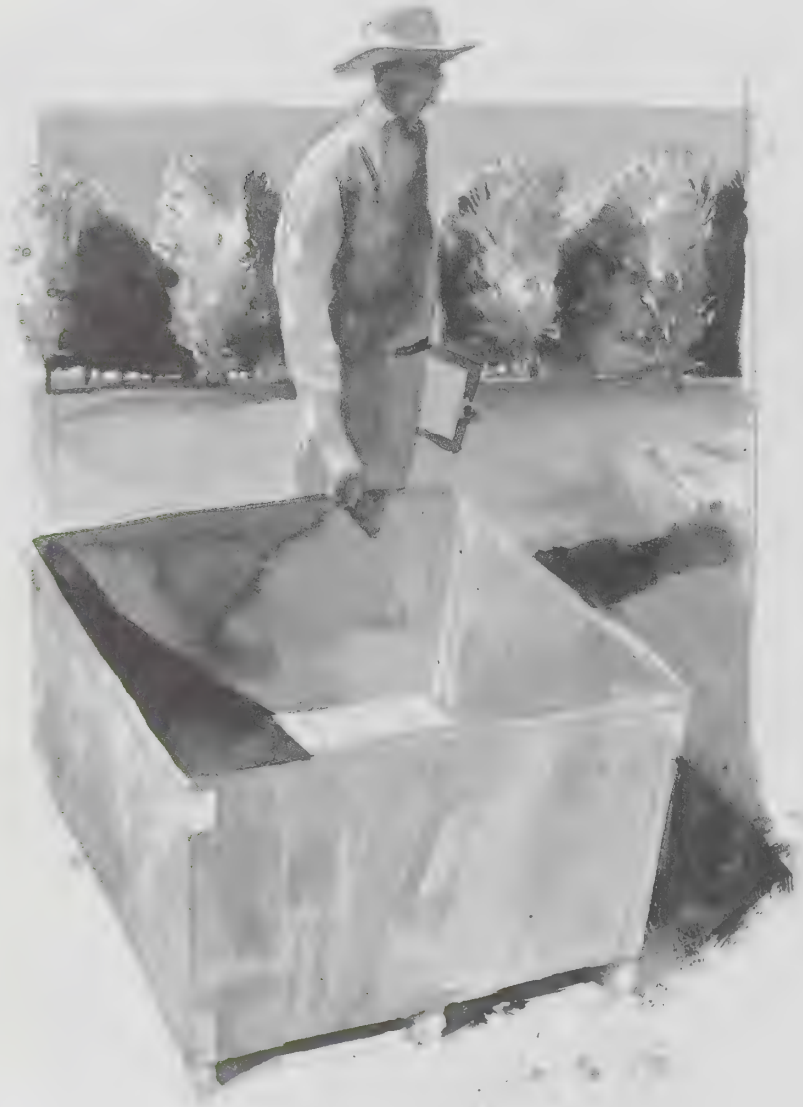


who, despite the millions he has spent on worker housing, still runs a profitable business. Broetje, ever straight-faced and calm, offers no response when I mention to him that he is sometimes dismissed by certain growers as an evangelical fanatic. Nor can I coax him into criticizing growers who ignore the needs of workers. "It's a hard business," he reminds me. "But the Lord has really blessed us here. It's good land for apples."

Meanwhile, westward across the mountains near Seattle, a company called Newton Research Labs is developing the basic technology to build robotic pickers. Its "vision system," known as Cognachrome, can discern the color and shape of small objects and is already used to sort blueberries. Newton's scientists envision a world in which Cognachrome-guided robot pickers progress between the rows of trees, employing retractable, swiveling arms to harvest apples at two to ten times the speed of

the fastest human hands. These robots could be carefully programmed to pick only mature fruit. With built-in artificial lights, they could proceed with their picking even at night, uninterrupted by the setting of the sun or the human need to sleep.

As the harvest season rises to a peak, the cottonwood leaves turn russet yellow and the cattails by ponds and in irrigation wasteways take on a bold golden cast. Tumbleweed skitters across back roads and up against barbed wire fences; full bins wait at sidings. The props are pulled from under limbs freshly freed from the weight of fruit, and everywhere the haul trucks run, even on the dusty lanes that wind, unnamed, across the land.



It's at this time that I travel north, past Lake Chelan and the town of Brewster, then along the Okanogan River. Growers here must contend with long winters, chilly weather during bloom, and the near likelihood, every spring, of devastating frost. Situated north of the federal government's irrigation project, they do not have access to the subsidized water that helps make orchards to the south so profitable. Corporate growers have shied away from this region, making the northern reaches of the apple country a last bastion of the family orchard and of the marketing and packing cooperative. Recently, though, a number of small family operations have freshly succumbed to the onslaught of global market forces—21 percent in Douglas County alone between 1992 and 1997.

I drive up the west bank of the Okanogan then take the Monse cutoff to Brewster Flat where I find Bob Brody, owner of the King Blossom Natural orchards, standing at the tail gate of his pickup truck and sorting through a box of apples. The apples, as it turns out, are a gift for me—a kindness performed for a journalist—and Brody is busily hand-turning them so that they sit in their purple eggshell nests in perfect symmetry.

Brody is a blunt, straightforward man who wears a King Blossom cap and keeps a calculator permanently attached to his steering wheel with Velcro. He is widely known in the apple country as plainspoken and opinionated; he has no sympathy for the United States Trade Representative, Bill Clinton, or the media. Against expectation, he grows organic fruit the sort one finds in co-op groceries and upscale-market produce sections. "I happen to be very conservative," he says, "but I sell to very liberal people."

We go for a drive in Brody's truck; he wants me to tour his operation. It is cold enough now that the pickers wear jackets, stocking caps and flannel shirts. Brody maneuvers between the narrow rows, apples so close on either side we might pick them from our windows. A traveling *taquería*, or taco wagon—a ubiquitous sight in orchard country—is temporarily parked among the trees, and a man in a stained white restaurant apron is hawking burritos, jojos (small french fries), and soft drinks from its narrow serving window. Windfall apples litter the ground here. The trees are still, as if poised for something. The pickers move with a steady grace, plucking the apples rapidly, leaning and reaching like jugglers or magicians practiced at sleight-of-hand.

Brody assures me, forcefully, that organic apples are not, for him, a philosophical proposition. He does not grow them to promote biodiversity, keep chemicals off my plate, save energy, or protect the earth. In fact, for twenty years until the late Eighties, Brody grew conventional apples and used conventional pesticides and chemical fertilizers. Then in 1989, CBS's *60 Minutes* ran a story alleging that Alar, a growth hormone once widely used on apples, was pow

IN THE FUTURE WE MAY SEE ROBOT APPLE PICKERS WITH RETRACTABLE, SWIVELING ARMS HARVESTING FRUIT TEN TIMES FASTER THAN HUMAN HANDS, UNINTERRUPTED BY DARKNESS

fully carcinogenic. Within a week, Brody calls, apple sales slowed to a trickle, and, like any other Washington orchardists, he was rced to donate fruit to food banks to keep it om rotting on the ground.

Brody and ten other growers filed a $200 illion product-disparagement suit against BS and an environmental group that did not revent *60 Minutes*' allegations from having a isastrous effect. Consumers shied away from ples, and a number of orchards went bank-pt. Brody, searching for a means to survive, ent organic instead.

Organic growers, to be certified as such, ust meet strict horticultural standards that rohibit, among other practices, the use of ost synthetically derived fertilizers, insecti-des, fungicides, and herbicides. They also ust accept the fact that a portion of their op, every year, will inevitably be claimed by ests. Brody, for example, has seen his rchards inundated by campylomma—more mmonly known as the mullein plant bug—hich feeds on blossoms and developing fruit rly in the season. Conventional growers can mbat this pest with the properly timed raying of insecticides, but organic growers ke Bob Brody must stand aside and watch imly while campylomma takes as much as ne third of their fruit.

We bump along through a block of Galas, rody talking at high speed but driving at a ately pace. He is glad, he says, that tree-fruit searchers and entomologists are developing ew measures for pest control to replace the onventional insecticides once standard cross the industry. These insecticides, he lds, were at first effective and inexpensive, nd growers used them liberally, engaging in roadcast spraying regimens whether pests ere present or not. One result of this wide-pread practice was the gradual emergence of ew pests that, until the advent of broadcast raying, had been held in check by natural nemies now reduced by lethal pesticides. A cond result was the steady rise of insecti-de-resistant pest generations, which only rompted further rounds of ever more expen-ve, ever more toxic spraying.

Brody stops to emphatically remind me that e is no friend of the sustainable agriculture movement, the EPA, or the Sierra Club. Some of these new measures for pest control are simply better, he argues—less expensive, more effective, and, best of all, in Brody's case, legal for organic growers.

One example is a novel technique—aimed primarily at a pest called the codling moth—known as mating disruption. The codling moth, *Cydia pomonella*, whose scientific name suggests an interest in apples, is a widespread, tenacious orchard dweller whose larvae bore deeply into fruit, feeding on the flesh as they penetrate, then on the seeds at the core.* They leave their excrement, known as brown frass, in piles by their entry holes—holes they further excavate and enlarge to serve as eventual exits. Adults mate most actively on warm summer evenings, flitting through orchards restlessly, their gray and white wings beating the night air. Females lay their eggs on leaves, branches, and newly developing fruit, or even in the calyxes of tender blossoms, so that newly hatched larvae will be situated for the feast when apple seeds begin to grow.

Mating disruption, a biological intervention, is only the latest strategy employed in a century of war with the codling moth. For decades the widespread measure of choice was to spray lead arsenate as many as nine times a season, but this left a toxic, gray residue on the fruit that was costly and difficult to wash away, and exposed the public to the possibility of lead poisoning from eating Washington State apples. Lead arsenate was replaced by DDT, but by the 1960s it was clear to entomologists that orchard pests like the codling moth were developing resistance to this new insecticide, and by the 1970s DDT, widely understood as ecologically lethal, was banned by federal law.

Unlike lead arsenate or DDT sprays, mating disruption controls the codling moth without introducing toxic chemicals into the orchard environment. The technique derives from an increased understanding of the moth's sexual behavior, particularly the revelation that

** Codling moth is found nearly everywhere but, like fire blight, is absent in Japan, which notoriously tests imported apples for signs of the pest's presence. American growers generally believe that these tests are far more stringent than necessary and are used, primarily, to prevent foreign fruit from competing on the Japanese market.*

EVERY ORCHARDIST DREAMS QUIETLY OF ONE DAY DISCOVERING THE PERFECT APPLE—THE NEXT RED DELICIOUS, THE NEXT GRANNY SMITH—GROWING INNOCENTLY AMONG HIS WEEDS

females of the species announce their sexual willingness by releasing plumes of pheromone that waft downwind through an orchard. Using keen olfactory receptors located on their antennae, the males are capable of detecting this pheromone from as far off as a hundred yards, and are adroit at tracing it relentlessly upwind until they arrive at its source. Copulation is a quick affair, after which the male flutters off, his antennae raised high once again, in search of yet more pheromone.

Manufacturers like Shin-Etsu Chemical and Hercon Environmental have learned to synthesize female codling moth pheromone and now sell it to orchardists in a variety of slow-release dispensers. Each emits as much as 10,000 times the pheromone naturally emitted by a female, suffusing the air with so much scent the males can't track the females. Confused by the odor of sex everywhere, these males wander in anxious confusion, unfulfilled and frustrated. In time, populations of codling moths dwindle to acceptable numbers.

A permutation of mating disruption known in the industry as "attract and kill" gives orchardists yet another weapon in the war with the codling moth. The Swiss chemical company Novartis has developed a pheromone product aptly named Last Call, which is laced with permethrin, an insecticide. Applied in sticky droplets to the bark of trees, Last Call lures males to untimely deaths, victims of their sexual appetites. Meanwhile, in British Columbia, millions of moths sterilized by radiation have been released to mate with wild moths—a program so enormously successful that control of the pest is in sight there. These measures may have problems of their own, but they are generally acknowledged to be far more benign than the chemical sprays of the past.

Like most organic growers in Washington, Bob Brody would not be in business today without new biological weapons like mating-disruption technologies. He admits as much as we drive out of his orchard, though at the same time he believes fervently in the efficacy and safety of most chemical insecticides and suspects that the EPA is the hand puppet of environmental organizations. It takes a lot of environmentalists, he tells me—paranoid ones with plenty of money—to ensure a market for organic apples, which often cost three times as much as their non-organic counterparts. This marke he adds, is growing rapidly, but so is the supp of organic fruit, a fact that might eventual drive down prices and perhaps nudge Bro from the cozy niche he inhabits at the momer

When I leave, I take with me a box organic apples and another of organic pea Brody is right about one thing: King Blosso Natural's fruit is excellent, worth the prem um price. I sample it as I make my way sou and find that even his Red Delicious apples, often bland and disappointing, are unusual sweet and flavorful. The Bosc dessert pears a marvelous, too. Their juice is thic ambrosial. Sitting on the bank of t Columbia with three pieces of fruit in my la I eat until I am surfeited, a mistake I've ma earlier this harvest season but haven't learn from yet. I indulge in fruit as people ha since at least the Neolithic era, when th wandered gathering wild apples, pears, plu cherries. Our word "fruit" derives from t Latin *fruor:* "to delight in."

Downriver forty miles from B Brody's place is the Little O Orchard, run by Doyle and Th Fleming. They are in their kitch when I come to call, seated at the table wi their son, Tye; the three are soberly answeri questions put to them by Geraldine Warn editor of a magazine called *Good Fruit Grow* The Flemings are modest, thoughtful peo whose home feels inundated, throttled, orchards; they are also widely known as innov tors, celebrated across the apple country as ri takers and dreamers. Warner is here for t same reason I am—to learn more about t Flemings' latest venture, a new apple called t Cameo, which now grows on nearly half of t Flemings' 170 acres.

The Cameo was discovered by an orchard named Darrel Caudle near Dryden in the ea 1980s. Picking in a block of Red Delicio Caudle was astonished to find a tree in wh the fruit was rounder and less red than in s rounding trees, tapered at the calyx but with points. This new, unfamiliar apple, mildly t and aromatic, had a fine firm texture, crea white flesh, and an exquisitely subtle sw

aste. It might be, hoped Caudle, a marketable ariety, though as yet it had no name.

New, unnamed apple varieties are by no eans rare in orchard country. This is because pples are heterozygous, meaning that every one f their seeds, even those from the same piece of uit, is genetically unique. The seeds of an apple re like human siblings, related individuals with istinct destinies encoded in their DNA—one nable to thwart a hint of frost, the next susceptible to fire blight. Were you to cut open a hode Island Greening, successfully propagate ie seeds at its core, then nurture them over sufcient time until each grew into a bearing tree, ventually you would harvest, from the branchs of each, a separate and unique variety of pple—large, small, green, russet, perhaps rt, perhaps aromatic, but the produce of ach distinct from the next, and none of it hode Island Greenings.

Such unpredictability, Doyle Fleming lls me, is anathema to orchardists, who annot afford to plant randomly in a orld where the vast majority of apple eds bear less than desirable fruit. The olution since the time of Pliny has been n elegantly simple one—rather than lanting unreliable seeds, orchardists edge the buds or branches of trees they now to be good producers into slits cut n other trees, where they sprout parasitially, making use of the host tree's rootock. Budding and grafting are the sole eans by which orchards of single varieies are established; in fact, every apple in he grocery store is the product not of a plantd seed but of budding or grafting by human ands. Nursery workers in apple country cultiate rootstock that is disease resistant, hardy nder frost conditions, persevering through rought or flood, generally stalwart and vigorus, but they do not care what sort of fruit it ill bear if left to its own devices. Instead, hey graft marketable varieties to it—say, M111 rootstock grafted with Gibson olden Delicious, or EMLA 7 rootstock graftl with Ace Spur Red Delicious—and sell it orchardists for planting.

Doyle, who looks vaguely like Robin Williams the mad professor in the recent remake of *Rubber*, explains that a new apple like the one arrel Caudle found results when a nursery's aft breaks off, allowing the rootstock itself to rout. At other times, new apples are found owing by fences or in weeds, the result of seeds opped aimlessly by birds, or of the seeds of ples that have rotted on the ground and successfully propagated. Most of the time, the progny of rootstock or of dropped seeds turns out to e unmarketable—poor keepers, susceptible to sunburn, bitter, coarse, soft, juiceless, easily ravaged by pests. Occasionally, though, a new variety appears that holds the same promise as the first Red Delicious, the first Rome Beauty or Granny Smith.* Every orchardist dreams quietly—in the way people dream of lottery luck—of one day discovering the perfect apple growing innocently among his weeds, of putting his personal trademark on it, and of reaping for many years to come the royalties that are sure to accrue as his apple becomes hugely popular.

Caudle's new apple fell into the hands of a field horticulturist named Fred Valentine, who kept a few in controlled-atmosphere storage and one day brought two to Doyle Fleming. Fleming



was impressed not only by its taste but by its astonishing durability: Caudle's apple, after ten months in storage, was still toothsome and fragrant. With buds and branches from Caudle's mother tree, Fleming, Valentine, and a horticulturist named Bob Gix initiated a series of experiments. Fleming, eventually, planted seventy acres, and the Caudle Corporation—Gix, Caudle, Valentine, Fleming—decided to launch its new apple in an already crowded marketplace.

The Cameo has excelled in consumer taste tests and commands, already, substantial buyer loyalty, but it has also arrived on the scene at a time when difficulties for apples abound. The consumption of apples in the United States has been flat for the last decade, while consumption of such exotic fruits as kiwi and mango has increased dramatically and processed foods like

** Red Delicious came to light as a chance seedling in Jesse Hiatt's orchard near Peru, Iowa, circa 1870. The Rome Beauty, meanwhile, derives from a shoot put out by rootstock below the point at which it had been grafted; the mother tree was named for Rome Township, Ohio, and dates from the 1820s. Granny Smith is an Australian apple; legend has it that it sprouted from apples left to rot by a Mrs. Smith in 1868.*

potato chips have expanded their share of the snack market. Current global apple production is more than sufficient to meet world demand, and the projection for 2005 is that apple production will outpace population growth by approximately 20 percent. By then there will be 77 million tons of apples, in proliferating varieties, available on the world market—Australian Pink Ladies, Chinese Fujis, Elstars, Royal Galas, Ginger Golds. All of these apples will be looking for buyers, and consumers will have to select, from among them, Darrel Caudle's Cameo if the Flemings are to survive.

In the corner of their kitchen on this afternoon, a computer is humming incessantly, its monitor's screen saver stacking boxes with Sisyphean doggedness, its keyboard stained from constant use. Doyle stays in contact, by e-mail, with growers and marketers in Western Europe, Japan, China, Australia, and New Zealand; he is interested in learning about new varieties and in investigating whether the Cameo is being properly promoted worldwide. The focus, he says, should be on eating quality, not on the polished, high red color that has long been the mainstay of apple promotion, particularly for Washington State apples. Doyle finds it enormously disconcerting that the industry persists in touting high color, which, he fumes, prompts many orchardists to compromise the flavor of their fruit in favor of comeliness. "Red fruit," insists Doyle, "doesn't fool today's buyers. They're after something with taste."

Doyle, Tye, and I go out into the hardening light of a late-fall afternoon. The wind has whipped up and is funneling downriver; it bends the limbs of the poplars and agitates the flight of birds, who blast over the treetops as if shot out of cannons. We walk through a block of Fuji apples planted with 6,000 trees per acre, trees so dense they form a wall; the rows have the feel of hedges. The Cameos are planted in vertical axes—the limbs lie draped across four wires, to which they are fixed with staples. There are cherries, pears, apricots, Gala and Braeburn apples. Finally we visit, on a bench above the river, the Flemings' personal breeding plot, where about 4,000 apple varieties grow in crowded rows. None of the fruit here has a name, and we wander among it with our pocketknives open, sampling like connoisseurs, seeking the proper descriptive language, and pondering whether anything we've tried might be worth grafting to rootstock and peddling in the marketplace. The range of fruit is beyond imagining—a kingdom of varied treasures. I try an apple that tastes like a banana, a timid apple, an apple of spice, an apple that smells like watermelon. One is no bigger than the common plum; another is as big as a coconut. One has a waxy, bitter skin; another is tough and coarse in the mouth; a third, dry and pungent, musty; a fourth, delicate, ethereal. Russeted like a small mosaic, surprisingly weighty in the palm of the hand, potato-fleshed, mealy, invigorating, fine-grained, piquant, astringent, a spitter. Doyle chews and wipes juice from his chin with a slightly crazy grin on his face, barely containing his ecstasy, his exultation. The world seems a fine place to the three of us just now. There is nothing in it but apples.

In an orchard as various and promising as this, as wild, glorious, and thoroughly enchanted, it is easy to see that the factory apple—the one produced in uniform rows to ripen into a uniform color at a market-optimum uniform size; the one handled in a warehouse like a widget, waxed to a lifeless, plastic sheen, stuffed into cold storage for months on end, shipped to every corner of the world, and displayed at retail like a veritable clone of every apple it is mounded with—is in effect only a paltry substitute for the real thing here in Doyle's orchard. It is easy to think that the experience of an apple, for most of us, most of the time, is already less than it ought to be, and that the apple's power, its mythic resonances, its poetry and poignancy, is increasingly diminished in the contemporary world, perhaps already lost.

The close of the harvest season is not long off. The bins and ladders will soon be put away, the canvas bags hung up for winter, every apple removed from every tree, the orchards brought to a leaden silence, the pickers moving on, disappearing south, leaving the country hushed and lonely, not even an evening breeze.

Going home, I stop at the verge of a still orchard and collect windfall apples. Already some leaves are on the ground, as dry as bone, weightless, curled in on themselves. Already my own harvest season is done—I will not be this way again to taste this fruit against my tongue, the white flesh of an apple, the juice of an apple, the heft of an apple, palmed. The word for how I feel is *autumnal*. I'm pierced by the beauty of orchards, of apples. I fashion my coat into a kind of sack in order to tote my gathered fruit, and do not want this fall to end, though of course it already has. The fruit of immortality, of passion, is also the fruit of sad desire, of unrequited love for this earth, whose loveliness torments us. Yet I am glad to have had this harvest season. I carry apples in the sack of my coat, two dozen windfalls nestled there, each a kind of good fortune, each a gift to be met with gladness that the world includes such things as this. In this way, I bring my apples home, my windfall fruit, to eat. ■

YOUR CONSTITUTION IS KILLING YOU

A reconsideration of the right to bear arms

By Daniel Lazare

A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.
—Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States

On June 17, in the aftermath of the massacre at Columbine High School and a similar, if less grisly, incident the following month in Conyers, Georgia, the House of Representatives passed a "juvenile crime bill" steadfast in its refusal to limit the ease with which juveniles can lay their hands on firearms. House Republicans, it was clear, were determined to avoid making any connection between the fact that there are an estimated 240 million guns in the United States, nearly one per person, a number that is increasing by some 5 to 7 million a year, and the increase of violence in our culture. Instead, the problem was that we had forgotten the importance of "family values," that our children had become "spoiled with material things," that we had given in to "liberal relativism." Guns weren't the problem; the problem was "the abandonment of God" in the public sphere.

Representatives Henry Hyde (R., Ill.) and Tom DeLay (R., Tex.) were particularly enthusiastic in their efforts to look beyond guns for a solution. Hyde put the blame on the entertainment industry and tried to push through an amendment to the crime bill that would have made it a jailable offense to sell overtly violent or sexual material to minors. Even when 127 of his fellow Republicans voted against the measure, Hyde refused to let go. "People were misled," he said, "and disinclined to oppose the powerful entertainment industry." DeLay's approach was even more entertaining. At a "God Not Guns" rally, he read aloud an e-mail he claimed to have received that very morning: "The student writes, 'Dear God, Why didn't you stop the shootings at Columbine?' And God writes,

Daniel Lazare is the author of The Frozen Republic: How the Constitution Is Paralyzing Democracy, *published by Harcourt Brace. He is finishing a book about the prospects for re-urbanization in the twenty-first century.*

LIBERALS CANNOT BEAR TO ADMIT THE TRUTH ABOUT GUN CONTROL: THE RIGHT WING IS RIGHT. THE SECOND AMENDMENT CONFERS AN *INDIVIDUAL* RIGHT



'Dear student, I would have, but I wasn't allowed in school.'" (So mu
for divine omnipotence.) An hour later DeLay was on the House flo
telling his colleagues that "our school systems teach the children th
they are nothing but glorified apes who are evolutionized out of some p
mordial soup of mud." Other DeLayisms: "We place our children in d
care centers where they learn their socialization skills . . . under the law
the jungle . . ."; "Our children, who historically have been seen as a ble
ing from God, are now viewed as either a mistake created when cont
ception fails or inconveniences that parents try to raise in their sp
time." A proposal to allow the display of the Ten Commandments in p
lic schools was subsequently voted into the bill.

Among the further futile gestures housed in a second piece of crime l
islation that failed the next day was a measure to reduce the Senate's p
posed waiting time for purchases at gun shows and to limit the numbe
gun shows subject to any waiting period whatsoever. All this despite p
showing two-to-one support for stricter gun control even bef
Columbine. Two centuries ago, the great fear among the men who dr
up the United States Constitution was of a popularly elected legislat
falling all over itself to do the public's bidding; today we are witness t
popularly elected body falling all over itself *not* to carry out the democr
ic will. Why?

The standard liberal response is that the National Rifle Associati
made them do it. The NRA has used its immense campaign war chest
punish gun-control advocates and stifle dissent. It has twisted and disto
ed the Constitution. It has cleared a path for troglodytes like Hyde a
DeLay. But the real problem is more disconcerting. The reason that Hy
and Co. are able to dominate the gun debate, the reason that the gun l
by is so powerful, is not the NRA but the basis on which the NRA's po
er rests; i.e., the Second Amendment. The truth about the Seco
Amendment is something that liberals cannot bear to admit: The rig
wing is right. The amendment *does* confer an individ
right to bear arms, and its very presence makes effect
gun control in this country all but impossible.

For decades liberal constitutional scholars have maintained that, co
trary to the NRA, the Second Amendment does not guarantee an in
vidual's right to own guns, merely a right to participate in an official st
militia. The key phrase, they have argued, is "[a] well regulated Militi
which the introductory clause describes as nothing less than essential
"the security of a free State." A well-regulated militia is not just a go
consequently, but *the* goal, the amendment's raison d'être. Everything e
is subordinate. The right "to keep and bear Arms" is valid only to the
gree that it serves this all-important end. There is therefore no *individ*
right to bear arms in and of itself, only a *collective* right on the part of
citizens of the states to do so as members of the various official state m
tias. The right to own the assault weapon of one's choice exists only
the fevered imagination of the National Rifle Association. Its consti
tional basis is nil. The only right that the Second Amendment confer
the right to emulate Dan Quayle and join the National Guard.

This is the cheerful, anodyne version of the Second Amendment we
used to from the American Civil Liberties Union and other liberal grou
But as the gun issue has heated up since the Sixties and Seventies, con
tutional scholars have taken a second look. The result has been both a
naissance in Second Amendment studies and a remarkable about-face
how it is interpreted. The purely "collectivist" interpretation has been
jected across the board by liberals and conservatives as ahistorical a
overly pat. The individualist interpretation, the one that holds that Am
icans have a right to bear arms whether they're serving in an official st
militia or not, has been more or less vindicated. In fact, some academ
have gone so far as to compare the NRA's long campaign in behalf of

Photographs by Zed Nelson from the series Gun Nation/M

expansive interpretation of the Second Amendment to the ACLU's long campaign in behalf of an expansive reading of the First. As the well-known constitutional scholar William Van Alstyne put it, "The constructive role of the NRA today, like the role of the ACLU in the 1920s, . . . ought itself not lightly to be dismissed. Indeed, it is largely by the 'unreasonable' persistence of just such organizations in this country that the Bill of Rights has endured." Language like this is what one might expect at some Texas or Colorado gun show, not in the pages of the *Duke Law Journal*.

No less strikingly, the Second Amendment renaissance has also led to a renewed appreciation for the amendment's ideological importance. Previously, scholars were inclined to view the Second Amendment as little more than a historical curiosity, not unlike the Third Amendment, which, as almost no one remembers, prohibits the peacetime quartering of troops in private homes without the owners' consent. Harvard's Laurence Tribe gave the Second Amendment no more than a footnote in the 1988 edition of his famous textbook *American Constitutional Law*, but a new edition, published this August, treats the subject much more extensively. It is now apparent that the amendment, despite its brevity, encapsulates an entire worldview concerning the nature of political power, the rights and duties of citizenship, and the relationship between the individual and the state. It is virtually a constitution-within-the-Constitution, which is undoubtedly why it fuels such fierce passions.

WITH DAY TRADERS AND STUDENTS SHOOTING CITIZENS, THE IMPLICATIONS OF AN INDIVIDUAL RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS ARE PROFOUND



With crazed day traders and resentful adolescents mowing down large numbers of their fellow citizens every few weeks, the implications of this new, toughened-up version of the Second Amendment would seem to be profound. Politically, there's no doubt that it has already had an effect by encouraging the gun lobby to dig in its heels after Littleton, Conyers, the Mark Barton rampage in Atlanta, and the earlier shootings in Kentucky, Arkansas, and elsewhere. When Joyce Lee Malcolm, professor of history at Bentley College in Waltham, Massachusetts, and the author of a pathbreaking 1994 study, *To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an Anglo-American Right* (Harvard University Press), told a congressional committee a year later that "[i]t is very hard, sir, to find a historian who now believes that it is only a collective right . . . [t]here is no one for me to argue against anymore," it was just the sort of thing that pro-gun forces on Capitol Hill wanted to hear. If it wasn't a sign that God was on their side, then it was a sign that the Constitution was, which in American politics is more or less the same thing.

The judicial impact is a bit harder to assess. Although the Supreme Court has not ruled on the Second Amendment since the 1930s, it has repeatedly upheld gun control measures. But there is evidence that judicial sentiment is beginning to take heed of the academic change of heart. Two years ago, Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas indicated that he thought it was time to rethink the Second Amendment; Justice Antonin Scalia apparently thinks so as well. Then, just this past April, two weeks before Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold shot up Columbine High School, a federal judge in a Texas gun case issued a ruling so enthusiastically "individualist" that it was virtually a brief in favor of what is now known in aca-

COULD IT BE THAT THE CONSTITUTION IS NOT THE GREATEST PLAN, THAT IT CONTAINS NOTIONS REPUGNANT TO THE MODERN SENSIBILITY?

demic circles as the "Standard Model" of the Second Amendment. "The plain language of the amendment," declared Judge Sam R. Cummings, "shows that the function of the subordinate clause [i.e., the portion referring to a well-regulated militia] was not to qualify the right [to keep and bear arms], but instead to show why it must be protected." Rather than mutually exclusive, the collective right to join a state militia and the individual right to own a gun are, according to Cummings, mutually reinforcing. Although anti-gun groups predicted that the decision would soon be overturned, it is clear that a purely collectivist reading is becoming harder and harder to defend; the individualist interpretation, harder and harder to deny.

We have long been in the habit of seeing in the Constitution whatever it is we want to see. Because liberals want a society that is neat and orderly, they tell themselves that this is what the Constitution "wants" as well. This is a little like a nineteenth-century country vicar arguing that the Bible stands for moderation, reform, and other such Victorian virtues when in fact, as anyone who actually reads the text can see, it is filled with murder, mayhem, and the arbitrary vengeance of a savage god. By the same token, the increasingly sophisticated scholarship surrounding the Second Amendment has led to renewed respect for the constitutional text as it is rather than as we would like it to be. The Constitution, it turns out, is not neat and orderly but messy and unruly. It is not modern but pre-modern. It is not the product of a time very much like our own but reflects the unresolved contradictions of a time very different from our own.



Could it be that the Constitution is not the greatest plan on earth, that it contains notions that are repugnant to the modern sensibility? "When we are lost, the best thing for us to do is to look to our Constitution as a beacon of light and a guide to get us through trying times." So declaimed Representative Zoe Lofgren (D., Calif.) during the House impeachment debate last October. Considering how we've all been taught since childhood to revere this document, probably not one American in a thousand would disagree. But what if Zoe Lofgren is wrong—what if the sacred text is seriously, if not fatally, flawed? Could it be that constitutional faith is *not* enough to get us through trying times? In a faith-bound republic like the United States, this is pretty heretical stuff. Yet one of the nice things about the Second Amendment renaissance is the way it forces us to grapple with such heresy. Instead of allowing us to go on blindly trusting in the wisdom of a group of tribal patriarchs known as the Founding Fathers, it compels us to think for ourselves.

The framers, as it turns out, were of two minds where the power of the people was concerned. The Preamble to the Constitution implies a theory of unbounded popular sovereignty in which "we the people" are so powerful that we can "ordain and establish" new constitutions and, in the process, abrogate old ones such as the disastrous Articles of Confederation. The rest of the document implies that "we the people" are so powerless that when it comes to an anachronism such as the Second Amendment, the democratic majority is effectively precluded from changing a Constitution made in the people's name. We the people can move mountains, but we cannot excise one troublesome twenty-seven-word clause. Because we have chained ourselves to a premodern Constitution, we are unable to deal with the modern problem of a run-

way gun culture in a modern way. Rather than binding society together, he effort to force society to conform to the dictates of an outmoded plan of government is tearing it apart. Each new crazed gunman is a symptom of our collective—one might say our constitutional—helplessness. Someday soon, we will have to emancipate ourselves from our eighteenth-century Constitution. The only question is how.

Americans tend to give history short shrift; after all, when your Constitution is a timeless masterpiece, who needs to bother with something as boring as the past? But in order to unlock the meaning of the Second Amendment, it is necessary to know a little about the world in which it was created. The most important thing to understand is the eighteenth century's role as the great transitional period. Capitalism, industrialism, the rise of the great metropolis, the creation of new kinds of politics—these were beginning to make themselves felt, and as they did so they were creating shock waves and counter shock waves from one end of the English-speaking world to the other. Urbanization fueled passionate defenses of the old agrarian way of life. A new system of government centered on a prime minister, a cabinet, and an all-powerful House of Commons provoked endless screeds in favor of the old system of checks and balances among a multitude of coequal governing institutions.

This is the source of the great eighteenth-century polarization between what was known as Court and Country—the powerbrokers, influence-wielders, and political fixers on one side, and all those who felt shut out by the new arrangement on the other. Since the 1960s, historians have made immense strides in reconstructing this Anglo-American ideological world. In essence, we now know that it was dominated by fierce controversy over the nature of political power: whether it was harmful or beneficial, oppressive or liberating, whether it should be concentrated in a single legislative chamber or distributed among many. The Country opposition believed passionately in the latter. As a couple of coffeehouse radicals named John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon put it in their hugely popular *Cato's Letters* in the 1720s, "Power is like fire; it warms, scorches, or destroys according as it is watched, provoked, or increased." The solution was to divide power among so many competitive institutions that politicians' "emulation, envy, fear, or interest, always made them spies and checks upon one another." Since power was growing, oppression was growing also. "Patriots," therefore, were continually fighting a rear-guard action against corruption and tyranny, which were forever on the increase.

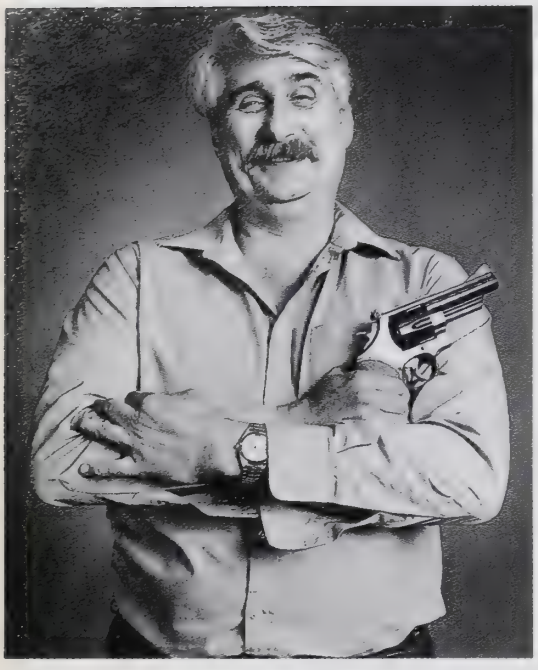
We can recognize in eighteenth-century beliefs like these such modern U.S. attitudes as the cult of checks and balances, hostility to "big gummint," and the Zoe Lofgrenesque conviction that everything will turn out well so long as we remain true to the constitutional faith of our forefathers. Guns, as it turns out, were also a big part of the eighteenth-century Anglo-American debate. "Standing armies," the great bugaboo of the day, represented concentrated power at its most brutal; the late-medieval institution of the popular militia represented freedom at its most noble and idealistic. Beginning with the highly influential Niccolò Machiavelli, a long line of political commentators stressed the special importance of the popular militias in the defense of liberty. Since the only ones who could defend popular liberty were the people themselves, a freedom-loving people had to maintain themselves in a high state of republican readiness. They had to be strong and independent, keep themselves well armed, and be well versed in the arts of war. The moment they allowed themselves to surrender to the wiles of luxury, the cause of liberty was lost.

Thus, we have Sir Walter Raleigh warning that the first goal of a would-be tyrant is to "unarm his people of weapons, money, and all means whereby they may resist his power." In the mid-seventeenth century, we

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have the political theorist James Harrington stressing the special importance of an armed yeomanry of self-sufficient small farmers, while in the early eighteenth we have Trenchard and Gordon warning that "[t]he Exercise of despotick Power is the unrelenting War of an armed Tyrant upon his unarmed Subjects." In the 1770s, James Burgh, another writer in this long Country tradition, advised that "[n]o kingdom can be secured [against tyranny] otherwise than by arming the people. The possession of arms is the distinction between a freeman and a slave." A pro-American English radical named Richard Price added in 1784 that

> [T]he happiest state of man is the middle state between the *savage* and the *refined*, or between the wild and the luxurious state. Such is the state of society in CONNECTICUT, and in some others of the *American* provinces; where the inhabitants consist, if I am rightly informed, of an independent and hardy YEOMANRY, all nearly on a level—trained to arms,—instructed in their rights—cloathed in home-spun—of simple manners—strangers to luxury—drawing plenty from the ground—and that plenty, gathered easily by the hand of industry.

This was the Country myth in all its glory, the image of the rough-hewn, liberty-loving "republican" as someone who called no one master, equated freedom and independence, and was not afraid to fight in defense of either or both. Joyce Lee Malcolm points out that where English patriots were content to pay lip service to the importance of arming the people, their cousins across the sea took the notion quite literally. A law passed by the Plymouth Colony in 1623 required "that every freeman or other inhabitant of this colony provide for himselfe and each under him able to beare arms a sufficient musket and other serviceable peece for war." A 1639 law in Newport ordered that "noe man shall go two miles from the Towne unarmed, eyther with Gunn or Sword; and that none shall come to any public Meeting without his weapon." Measures like these were both practical and symbolic. Not only were guns necessary for self-defense but their widespread possession confirmed America's self-image as a homeland of liberty.

Ideas like these do not seem to have abated the least bit during the colonial period; indeed, by the 1770s they were at full boil. By the time British Redcoats faced off against heavily armed colonial irregulars at the Battle of Lexington and Concord in April 1775, it was as if both sides were actors in a political passion play that had been centuries in the making. It was the standing army versus the people's militia, the metropolis versus the hinterlands, centralized imperial power versus the old balanced constitution. Although the militias performed less than brilliantly in the Revolutionary War—Washington, professional soldier that he was, thought that the ragtag volunteer outfits were more trouble than they were worth—the myth lingered on. Americans needed to believe that amateur citizen-soldiers had won the war because their ideology told them that it was only via a popular militia that republican virtue could be established.

It is worth noting that even among those who were skeptical about the militias' military worth, the concept of a people in arms does not seem to have been at all problematic. Although Alexander Hamilton argued against separate state militias at the Constitutional Convention in 1787, for example, he seemed to have had nothing against popular militias per se. In 1788, he argued in *The Federalist Papers* that in the unlikely event that the proposed new national government used what was known at the time as a "select" militia—i.e., an elite corps—to oppress the population at large, the rest of the militia would be more than enough to fight them off. Such "a large body of citizens," he wrote, "little if at all inferior to them in discipline and the use of arms, . . . [would] stand ready to defend their own rights and those of their fellow-citizens." This is one reason why the argument that the Second Amendment confers only a collective right to join the National Guard is specious: today's National Guard is far closer to the

ighteenth-century concept of a select militia than to the broad, popular ilitia the Framers clearly had in mind. And if the Second Amendment as nothing more than a guarantee of a right on the part of the states to rganize state militias, it would imply that only the federal government was otentially tyrannical. Yet it is clear from James Madison's writings in *The ederalist Papers* that he saw state governments as potential sources of ranny as well. Madison wrote that "the advantage of being armed" was ne of the things that distinguished Americans from all other nations and elped protect them against abuse of power at all levels of government, federal and state. Anti-federalists quite agreed. Their only quibble was that they demanded a Bill of Rights; they wanted the right to bear arms put in writing for all to see.

IF THE FRAMERS WERE LESS THAN EXPLICIT ABOUT THE NATURE OF A WELL-REGULATED MILITIA, IT WAS BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T FEEL THEY HAD TO BE

The meaning of what is now the Second Amendment becomes learer still if we take a look at how its wording evolved. Madison's origi- al version, which he drew up in 1789 as a member of the newly created louse of Representatives, was on the wordy side but at least had the merit f clarity:

> The right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed; a well armed and well regulated militia being the best security of a free country; but no person religiously scrupulous of bearing arms shall be compelled to render military service in person.

By reversing the order between the right to bear arms and a well-regulat- d militia, Madison reversed the priority. Rather than a precondition, his orig- nal version suggested that a well-ordered militia was merely one of the ood things that flowed from niversal gun ownership. A ommittee to which the mendment was referred, how- ver, changed the order so that he amendment now read,

> A well regulated militia, composed of the body of the people, being the best security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed, but no person religiously scrupulous shall be compelled to bear arms.



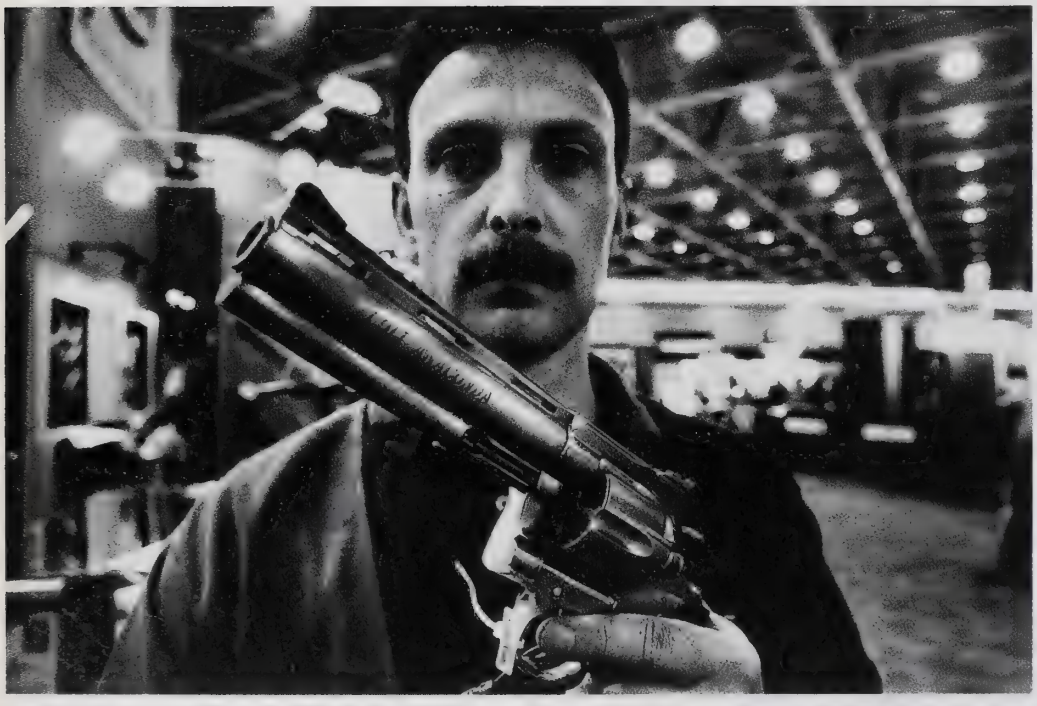
This was confusing but at east made plain that a militia vas essentially synonymous vith the people at large. Un- ortunately, that notion, too, vas lost when the Senate got old of the amendment and egan chopping out words ight and left. The reference o "the body of the people" vound up on the cutting-room floor, as did the final clause. The effect was o deprive later generations of an important clue as to what a well-regulat- d militia actually meant. Although the final version was leaner and more ompact, it was also a good deal less clear.

Nonetheless, a few things seem evident. If the Framers were less than xplicit about the nature of a well-regulated militia, it was because they idn't feel they had to be. The idea of a popular militia as something syn- nymous with the people as a whole was so well understood in the eigh- eenth century that it went without saying, which is undoubtedly why the

IF THE SEARCH FOR THE MEANING OF THE SECOND AMENDMENT, WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT "MEANING" IS PROBLEMATIC ACROSS THE SPAN OF CENTURIES

Senate felt that the reference to "the body of the people" could be safely eliminated. It is also important to note that the flat-out declaration "[t]he right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed" remained unchanged throughout the drafting process. As Joyce Lee Malcolm has noted, the Second Amendment is a reworking of a provision contained in the English Bill of Rights of 1689. But whereas the English Bill of Rights specified that subjects "may have arms for their defense suitable to their conditions, and as allowed by law," the American version avoided any such restrictions. Since all Americans (or, rather, members of the white male minority) were of the same rank, they possessed the same rights. They could bear arms for any purpose. And since the amendment was now part of the Constitution, the right was not limited by ordinary law but was over and above it. It was the source of law rather than the object. In this regard, as in virtually all others, Americans saw their role as taking ancient liberties and strengthening them so as to render tyranny all the more unlikely.

Although members of the legal academy assume that this is where the discussion ends, they're wrong: it's where the real questions begin. In attempting to nail down the meaning of the Second Amendment, we are therefore forced to recognize that "meaning" itself is problematic, especially across the span of more than two centuries. Once we have finished dissecting the Second Amendment, we are still left with a certain tension that necessarily exists between a well-regulated militia on the one hand and a right to bear arms on the other. One suggests order and discipline, if not government control; the other suggests voluntarism and a welling up from below. Eighteenth-century Country ideology tried to resolve this contradiction by envisioning the popular militia as a place where liberty and discipline would converge, where a freedom-loving people would enjoy the right to bear arms while proving their republican mettle by voluntarily rising to the defense of liberty. But although this certainly sounded nice, a harrowing eight-year war for independence had demonstrated the limits of such voluntarism. No-nonsense Federalists such as Washington and Hamilton recognized that there was no substitute for a professional army, not to mention a strong, centralized nation-state. But they also recognized that they had to get along with elements for whom such ideas were anathema. As a result, they felt they had no choice but to put aside their scruples and promise effective discipline from above *and* spontaneous self-organization from below, strong national government *and* states' rights, as contradictory as those notions might now seem.



The *meaning* of the Second Amendment, therefore, incorporates the contradictions in the Founders' thinking. But what's true for the Second Amendment is true for the Constitution as a whole. In June, William Safire rather naively suggested in his *New York Times* column that the solution to the problem of "the Murky Second" was to use the constitutional amending process to clarify its meaning. Did Americans have an un-

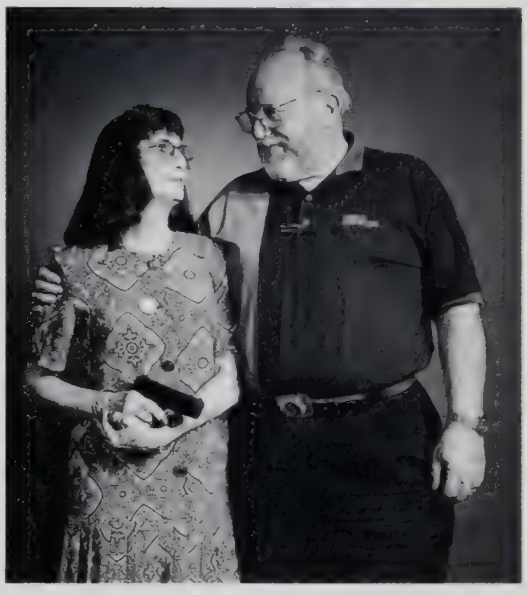
ualified right to bear arms or merely a right to enlist in the National uard? Since the Founders had "botched" the wording, the solution was mply to fix it. This is indeed logical, but the problem is that the amend-g process is entirely useless in this instance. Because Article V stipulates at two thirds of each house, plus three fourths of the states, are required change so much as a comma, as few as thirteen states—representing, by e way, as little as 4.5 percent of the total U.S. population—would be fficient to block any change. Since no one would have any trouble com-g up with a list of thirteen states in the South or the West for whom re-aling the sacred Second Amendment would be akin to repealing the ur Gospels, the issue is moot.

Since "we the people" are powerless to change the Second Amend-ent, we must somehow learn to live within its confines. But since this eans standing by helplessly while ordinary people are gunned down by a ccession of heavily armed maniacs, it is becoming more and more diffi-lt to do so. As a result, politicians from President Clinton on down are rever coming up with ways of reconciling the irreconcilable, of reining the gun trade without challenging the Second Amendment–fueled gun lture. The upshot is an endless series of ridiculous proposals to ban some nds of firearms but not others, to limit handgun purchases to one a onth, or to provide for background checks at otherwise unregulated aveling gun bazaars. Instead of cracking down on guns, the administra-on has found it easier to crack down on video games and theater owners ho allow sixteen-year-olds to sneak into adult movies. The moral seems be that guns don't kill people—fart jokes in the R-rated *South Park: igger, Longer & Uncut* do.

This is the flip side of the unbounded faith of a Zoe Lofgren or a Bar-ra Jordan, who famously declared during Watergate, "My faith in the onstitution is whole, it is complete, it is total . . ." If one's faith in the onstitution is total, then one's faith in the Second Amendment is total well, which means that one places obedience to ancient law above the eeds of modern society. Once all the back-and-forth over the meaning of e Second Amendment is finished, the question we're left with is: So hat? No one is suggesting that the Founders' thinking on the gun issue is relevant, but because they settled on a certain balance between freedom nd order, are we obliged to follow suit? Or are we free to strike a different alance? Times change. From a string of coastal settlements, the United tates has grown into a republic of 270 million people stretching across e entire North American continent. It is a congested, polluted society lled with traffic jams, shopping malls, and anomic suburbs in which an ghteenth-century right to bear arms is as out of place as silk knee britch-s and tricornered hats. So why must we subordinate ourselves to a 208-ear-old law that, if the latest scholarship is correct, is contrary to what e democratic majority believes is in its best interest? Why can't *we* cre-e the kind of society we want as opposed to living with laws meant to eate the kind of society *they* wanted? They are dead and buried and will ot be around to suffer the consequences. We the living will.

There is simply no solution to the gun problem within the confines of e U.S. Constitution. As the well-known Yale law professor Akhil Reed mar put it recently, the Constitution serves to "structure the conversa-on of ordinary Americans as they ponder the most fundamental and metimes divisive issues in our republic." In other words, the Constitu-on's hold on our society is so complete that it controls the way we discuss nd debate, even the way we think. Americans are unable to conceive of n alternative framework, to think "outside the box," as the corporate rategists put it. Other countries are free to change their constitutions hen it becomes necessary. In fact, with the exception of Luxembourg, orway, and Great Britain, there is not one advanced industrial nation at has not thoroughly revamped its constitution since 1900. If they can o it, why can't we? Why must Americans remain slaves to the past? ■

WHY MUST WE SUBORDINATE OURSELVES TO A 208-YEAR-OLD LAW THAT, IF THE LATEST SCHOLARSHIP IS CORRECT, IS CONTRARY TO WHAT WE WANT?

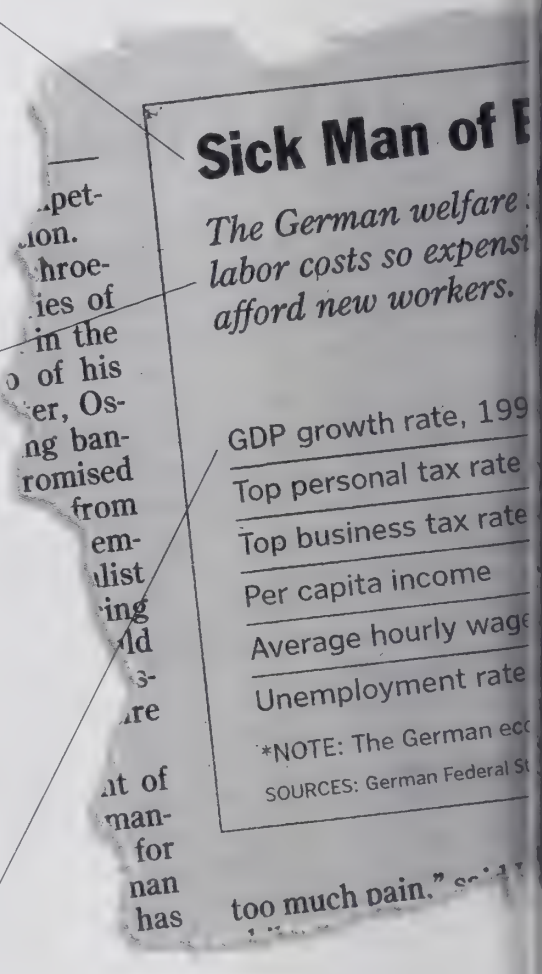


SUPPLY-SIDE

An all-American prescription for

This chart, from the March 23, 1999, edition of the *Washington Post*, illustrates the venerable theory, invariably presented by the American press as fact, that the welfare state has been hazardous to Europe's economic health. As a *Time* correspondent explained in 1996, "The rich benefits that have made Europe a sweet place to work"—benefits such as universal health care, tuition-free universities, a living minimum wage, and a short work week—"have clogged its economic arteries. Call it Eurosclerosis." Roundly endorsed by Wall Street, the theory of "Eurosclerosis" has appeared in nearly 600 news articles since the mid-1980s; terms such as "sick man of Europe" and "European malaise," in hundreds more. And yet, such diagnoses reveal far more about the doctor's economic interests than they do about the patient's condition. The "sick man of Europe" is in truth a straw man of American capitalism, a cautionary fairy tale as widely believed by our journalists as it is beloved by the businessmen who sign their checks.

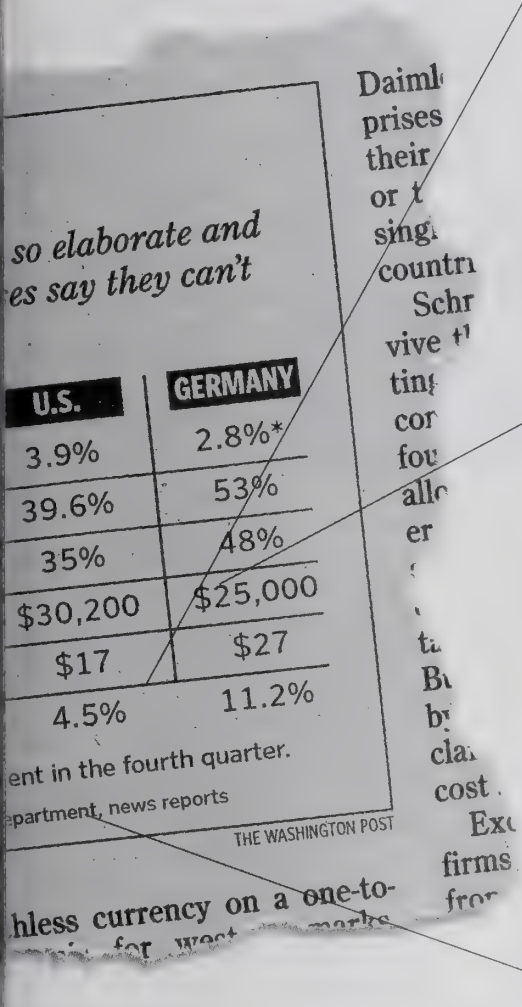
As Nobel laureate Robert Solow and numerous other economists have shown, the evidence "goes squarely against the cliché that high and persistent European unemployment is entirely or mainly a matter of 'labor-market rigidities.'" Were German unemployment the side effect of "elaborate" regulations and "expensive" labor costs, the data would register a rising number of unfilled job vacancies, or profits dwindling as a share of German GDP, or a falling proportion of unemployment among higher-skilled workers. But such telltale symptoms have failed to materialize.



The German economy is captured here in a moment of weakness, but measured over an entire business cycle (1989–1998), it has grown substantially faster, per capita, than has our own—1.9 percent per year versus 1.6. Moreover, worker productivity in Germany has grown much more rapidly—2.6 percent per year versus 0.9 percent. Given this strong productivity growth, Germany's high unemployment might be eliminated, as Solow has proposed, through "a concerted steady expansion of aggregate demand" for Europe's products and, consequently, its workers. But the idea was outlawed by the Maastricht Treaty, which prescribed a regimen of austere budgets and strict monetary policies in preparation for a common currency. In 1992, the year Germany signed the treaty, its unemployment rate was only 4.5 percent, while the U.S. rate was 7.5. Since then, Europe's central bankers have kept interest rates exorbitantly high: even though their idol, Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan, cut the real U.S. short-term interest rate virtually to zero in 1993, Europe's real short-term interest rate has not dipped below 2 percent this decade. Accordingly, Germany's annual inflation has plummeted from almost 5 percent to just 0.3 percent in the first quarter of this year (less than one fifth the U.S. inflation rate), growth has faltered, and unemployment has soared.

URNALISM

employment, *by Seth Ackerman*


so elaborate and
es say they can't

U.S.	GERMANY
3.9%	2.8%*
39.6%	53%
35%	48%
$30,200	$25,000
$17	$27
4.5%	11.2%

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It's not hard to make the problem look worse than it is. The *Post*'s figures come from the two countries' respective statistical agencies, which use different measures of unemployment. If a standardized measure is used, the German rate falls from the 11.2 percent cited here to 9.4 percent, while the U.S. rate does not change. Excluding the former East Germany, the German rate falls to 7.5 percent. And although the East German unemployment rate is high, so is that of Poland, an ex-Communist country that has managed to avoid the "sick man" epithet through its sapient obedience to the IMF, whose loan officers consider labor-market rigidities to be Europe's "Achilles' heel."

If East Germany is again excluded, German per capita GDP rises from $25,000 to $27,200. On average, America is undeniably wealthier, but that average hides a fearsome inequality. Herein lies the hypocrisy of the Eurosclerotic argument, which condemns as "decadent" the unionized German autoworker receiving six weeks of paid vacation, yet praises as "dynamic" the American CEO earning on average 600 times the salary of the fellow who delivers his daily copy of the *Post*.

As long ago as 1947, press critic A. J. Liebling noted among American correspondents in England a native predilection for demonstrating the excesses of European socialism: "Let a *Time* man ask, 'And what do you think of free medical service?' and a little man in a pub will pop up and shout 'It's all a bloody fraud, Guvnor!'" As Liebling suggests, the political roots of our news media's fondness for "sick men" in Europe are domestic. Last August, a *New York Times* op-ed triumphantly declared that Europeans had finally begun "to embrace market reforms." Yet such predictions have been made—and unmade—many times before. Some fifteen years ago, another *Times* article, heralding "Europe's Tougher Labor Policies," reported that Europe was "taking a hard line against Eurosclerosis," which was fast becoming "a fading concept." As long as American workers lack health insurance or a living minimum wage, news reports will likely continue to warn us of economic "sclerosis" abroad. Meanwhile, as they've watched their currencies fall and their unemployment rates rise, the "sick men" of Europe, Russia, South America, and Asia have discovered that the free-market medicine, peddled by the IMF's economists without borders and the faith healers of Wall Street, may be little more than economic snake oil. The hard-boiled American newspaperman, famous for his skepticism, may in the end be the most devout believer in the magical powers of this charlatan tonic. Call it "Milton Friedman's Thunder," an all-purpose, all-American purgative.

Ackerman is a media analyst with Fairness & tracy In Reporting. This is his first article for per's Magazine.

At Walden Pond

By E. B. White

Miss Nims, take a letter to Henry David Thoreau. Dear Henry: I thought of you the other afternoon as I was approaching Concord doing fifty on Route 62. That is a high speed at which to hold a philosopher in one's mind, but in this century we are a nimble bunch.

On one of the lawns in the outskirts of the village a woman was cutting the grass with a motorized lawn mower. What made me think of you was that the machine had rather got away from her, although she was game enough, and in the brief glimpse I had of the scene it appeared to me that the lawn was mowing the lady. She kept a tight grip on the handles, which throbbed violently with every explosion of the one-cylinder motor, and as she sheered around bushes and lurched along at a reluctant trot behind her impetuous servant, she looked like a puppy who had grabbed something that was too much for him. Concord hasn't changed much, Henry; the farm implements and the animals still have the upper hand.

I may as well admit that I was journeying to Concord with the deliberate intention of visiting your woods; for although I have never knelt at the grave of a philosopher nor placed wreaths on moldy poets, and have often gone a mile out of my way to avoid some place of historical interest, I have always wanted to see Walden Pond. The account which you left of your sojourn there is, you will be amused to learn, a document of increasing pertinence; each year it seems to gain a little headway, as the world loses ground. We may all be transcendental yet, whether we like it or not. As our common complexities increase, any tale of individual simplicity (and yours is the best written and the cockiest) acquires a new fascination; as our goods accumulate, but not our well-being, your report of an existence without material adornment takes on a certain awkward credibility.

My purpose in going to Walden Pond, like yours, was not to live cheaply or to live dearly there, but to transact some private business with the fewest obstacles. Approaching Concord, doing forty, doing forty-five, doing fifty, the steering wheel held snug in my palms, the highway held grimly in my vision, the crown of the road now serving me (on the right-hand curves), now defeating me (on the left-hand curves), I began to rouse myself from the stupefaction which a day's motor journey induces. It was a delicious evening, Henry, when the whole body is one sense, and imbibes delight through every pore, if I may coin a phrase. Fields were richly brown where the harrow, drawn by the stripped Ford, had lately sunk its teeth; pastures were green; and overhead the sky had that same everlasting great look which you will find on Page 144 of the Oxford Pocket Edition. I could feel the road entering me, through tire, wheel, spring, and cushion; shall I not have intelligence with earth too? Am I partly leaves and vegetable mold self?—a man of infinite horsepo yet partly leaves.

Stay with me on 62 and it will t you into Concord. As I say, it w delicious evening. The snake i come forth to die in a bloody S the highway, the wheel upon its h its bowels flat now and exposed. turtle had come up too to cross road and die in the attempt, its h shell smashed under the rubber bl its intestinal yearning (for the ot side of the road) forever squash There was a sign by the wayside wh announced that the road had a "c ton surface." You wouldn't know w that is, but neither, for that mat did I. There is a cryptic ingredien many of our modern improvement we are awed and pleased with knowing quite what we are enjoyi It is something to be traveling o road with a cotton surface.

The civilization round Concord day is an odd distillation of city, lage, farm, and manor. The hou yards, fields look not quite suburb not quite rural. Under the bronze be and the blue spruce of the depa baron grazes the milch goat of the h Under the porte-cochère stands the conditioned station wagon; under grape arbor sit the puppies for sale. (why do men degenerate ever? W makes families run out?)

It was June and everywhere June publishing her immemorial stanza

E. B. White (1899–1985) wrote the "One Man's Meat" column for Harper's Magazine *from 1938 to 1943. This piece appeared in the August 1939 issue.*

lilacs, in the syringa, in the fresh-
dged paths and the sweetness of
st beloved gardens, and the little
wickets that preserve the tulips'
t. Farmers were already moving the
s of their toil into their yards, ar-
ging the rhubarb, the asparagus, the
tly fresh eggs on the painted stands
er the little shed roofs with the
nt shingles. And though it was al-
t a hundred years
e you had taken
r ax and started
ting out your
ne on Walden
d, I was interest-
to observe that
philosophical
it was still alive
Massachusetts: in
center of a va-
t lot some boys
e assembling the
nework of a rude
ter, their whole
d and skill con-
trated in the
her inauspicious
ter-skeleton of
ds and rafters.
ey too were es-
ing from town, to
naturally, in a
n blend of sav-
ry and philosophy.



WALDEN POND, 1924

That evening, after supper at the
, I strolled out into the twilight to
am my shapeless transcendental
ams and see that the car was locked
for the night (first open the right
t door, then reach over, straining,
pull up the handles of the left rear
the left front till you hear the click,
n the handle of the right rear, then
t the right front but open it again,
embering that the key is still in
ignition switch, remove the key,
t the right front again with a bang,
h the tiny keyhole cover to one
, insert key, turn, and withdraw).
what we all do, Henry. It is called
king the car. It is said to confuse
ves and keep them from making off
h the laprobe. Four doors to lock be-
d one robe. The driver himself nev-
ses a laprobe, the free movement of
legs being vital to the operation of
vehicle; so that when he locks the
car it is a pure and unselfish act. I have in my life gained very little essential heat from laprobes, yet I have ever been at pains to lock them up.

The evening was full of sounds, some of which would have stirred your memory. The robins still love the elms of New England villages at sundown. There is enough of the thrush in them to make song inevitable at the end of day, and enough of the tramp to make them hang round the dwellings of men. A robin, like many another American, dearly loves a white house with green blinds. Concord is still full of them.

Your fellow-townsmen were stirring abroad—not many afoot, most of them in their cars; and the sound which they made in Concord at evening was a rustling and a whispering. The sound lacks steadfastness and is wholly unlike that of a train. A train, as you know who lived so near the Fitchburg line, whistles once or twice sadly and is gone, trailing a memory in smoke, soothing to ear and mind. Automobiles, skirting a village green, are like flies that have gained the inner ear—they buzz, cease, pause, start, shift, stop, halt, brake, and the whole effect is a nervous polytone curiously disturbing.

As I wandered along, the toc toc of ping pong balls drifted from an attic window. In front of the Reuben Brown house a Buick was drawn up. At the wheel, motionless, his hat upon his head, a man sat, listening to Amos and Andy on the radio (it is a drama of many scenes and without an end). The deep voice of Andrew Brown, emerging from the car, although it originated more than two hundred miles away, was unstrained by distance. When you used to sit on the shore of your pond on Sunday morning, listening to the church bells of Acton and Concord, you were aware of the excellent filter of the intervening atmosphere. Science has attended to that, and sound now maintains its intensity without regard for distance. Properly sponsored, it goes on forever.

A fire engine, out for a trial spin, roared past Emerson's house, hot with readiness for public duty. Over the barn roofs the martins dipped and chittered. A swarthy daughter of an asparagus grower, in culottes, shirt, and bandanna, pedalled past on her bicycle. It was indeed a delicious evening, and I returned to the inn (I believe it was your house once) to rock with the old ladies on the concrete veranda.

Next morning early I started afoot for Walden, out Main Street and down Thoreau, past the depot and the Minuteman Chevrolet Company. The morning was fresh, and in a bean field along the way I flushed an agriculturalist, quietly studying his beans. Thoreau Street soon joined Number 126, an artery of the State. We number our highways nowadays, our speed being so great we can remember little of their quality or character and are lucky to remember their number. (Men have an indistinct notion that if they keep up this activity long enough all will at length ride somewhere, in next to no time.) Your pond is on 126.

I knew I must be nearing your

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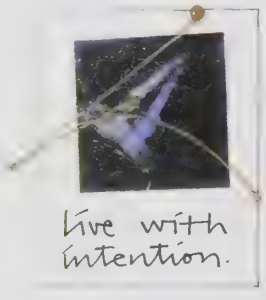
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woodland retreat when the Golden Pheasant lunchroom came into view—Sealtest ice cream, toasted sandwiches, hot frankfurters, waffles, tonics, and lunches. Were I the proprietor, I should add rice, Indian meal, and molasses—just for old time's sake. The Pheasant, incidentally, is for sale: a chance for some nature lover who wishes to set himself up beside a pond in the Concord atmosphere and live deliberately, fronting only the essential facts of life on Number 126. Beyond the Pheasant was a place called Walden Breezes, an oasis whose porch pillars were made of old green shutters sawed into lengths. On the porch was a distorting mirror, to give the traveler a comical image of himself, who had miraculously learned to gaze in an ordinary glass without smiling. Behind the Breezes, in a sun-parched clearing, dwelt your philosophical descendants in their trailers, each trailer the size of your hut, but all grouped together for the sake of congeniality. Trailer people leave the city, as you did, to discover solitude and in any weather, at any hour of the day or night, to improve the nick of time; but they soon collect in villages and get bogged deeper in the mud than ever. The camp behind Walden Breezes was just rousing itself to the morning. The ground was packed hard under the heel, and the sun came through the clearing to bake the soil and enlarge the wry smell of cramped housekeeping. Cushman's bakery truck had stopped to deliver an early basket of rolls. A camp dog, seeing me in the road, barked petulantly. A man emerged from one of the trailers and set forth with a bucket to draw water from some forest tap.

Leaving the highway I turned off into the woods toward the pond, which was apparent through the foliage. The floor of the forest was strewn with dried old oak leaves and *Transcripts*. From beneath the flattened popcorn wrapper (*granum explosum*) peeped the frail violet. I followed a footpath and descended to the water's edge. The pond lay clear and blue in the morning light, as you have seen it so many times. In the shallows a man's waterlogged shirt undulated gently. A few flies came out to greet me and convoy me to your cove, past the No Bathing signs on which the fellows and the girls have scrawled their names. I felt strangely excited suddenly to be snooping around your premises, tiptoeing along watchfully, as though not to tread by mistake upon the intervening centuries. Before I got to the cove I heard something which seemed to me quite wonderful: I heard your frog, a full, clear *troonk*, guiding me, still hoarse and solemn, bridging the years as the robin had bridged them in the sweetness of the village evening. But he soon quit, and I came on a couple of young boys throwing stones at him.

Your front yard is marked by a bronze tablet set in a stone. Four small granite posts, a few feet away, show where the house was. On top of the tablet was a pair of faded blue bathing trunks with a white stripe. Back of it is a pile of stones, a sort of cairn, left by your visitors as a tribute I suppose. It is a rather ugly little heap of stones, Henry. In fact the hillside itself seems faded, brow-beaten; a few tall skinny pines, bare of lower limbs, a smattering of young maples in suitable green, some birches and oaks, and a number of trees felled by the last big wind. It was from the bole of one of these fallen pines, torn up by the roots, that I extracted the stone which I added to the cairn—a sentimental act in which I was interrupted by a small terrier from a nearby picnic group, who confronted me and wanted to know about the stone.

I sat down for a while on one of the posts of your house to listen to the bluebottles and the dragonflies. The invaded glade sprawled shabby and mean at my feet, but the flies were tuned to the old vibration. There were the remains of a fire in your ruins, but I doubt that it was yours; also two beer bottles trodden into the soil and become part of earth. A young oak has taken root in your house, and two or three ferns, unrolling like the tickle at a banquet. The only other furnishings were a DuBarry pattern sheet, a page torn from a picture magazine, and some crusts in wax paper.

Before I quit I walked clear round the pond and found the place where you used to sit on the N. E. side

t the sun in the fall, and the beach here you got sand for scrubbing your oor. On the eastern side of the pond, here the highway borders it, the tate has built dressing rooms for vimmers, a float with diving towers, inking fountains of porcelain, and wboats for hire. The pond is in fact State Preserve, and carries a twenty- llar fine for picking wild flowers, a ecree signed in all solemnity by your llow-citizens Walter C. Wardwell, son B. Barlow, and Nathaniel I. owditch. There was a smell of cre- ote where they had been building a de wooden stairway to the road and e parking area. Swimmers and aters were arriving; bodies splashed gorously into the water and emerged et and beautiful in the bright air. As left, a boatload of town boys were lashing about in mid-pond, kidding d fooling, the young fellows singing the tops of their lungs in a wild orus:

Amer-ica, A-mer-i-ca, God shed
his grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shi-ning sea!

I walked back to town along the ilroad, following your custom. The ils were expanding noisily in the hot n, and on the slope of the roadbed e wild grape and the blackberry sent their creepers to the track.

The expense of my brief sojourn in oncord was:

nvas shoes	$1.95	
seball bat	.25	} gifts to take
t-handed fielder's glove ..	1.25	} back to a boy
tel and meals	4.25	
In all	$7.70	

As you see, this amount was almost hat you spent for food for eight nths. I cannot defend the shoes or e expenditure for shelter and food: ey reveal a meanness and grossness my nature which you would find ntemptible. The baseball equipment, wever, is the sort of impediment th which you were never on even rms. You must remember that the use where you practiced the sort of onomy which I respect was haunted ly by mice and squirrels. You never d to cope with a shortstop. ■



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IT'S GLOBALICIOUS!

Two servings, half-baked, of the new economy

By Thomas Frank

Discussed in this essay:

The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization, by Thomas Friedman. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 394 pages. $27.50.

Building WEALTH: The New Rules for Individuals, Companies, and Nations in a Knowledge-Based Economy, by Lester Thurow. HarperCollins. 301 pages. $27.50.

By now most of us have figured out that there's nothing all that new about the "New Economy" and "globalization." We understand that these ringing phrases actually refer to something rather antique: a hopped-up capitalism stripped of the various reforms and regulations it accreted over the course of the twentieth century. What will surprise readers of *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* and *Building WEALTH* is the intellectual contortions through which even respected writers like Thomas Friedman and Lester Thurow will put themselves in order to win for themselves, through a sort of cosmic optimism about all things dot-com, the coveted and profitable title of Most Enthusiastic Pundit. It's as though our national intellectual life had somehow been pegged to the insanely rising Dow, as though each advance on Wall Street were a go-ahead for a new round of ecstatic superlatives in our social criticism.

Friedman, who is the foreign affairs columnist for the *New York Times*, aims not merely to describe "globalization" for us in his much-celebrated and best-selling new book but to help us "understand" it, by which he apparently means hammering into our heads the notion that "globalization" is the end object of human civilization and will undoubtedly make us rich, set us free, and elevate everything and everyone everywhere. However familiar this incantation has become, one cannot help but be startled by the massive escalation of rhetoric in which this now-official wisdom is expressed. So grandiose is the tone of arrogance Friedman adopts that one suspects he has taken leave of his senses.

Much of Friedman's millennial enthusiasm arises from the mundane faith that capitalism is functionally identical to democracy. He tells us of the "Democratization of Technology," in which we all get computers and telephones; he marvels at the "Democratization of Finance," in which we all get to invest in everything; he paints for us a miraculous "Democratization of Information," in which we get more TV channels than ever before. All of these forces, he asserts, have combined to subvert top-down hierarchies of all kinds, whether Soviet, Indonesian, or old-style American corporate. It's not long before he's hailing the Internet as both the most democratic thing on earth and the very "model of perfect competition." Astride Friedman's path, though, stand such blatant errors of fact that one wonder how they were not spotted by his edi tors. He repeatedly and mysteriousl implies that the welfare state and reg ulatory policies instituted in the 1930 were in fact somehow brought about b the pressures of the Cold War; he ir correctly asserts that "in the old days foreign securities "were never trade on an open market," whereas now "yo and me and my Aunt Bev" can all bu South American bonds, which o course figures as spectacular evidence the Democratization of Ownership (guess Friedman has never heard abou the infamous Peruvian bonds that wer sold to all manner of middle Ameri cans in the 1920s). But let's allow thos to pass for the moment. Error is on thing; deliberate propaganda is quit another.

Shall we start with the car and th tree that are counterposed in Fried man's title? These are meant to refe to excellent globalizing economi forces on the one hand and foolis backward regionalism on the othe It's not an original image—one think immediately of Benjamin Barber's in finitely more balanced 1995 treatmer of the same subject, *Jihad vs. Mc World*—but Friedman gives no sig that he has read *any* of the sophisti cated expressions of doubt about cap italism or globalization in recent yea (the books by William Greider, fo example, or Edward Luttwak, or Dou Henwood). Under no circumstance can skepticism about markets be pe mitted a reasonable articulation, an so he insists on attributing it exclu sively to dictators, bigots, "politicians the French, and other traditional ta gets of American loathing. On th other side of the coin are the variou customs of capitalism, which Fried man describes in an embarrassingl wonder-filled style: In American ba bershops they're talking about th Thai currency! Individuals everywhe are "super-empowered"! The Japa ese are building really fine cars—an it's *globalorious*! Nothing tells the st ry so well as the book's cover, whic

Thomas Frank is the editor of The Baffler *and the author of* The Conquest of Cool *and the forthcoming* Businessman's Republic. *His last piece for* Harper's Magazine, *"Brand You," appeared in the July issue*

th its raised golden lettering and its ndering of orangey dawn breaking er the globey globe, reminds one of opular religious tract.

Like day traders running up the ce of Amazon.com shares, Fried- n simply identifies the various fad as of the last ten years and bids em up a little more. Take Friedman countries other than the United ates: in one chapter he imagines the tions of the world spread out be- e him like so many stock listings the daily newspaper; he recom- nds that we "buy" some and "sell" ers. His definition of democracy is imple matter of "one dollar, one te," a system in which the market d corporate interests rightly and turally get to dictate to everyone e. Thus even as Friedman whoops p for The People he takes pains to te that the real boss, the market, ll not tolerate any sort of political ivity beyond its very narrow spec- m of permissible beliefs. No coun- that wishes to participate in the bal gloriosity will be allowed to reg- te its markets or provide for its un- tunates beyond what Friedman ems appropriate; he even describes e various punishments that the ong sort of voting might bring down a country, as investors "stampede ay" and stock markets crash.

Most revealing is Friedman's under- nding of the United States itself, a untry in whose image markets quite turally wish to remake the world. In losing chapter Friedman asks us to nder with him at how "a visionary -architect" (i.e., God) would go ut designing the ultimate nation, w He would insist that it have "the st flexible labor market in the rld," that all manner of rebellions d zany lifestyle accessories be toler- d in the boardroom as the signs of ativity that they are, that corporate nagements be allowed "to hire and workers with relative ease." Evi- ntly it's not enough anymore to im, as Rockefeller did, that "God ve me my money"; in passages like se Friedman is virtually asking us imagine God ghostwriting the Tom ters books, God descending from the avens to bust PATCO, to pass the ft-Hartley Act over Truman's veto, send in the strikebreakers, to make Manpower the largest employer in the land.

In stylistic terms the book seems to belong to that genre of madly triumphalist TV commercial that the software and brokerage industries have been running in recent years, and Friedman quotes such commercials throughout his book—not as examples of transparent efforts to sell some-



thing but as particularly compelling and truthful bits of shamanistic soothsaying that he evaluates only by appending his fervent amens. That Charles Schwab commercial in which regular people talk about how they bought shares in one company or another? *Right on!* That Merrill Lynch ad that claims "The World Is 10 Years Old"? *Exactly!*

Thomas Friedman may write like a TV commercial, but he proudly informs us that he thinks like a "hedge fund manager." And when future students of the 1990s seek to categorize his book they will be tempted to understand it as a contribution to that popular genre of business writing known as "futurism," a literature marked by its gawking talk about the ever-increasing rate of "change," its ranks of neologisms, and its homegrown metanarratives. But what Friedman has actually written is a dictionary of the shibboleths of our time, awesome in its inclusiveness. They're all there: the desire to "rebrand" Britain, casual badmouthing of France for its efforts to retain its welfare state, facile equating of Great Society America with the Soviet Union. Each of them is foolish and monstrous in its own way; thrown together they leave a truly dispiriting impression. I can only compare the sensation of reading *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* to the first time I heard Newt Gingrich speak publicly and it began to dawn on me that *this is what the ruling class calls thinking*, that this handful of pathetic, palpably untrue prejudices are all the ruling class has to guide it as it shuttles back and forth between the State Department and the big think tanks, discussing what it means to do with us and how it plans to dispose of our nation.

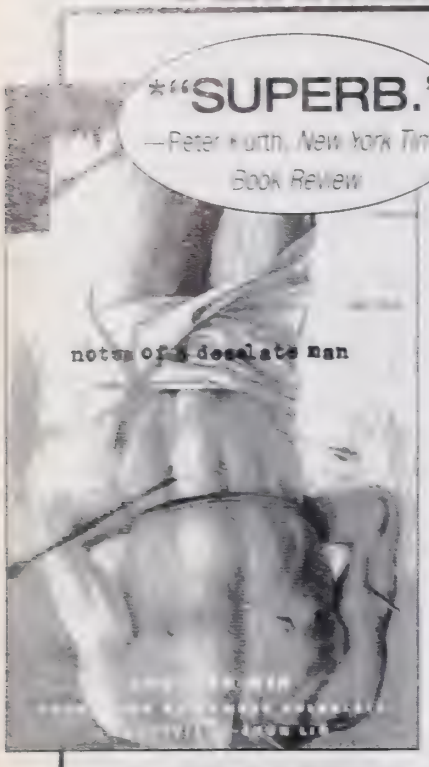
Competition among pundits is heating up, though, and Thomas Friedman can't expect to hold the title of the new global order's most fervent celebrator for too long. MIT economist Lester Thurow's new book, *Building WEALTH* (yes, it's in all caps—all the way through the book), seems to have sprung from a simple desire to run up the hyperbole averages just a little higher. In a few months the Dow will be sailing off into uncharted five-digit expanses, and it seems only fitting that a well-known economist should try his hand at the epiphanic, orgiastic style that is clearly becoming one of the trademark literary gestures of this unhappy *fin de siècle*.

Unfortunately, Thurow doesn't pull it off with anywhere near the wonderment mustered by Friedman. However he may cheer for the great god Creativity or whisper about the all-destroying Entrepreneur, the economic facts to which he is professionally bound keep getting in the way. Several of the alarming declarations with which the book begins have been contradicted by its end, and although Thurow (like Friedman) makes a fearsome show of calling down the fire of the free-market heavens on those welfare-stating Europeans, he has acknowledged before long that in some crucial ways *they* may have the numbers on *us*.

Like *Lexus*, *Building WEALTH* is superficially organized as a sort of layman's guide to the "third industrial revolution" upon which the author

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believes that we have embarked. But Thurow has come to evangelize rather than to narrate, to tell us why it is that everyone on earth must come around to his way or suffer the hideous consequences. Whenever this simple impulse gets him into a jam, Thurow simply pulls out the concept of "inevitability," a handy logical atom bomb over which he seems to believe that he and his fellow New Economy ideologues enjoy an unquestioned monopoly. Genetic engineering will "inevitably" triumph over its doubters; "trying to defend" old standards of income equality "is impossible"; "all of Europe is an also-ran" in the "new man-made brainpower industries of the twenty-first century." *Building WEALTH* is, in this respect, one long study in the technique of selling what is in many ways a backward social system by enthusiastically announcing it to be the way of the future—a rhetorical maneuver we haven't seen so much of on these shores since the heyday of old-school Marxism.

But the working class, whose triumph once seemed so certain, appears in *Building WEALTH* only as a hapless victim, stripped of any historical agency whatsoever. No, the makers of history here are the billionaires, upon whom Thurow fastens with a curious obsessiveness. Just a few pages into *Building WEALTH* he commences an ode to the rich and their virtues that matches anything in the history of the Republic for sheer, irony-free obsequiousness.

> Great wealth allows individuals to place their footprints in the sands of time. . . .
>
> Political influence can be quietly bought. Campaign contributions effectively give the wealthy more than one vote. . . .
>
> Those with great wealth are important, to be courted. They are deserving of respect and demand deference. They are the winners.
>
> Wealth . . . is the only game to play if you want to prove your mettle. It is the big leagues. If you do not play there, by definition you are second rate.

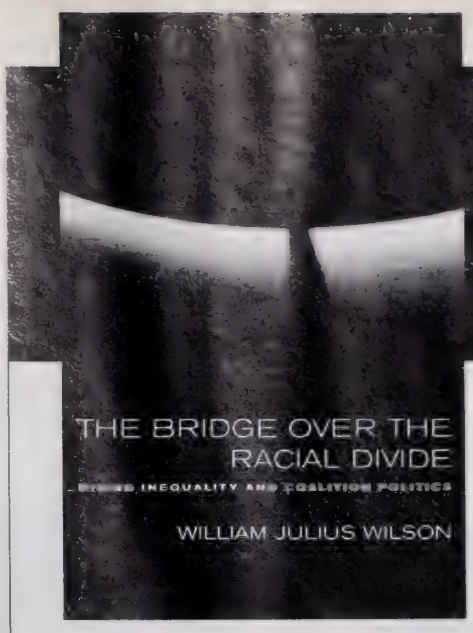
Thurow has excellent reason for establishing the godliness of the wealthy early on. When the traditional tools of economic measurement don't serve his celebratory narrative—most notably on the issue of productivity: seems that darn Web isn't changin everything as much as the TV com mercials say it is!—he rolls out a nut index of his own invention: How man billionaires are there? As evidence his assertion that "America is back Thurow offers the fact that "the world wealthiest man is once again an Ame ican," that "American billionaires num ber in the hundreds." Asian econon ic error, meanwhile, is nailed down b the observation that "what had bee forty-one Japanese billionaires fell t only nine at the most recent count And to persuade us that we should we come cultural and economic "disequ librium," Thurow confides that in suc a state "billionaires could emerge." A though Thurow doesn't take his logi much further than this, one could ea ily posit a billionaires-to-earnings rati and conclude that by far the most lauc able economic endeavors are th launching of Internet IPOs. Thurow, b the way, is on the board of day-tradir propagandist E*Trade.

Building billionaires, then, is wh all our labor is about, and having pile up such a prodigious amount of th stuff that makes life worth living the feet of Bill Gates, we American in Thurow's telling, have decided to r make both our society and the outsic world so that this magical operatio might be repeated again and agair Unfortunately, the price of buildin billionaires is very, very high: to mak them sufficiently rich, in fact, we mu do nothing less than "destroy the old a line Thurow repeats like a mantr throughout his text. So crucial wreaking this destruction—on cultur on institutions, on the assumptions the past—that he sees it as the very n ture of entrepreneurship and the o ganizing principle of society: "Soci systems have to be built that give en trepreneurs room to destroy the old.

Destroying the way we live just so w can have more billionaires doesn sound like a great bargain on the su face. And one of the better features Thurow's book is that, unlike Frie man, he is occasionally willing to a mit that other interpretations of r cent economic events are just plausible as his millennialist accoun The stock market runup might be

re bubble; the making of billion-
es might be a sign not of society's
alth but of its illness. These passages,
ough, are quickly forgotten as
urow gets back to what he does best:
ually tossing off all manner of stag-
ring assertions about history, soci-
, and the national character of var-
is peoples as proof that (a) we don't
ve a choice and (b) we aren't good
nericans if we don't join him on his
ees before the billionaires. This lat-
tendency is particularly annoying.
r Thomas Friedman, employers'
ility to fire workers at will is or-
ined by God; for Lester Thurow, it's
"American-style right" with "no
tice, no severance pay, no justifi-
tion necessary." And the massive
ncentration of wealth that has
erged over the last two decades?
r Thurow, that, too, is just our na-
re. America is a land "comfortable
th inequalities," a place where one
n having as much as nearly half
e population (think about that one
e next time you feel the phrase
merican democracy" forming on
ur lips) doesn't lead "anyone of im-
rtance to suggest that Americans
ght to change the system."

In Thurow's telling, history is al-
st always quaint and ancient, and
almost always comes with an easily
ciphered moral: fifteenth-century
nina proves this; turn-of-the-
ntury Russia proves that. When
urow finally breaks down and ac-
owledges the last sixty years of our
n nation's history, it's all stereo-
e and History Channel voice-over.
his accounting of the postwar pe-
d, for example, the United States
nehow prevailed alone against an
tirely red globe; those treasonous
itish, you see, elected a Labour gov-
ment, and "In the 1950s, all of the
rd world believed in the communist
del of development." Add to the
d history and the mad generaliza-
ns Thurow's curious refusal to in-
de his footnotes in the book (we're
posed to look them up online) and
ersistent problem with spelling and
ject-verb agreement, and one can
nost get outraged about this stuff.
en an economist, one feels, should
ve had the courtesy to run spell-
eck before calling for the end of
estern civilization. ■



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EYES WIDE SHUT

What the critics failed to see in Kubrick's last film

By Lee Siegel

Eyes Wide Shut is one of the most moving, playful, and complex movies I have ever seen. I love the way Stanley Kubrick expresses the film's theme of social and psychological doubleness through a double entendre in the film's very title—"I's Wide Shut"—and through his choice, for the title song, of a waltz by Dmitry Shostakovich, a guileful composer famous for writing music whose subtle motifs seemed to celebrate Stalin but actually undermined him. I love the film's spare, almost allegorical portrait of the tension and complexity at the heart of a marriage. So imagine my alarm when, picking up one magazine and newspaper after another, I read reviews calling Kubrick's film a disaster and a titanic error, trite and self-important, one of the worst movies the critics had ever seen.

> "I can state unequivocally that the late Stanley Kubrick, in his final film, 'Eyes Wide Shut,' has staged the most pompous orgy in the history of the movies."
>
> —David Denby in *The New Yorker*

> "Ridiculously though intellectually overhyped for the very marginal entertainment, edification and titillation it provides over its somewhat turgid 159-minute running time."
>
> —Andrew Sarris in *The New York Observer*

> "This two hour and 39 minute gloss on Arthur Schnitzler's fantasmagoric novella feels like a rough draft at best."
>
> —J. Hoberman in *The Village Voice*

> "In *Eyes Wide Shut* nothing works."
>
> —Louis Menand in *The New York Review of Books*

> "An unfortunate misstep."
>
> —Michiko Kakutani in the *New York Times*

I soon began to discover something even more startling. Not a single critic, not even those few who claimed to like *Eyes Wide Shut*, made any attempt to understand the film on its own artistic terms. Instead, the critics denounced the film for not living up to the claims its publicists had made for it, reduced it to a question of its director's personality, measured it by how much information it conveyed about the familiar world around us. And I realized that something that had been stirring around in the depths of the culture had risen to the surface.

After years of vindictive, leveling memoirs of artistic figures; after countless novels, plays, films, paintings, and installations constructed to address one social issue or another; after dozens of books have been published proclaiming the importance of the "great books" and "humanist ideas" to such a point of inflation that the effect was to bury the specificity of great books and of original ideas—after the storm of all this self-indulgence had passed, a new cultural reality had taken shape. Our official arbiters of culture have lost the gift of being able to comprehend a work of art that does not reflect their immediate experience; they have become afraid of genuine art. Art-phobia is now the dominant sensibility of the official culture, and art-phobia annihilated Stanley Kubrick's autumnal work.

Much talk—some of it real, a lot of it fake—has been in the air over the last decade about empathy for the "other," for people different from us. But no one has dwelled on the essential oth erness of a work of art. There is, afte all, that hackneyed but profound no tion of a willing suspension of disbelie Genuine art makes you stake you credulity on the patently counterfeit. takes you by surprise. And for art t take you by surprise, you have to pu yourself in the power of anothe world—the work of art—and in th power of another person—the artist.

Yet everything in our society, so sa urated with economic imperatives, tel us not to surrender our interests eve for a moment, tells us that the onl forms of cultural expression we ca trust are those that give us instant gra ification, useful information, or a re flected image of ourselves. So we ar flooded with the kind of art that dep recates attentiveness, tells us about th issues of the day, and corresponds t our own personalities. And if a gen uine work of art appears that has non of these qualities, critics impose thei anyway, for they fear that if they su render themselves to the work strangeness, they will seem vulnerabl and naive and intellectually unreliabl

Eyes Wide Shut is the story of a affluent Manhattan docto named Bill Harford (To Cruise) and his wife, Alice (Nicol Kidman). One night during Christm season, Bill and Alice go to a lavis holiday ball thrown by one of Bill's p tients, the shady and superwealthy Vi tor Ziegler. Alice dances with a dash ing Hungarian stranger, who tries t seduce her, and Bill is almost lure from the party by a pair of stunnin models. Arriving home, Bill and Ali make love. The next night Alic smokes a joint and tells Bill about th Hungarian's advances; he chuckles an shrugs it off. Annoyed by her husband indifference to the power of her sex ality, Alice, in revenge, reveals th during the previous summer she foun herself so attracted to a naval offic who was staying in their hotel that sh would have given up Bill and their se en-year-old daughter, Helena, to l with him. Bill becomes obsessed wi Alice's story, and he plays over an over in his mind the image—done black-and-white tones by Kubrick of Alice making furious love with th

Lee Siegel is a contributing writer for The New Republic. *He lives in Brooklyn, New York.*

cer. The rest of the movie follows as he moves through a world whose den erotic nature his obsession has covered: his adventures include enters with a prostitute and with a nphet in a costume shop and end h a masked orgy in a Long Island nsion at which Bill is discovered, osed as an intruder, and nearly pun-ed, until a mysterious woman offers self up as a sacrifice in order to save life. He escapes, and the ends with Bill and Al- and Helena searching Christmas presents in y store.

Now, it is perfectly pos-e not to like this film; I w more than a few sen-ve and intelligent ple who felt they could e lived without it. The has its longueurs; it is of puzzles, riddles, and nes; it is highly orches-ed and stylized, like a ss between Krzysztof slowski and Nō drama. s perfectly possible not like Kieslowski or Nō ma either; for that mat- it is possible to dislike a Pound's *Cantos* or nrik Ibsen's plays or drea del Sarto's paint-s. But one cannot sim- dismiss them. One st make one's negative gment of them also a de of understanding them.

There is pleasure as a form of di-sion, and there is pleasure as a form ttention. *South Park* is in the former egory; I can say that I dislike it, and one is going to ask me for an in-retation that will support my dis-, for the simple reason that if I in-reted it, I would be ignoring the vie's simple, diverting nature. I ld get laughed at. But I cannot just miss *Hedda Gabler* without inter-ting it. If I did, I would be ignoring play's purpose of laying claim to the ntion. I would be in no position to ge its worthiness.

The critics were in no position to ge the worthiness of *Eyes Wide Shut*; y took the wrong tack. Since the 's producers had mounted such an mensely noisy publicity campaign—



Kubrick's last film: one of the world's greatest directors tackles the subject of sex, sex, sex by staging the most erotic orgy scene ever filmed; see Nicole Kidman nude; see Tom Cruise nude; see the couple married in real life make love on the screen—the critics had to show that they were not going to allow bullying commerce to determine their experience of the film. So they decided not to respond to the film. They decided to respond to the hype. And the result was that the hype totally determined their experience of the film. They wrote about it as if it were a work of diversion and not a work of attention.

Consider this admission from Andrew Sarris, writing in *The New York Observer*: "Perhaps if *Eyes Wide Shut* just popped out of the blue without all the infernal hype and infomercials I might have appreciated it more for its uncommon virtues . . ." This is a truly astounding thing to say, since no one was stopping Sarris from ignoring the hype and appreciating the virtues. Such weariness toward the commercial world was flaunted by most of the critics. J. Hoberman began his review by disclosing the information that Warner Bros. produced the film and that *Time*—Warner Bros.'s "corporate sibling"—"shamelessly" promoted it. So what? Pope Julius shamelessly promoted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. In *The New York Review of Books*, Louis Menand went farthest of all. Asserting that Kubrick hadn't finished the film, he concluded that even if he had, it wouldn't have mattered anyway, because the people who made the film "became inflated by their own hype." And what if the people who made the film actually did not become inflated by their own hype? How would Menand know either way? But the critics would not be restrained. They had to prove that they were not about to have the wool pulled over their eyes by commercial culture—even if they had to trample on a work of art to prove it.

It just so happens that right around the time *Eyes Wide Shut* opened in the theaters, a book came out about Kubrick and the film that gave the critics exactly what they were looking for. *Eyes Wide Open*, by Frederic Raphael, is a memoir of the director by a screenwriter who shares with Kubrick a writing credit on the film. The book is an act of revenge. Raphael is convinced that Kubrick stifled his talent and commandeered the script. As payback for Kubrick's indifference to his genius, Raphael paints a devastatingly corrosive picture of the director as an obsessive tyrant who squeezes the life out of scripts, scriptwriters, and actors. And since this portrait of Kubrick corresponded in fact, if not in tone, to some other recent accounts of him, the critics seized on Raphael's memoir as a guide to the film.

In truth, they had no choice, even if they knew that Raphael's memoir was "self-promoting," as Menand put it. Raphael's image of Kubrick as a tyrant went to the core of the general artist-

ration by Eric Dinyer

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phobia. And once this picture of Kubrick—the mean, controlling genius, the maniacal director who shot scenes forty or fifty times—was in the air, no one could write about the movie without taking this information into account. Those who did would look like they were out of the loop. They would give the embarrassing appearance of people who, in 1999, did not know how to assimilate information.

I have never before read reviews in which the issue was the working habits of the director rather than the qualities of the film itself. Menand, on one of Kidman's scenes: "She really gives it, in what was plainly the ninety-ninth take, an earnest effort." How could Menand possibly know that this was the ninety-ninth take? He is substituting information that he has gotten about how the director operates for what he, as a critic, should be doing, which is to make sense of how the scene works.

Andrew Sarris solemnly dwelled a bit on Andrew Sarris ("I am booking [*Full Metal Jacket*] this term for my Columbia genre class on the War Film. . . ."), and then he pronounced judgment on *Eyes Wide Shut* using Raphael's framework: "more control-freak unreality than visual genius." David Denby also responded to Raphael's picture of Kubrick as a figure of oppressive authority who instills fear: "Even, however, if you let your imagination run wild, the atmosphere—sombre, trancelike, unimpassioned—should hold you in check. The orgy is frozen in ritual, and devoted not to pleasure but to authority and fear." Yet this formidable and reliable critic never bothered to ask himself whether Kubrick deliberately made the orgy seem devoted to authority and fear.

According to Raphael, Kubrick insisted that he stick faithfully to Schnitzler's novel. Here, too, the critics swallowed Raphael whole:

> Menand: "Schnitzler's story is set in turn-of-the-century Vienna and Kubrick's movie is set in contemporary New York City, but otherwise the adaptation is pretty faithful."
>
> Hoberman: "The script . . . is . . . surprisingly faithful to the 1926 Schnitzler original."
>
> Kakutani: "The movie was faithfull adapted from a 1926 novella calle 'Rhapsody: A Dream Novel' by the V ennese writer Arthur Schnitzler.

The fact is that the screenplay follow only the skeleton of the novel. (W everybody able to get a copy of th Schnitzler in time to meet their dea lines? It's been out of print for years, an I spent days finding mine.) In the no el, the Bill character answers Alice confession of an adulterous desire wi his own tale of adulterous desire. I the movie, he doesn't. In the nove the Bill character says he remembe having seen the man Alice desires. I the movie, Bill does not. In the nove the Bill character leaves the prostitu because he is revolted by her. In th movie, Bill is interrupted by a call fro his wife on his cell phone. In the no el, there is no Ziegler character. In th novel, the password Bill uses to ga entrance to the orgy is "Denmark." I the movie, it is "Fidelio." Remarkabl no critic I've quoted even brought u the password. This is a pretty bad lap for reviews that called Kubrick's me itation on marriage an empty aesthe ic exercise, since the opera *Fidelio* Beethoven's hymn to conjugal lov Indeed, Kubrick structures his film wit gorgeously subtle references to *Fidel* and Christmas and Ovid and Home though none of the critics here inte preted any of these allusions eithe Nothing of the sort exists in Schni zler's tale.

The critics may have gotten th relationship between the film and i source material all wrong, but th didn't stop them from takin Raphael's cue and lambasting th movie for not getting the relatio ship between its setting and conte porary New York right. Although th movie wears its expressionistic a symbolic style on its sleeve right fro the start—the Shostakovich wal playing over the titles stops when A ice turns off her radio—the criti wrote as if Kubrick had aimed a failed to make a *Frontline* docume tary about life in present-day Ne York. Denby even accused Schnitzl of anachronism. ("Writing in Vien in the mid-twenties, Schnitzler m have sensed that his material, in ter of consciousness of sex, was alrea

ed, so he set the book earlier, be-
e the First World War.") Now, why
uld Schnitzler write a novel about
mes that he thought were already
ed? He was Arthur Schnitzler,
end of Freud and Klimt and
noenberg, not some idiot. And it's
even clear that his novel takes
ce at the turn of the century.
phael is the one who says that; the
e period is never stated in the nov-
The whole question is, of course,
ot. Novelists and filmmakers set
ir work in the past when they want
avoid the distracting immediate
ticulars of their own time and
ce, when they want to strip their
ries down to essences and ulti-
tes. That's what Kubrick does in
s Wide Shut, but the critics did
consider that. That would have
n unfamiliar and demanding and
pectful of the viewer's desire to
aginatively inhabit other worlds.
lculating the proximity of Kubrick's
w York City to life in the real New
k City, on the other hand, assures
wers that they never have to ven-
e away from their own experience.
Attacking a work of art on the
unds that it doesn't reflect contem-
ary appearances and conventions
s bad enough, but the critics really
did themselves on the subject of
. The portrayal of an orgy, after all,
l been the centerpiece of the film's
licity campaign. Therefore, the pub-
sts had to be thoroughly debunked.
in debunking all the hype about
sex, the critics never got beyond the
e about the sex. They seemed intent
proving how sexy they were, and
v sophisticated they were about sex-
ss, because when sexiness is mar-
ed as vigorously as it is in America
ay, one had better appear to have
stered the market. Never mind that
s Wide Shut is not about sexiness
about sex. I've already quoted Den-
on the "pompous" and "unimpas-
ned" nature of the orgy ("I found
self bored" with the film, he sighs
r the end of his review).

Menand: "[A] ring of kneeling super-
nodels (identical proud firm breasts,
traight hair, no hips) wearing only masks
nd black thongs and looking extreme-
y chilly . . . It is a very tacky orgy. . ."

Hoberman [after alerting *Voice* readers

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NOTES FOR "PRINTER'S DEVILRY":

Slash lines indicate where the answer is to be inserted.

ACROSS: 2. rioto/us; 11. whe/re; 12. cur/ler; 13. folk/tale; 15. ammu/nition; 16. s/o; 17. offal-s/ing; 19. be/ing; 21. s/ales; 22. h/ail; 24. ta/n; 26. ho/g; 27. i/f *; 30. n/ope; 31. fi/ght; 32. shadow/y; 33. depic/t; 34. fa/t.

DOWN: 1. chrom/e; 3. R/ome; 4. bu/st; 5. Tow/s; 6. Gab/on; 7. ran/i; 8. ma/ts; 9. s/ore; 10. m/om; 14. to/o; 18. l/ed; 20. qua/i; 23. gar/e; 24. o/vernight; 25. fo/ur; 27. d/eed's; 28. be/st; 29. raf/t.

* The clue at 27A contained a misspelled word. The line should have read as follows: "You will see Nob in dust—ant, if ying—against her child in an Indian court (8)."

[After the orgy takes place in one of the richest, most Republican districts of Long Island"]: "Behind the sexual heart of darkness, this decorous gavotte is more studied than fashion shoot and rather less explicit. The final shock: Two men dancing . . . together."

Sarris: "It can be revealed at last that there are acres and acres of female pubic hair on display, but no male members . . . [in] the otherwise boring free-for-all orgy sequence."

Kakutani: "The masked orgy, much hyped in advance publicity for the movie, feels more ludicrous than provocative, more voyeuristic than scary . . . it is curiously devoid of sexual energy . . . the entire orgy sequence feels deliberate and contrived."

These are the terms, set by the film's promoters and determined by the enveloping dynamics of commercial culture, in which the critics judged Stanley Kubrick's last film.

Eyes Wide Shut is a descendant of Bernardo Bertolucci's *Last Tango in Paris*. Both films examine the relationship of fucking to fraternity, of sex to society, and both reach the same conclusion: for the social order to survive, the instincts have to be recognized for what they are and then restored to their hiding place behind society's curtains. This is a sturdy old theme, but that is not the same thing as a dated theme. The trick is in inflecting the old theme with idiosyncracy and fresh insight, and in honestly refracting it through the colors of one's time, without miring it in mere documentary particulars.

In *Last Tango in Paris*, Marlon Brando plays the down-on-his-luck owner of a cheap hotel in Paris. Crushed by his wife's suicide, enraged by her infidelity, he begins an affair with a young woman from a bourgeois family. He insists on anonymity. Pure sex is all he wants, with an emphasis on anal sex, for anal eroticism represents a total reversal of conventional romantic love, and Brando is in a rage against what he now considers the fraudulence of romantic ideas. Although she is engaged to be married, the young woman, played by Maria Schneider, submerges herself in the affair. She accepts and enjoys Brando's sexual demands and starts making her own.

One day, Schneider arrives at the apartment they have rented to find it empty. She is distraught, and when Brando rushes up to her in the street, she tells him that she never wants to see him again. But Brando has fallen in love with her. He is the true romantic; only a romantic could rebel so extravagantly against the shattering of romantic illusions. He tells Schneider his name and describes his life to her. A proper bourgeois girl, she is appalled by his lowly status (Schneider's facial expressions are hilarious here), though she has pledged herself to him. She is the true sexual nihilist, who would betray her fiancé with Brando but will not marry a man whose social status is lower than hers, even if she loves him.

In the film's closing scene, Brando chases Schneider through the streets and follows her upstairs to her family's apartment. There he playfully puts on her late father's army cap—he was a colonel in French North Africa—and then, removing it, tells Schneider that he loves her. Horrified by his irreverence, cornered, afraid, Schneider shoots him dead with her father's army pistol. Thus society executes Brando for wanting to bring the instincts back into alignment with emotional life. It is the bourgeoisie, represented by Schneider, who pruriently wish to keep them apart.

Our tame middle-class critics so wanted Kubrick's orgy to be dark and dangerous and full of sexual energy, but Kubrick wanted to show that sex without emotion is ritualistic, contrived, and in thrall to authority and fear. He was too wild for them. Everyone droned on about how unerotic Kubrick's orgy is, but no one talked about how intensely erotic is Bill's fantasy of Alice making love with the naval officer. It is so erotic because Alice is the object not only of Bill's desire but also of his love.

No one tried to fathom the film's purposes. Just about every critic also mocked what they considered to be Cruise and Kidman's stilted performances. They seemed to be acting like actors, everyone complained. At one point in his review, Menand obliquely refers to rumors that the real-life Cruise and Kidman have a sham marriage and that Cruise is actually gay. "Who cares?" asks the impressively unimpressible Menand. "It doesn't matter, because they have no chemistry in the movie, either."

Well, Kubrick must have been pretty stupid to spend three years filming actors who couldn't act. But Kubrick wasn't stupid. In a film about life's essential doubleness, Kubrick presents Cruise and Kidman with double lives. They are actors in a film, and they are people we think we know something about. Their real marriage exists beneath the rumors of trouble, just as the troubles of their film-marriage exist beneath its apparent success. They act with dreamy formality because they exist between dream and reality. Kubrick wants us to watch Cruise and Kidman and think about what people appear to be and who they really are.

Kubrick's genius in *Eyes Wide Shut* is to make us look at the film the way the film looks at life. The title announces the film's perspective: we stare life in the face and miss what is truly going on right under our noses. Bill is a doctor; his job is to defy the corruptions of time and repair injured bodies. Thus he is willfully blind to the way the demands of bodies hasten the ravages of time. Physical desire ruins friendships, destroys marriages, discombobulates thoughts and feelings. Underneath Bill's sober medical optimism lies the hazardous dynamism of sexual fantasy and sexual desire. That is why Alice hides her pot in a Band-Aid tin. And because desire is an agent of metamorphosis, Ovid, the author of *Metamorphoses*, becomes one of the film's presiding presences.

The danger Bill and Alice face is that either domestic emotions will stifle sex or that unbridled sexual indulgence will kill off the individuality that nourishes emotional attachment. That is a dated theme? (That's like telling Hamlet to lighten up—everyone's father dies, for goodness sake.) Such a dilemma is why the movie begins with a shot of Kidman's back and her unforgettable ass. We see her back when she dances with the Hungarian; Bill sees a man grabbing a woman's behind in a doorway as he wanders the street; a partly obscured sign over a store reads "ass" through a window behind Bill and a gay desk clerk in a hotel as the

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The Golan Heights

To Whom Do They Belong? Can Israel Survive Without Them?

Syria's president, Hafez Assad, has apparently "consented to discuss peace" with Israel's Prime Minister Ehud Barak, provided that Mr. Barak agrees to start negotiations where (allegedly) the late Prime Minister Rabin left off four years ago. Astonishingly and regrettably, Mr Barak seems to have agreed to this presumptuous imposition.

What are the facts?

Historical Background—The Golan was always part of the Jewish homeland. The Syrian claim to the Golan is tenuous. Syria, as a political entity, did not exist at all until after the first World War. Until then it was just another province in the Ottoman empire, with ill-defined borders. In 1923, in an Anglo/French great-power play, the border between Syria and what was then called Palestine was established. The Golan Heights were ceded to Syria.

Even before the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Syrians, having heavily fortified the area, subjected the villages in northern Israel to almost daily shellings, making normal life impossible. In the 1967 Six-Day War, Syria attacked Israel and was defeated. Israel occupied the Golan Heights and in 1981, for all practical purposes annexed them.

Syria and its President—Syria is the most destabilizing influence in the Middle East. It is classified by the U.S. State Department as a narcotics-dealing and terrorist state. Its main fury is directed against Israel, which is perceived as a bulwark of Western influence and civilization, both of which Syria totally rejects.

Syria's President, Hafez Assad, is a tyrant, every bit as ruthless and cunning as his Iraqi counterpart, Saddam Hussein. Under Assad, Syria is a world center for terrorism. It still harbors Nazi bigwigs, who found welcome there after the World War. Few doubt that he was the mastermind and final authority in the suicide attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut in which 241 Americans died, and in the explosion of Pan Am flight #103 in which 270 people lost their lives. He oversees one of the largest narcotics operations in the world.

Military Security—The Golan is the size of the New York borough of Queens, about 10 miles wide, with a plateau on either side of a ridge. If it were part of Syria it would be less than 1% of its territory. But it is of a supreme strategic importance to Israel. Its high ground provides early-warning capability, without which Israel–just as in 1948, in 1967, and in 1973–would be subject to surprise attack by the Syrians. Its loss would obligate Israel to stay on constant alert and to maintain a state of readiness and mobilization that would be economically and socially untenable. The Golan, which ranges up to a height of 2300 ft., dominates the Jordan Valley, the lowest point on earth about 700 ft. below sea level. On the Golan itself, there are only two natural terrain bottlenecks through which tanks can advance. Those choke points are defensible and made possible the repulse of 1400 Syrian tanks that attacked Israel in the 1973 war. But with the Golan in Syrian hands, and without the radar installations that would give Israel warning of any military movements, thousands of tanks–backed up by missiles and airplanes–could overrun Israel in a matter of hours. It would be a strategically impossible situation, especially for a country as small as Israel–smaller than Lake Michigan, smaller by half than San Bernardino County in California. The Golan does not make for perfect defense, but it gives Israel a small breathing space for mobilization.

> "With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arabs could be confident of defeat and peace would be preserved. To hand the Golan to Syria is a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction."

The Golan is the source of over one-third of Israel's fresh water. In 1964, with the Golan in Syrian hands, Syria attempted to divert these headwaters and to cripple Israel's water supply. It is more than likely that, given another opportunity, Syria would once again attempt to destroy Israel's water supply.

In its keen desire to bring peace to its people, after more than fifty years of war and bloodshed, Israel has been prepared to make far-reaching concessions to Syria on the Golan, in exchange for real peace. But it is hoped that even Ehud Barak, Israel's recently-elected prime minister, will not be prepared to give up all of the Golan high ground and to return to the "death trap" borders of 1967, or anything close to them. In order to survive within such borders, Israel would have to rely on the goodwill of the Arab states, most of which—with the recent exception of Jordan and of the cold peace with Egypt—are still in a declared or undeclared state of war with Israel. An aggressor will attack only if confident of victory. With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arabs could be confident of defeat and peace would be preserved. To hand the Golan to Syria is a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction.

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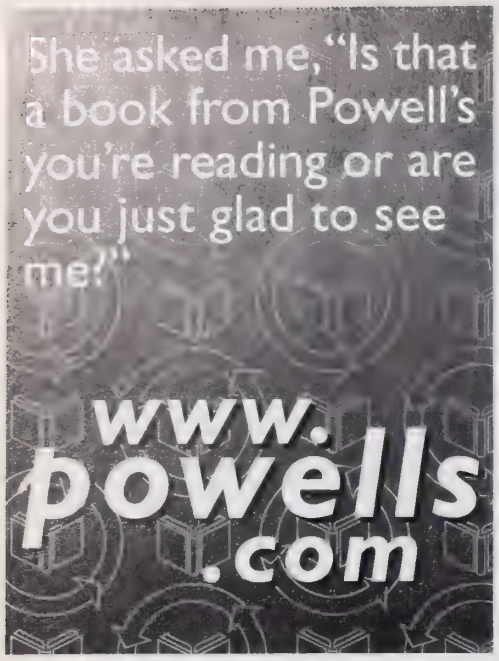
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talk; Ziegler delivers his stunning monologue about the banal inevitability of sexual desire to Bill's back; Helena picks up a giant teddy bear from behind in the film's final scene and asks if Santa will buy it for her.

The back, the ass, represent our animal side. They do not convey our individuality. Only our face does that. But the risk is that if we surrender ourselves absolutely to our anonymous animal side, we slide helplessly toward death, the absolute anonymity. For this reason, there are masks in Bill's patient's apartment and in the prostitute's place too, and this is why Kubrick makes the orgy a masked affair. When Bill finds out that the mysterious woman at the orgy who may have saved his life has died, he goes to the morgue, steps over to her body, and almost kisses her face. Her face has become a death mask, and his urge to kiss it signifies that he has submitted too thoroughly to his obsession. And to Alice's machinations.

For just as every enchantress Odysseus meets on his voyage home is an echo of his thralldom to Penelope, every woman Bill meets is a version of Alice. (The numerous references in *Eyes Wide Shut* to *2001: A Space Odyssey*; the naval officer; and the large model of a ship in Ziegler's billiard room emphasize the film's allusions to Homer.) This is why the prostitute is beautiful and educated. And this is why Bill is constantly being interrupted just as he is about to satisfy his desires. He allowed an interruption to come between him and Alice, and now he must be punished in the very same terms over and over again. Just as the husband in *Fidelio* is in prison, so is Bill: twice we see him standing behind bars, outside the costume store and outside the gate of the Long Island mansion. With her tale, Alice has orchestrated his fate for him. At any moment she can betray him with her naval officer, just as at any moment Penelope can betray Odysseus with her suitors.

The movie does not resemble New York? How can it when it has such a large poetic and symbolic dimension? Kubrick paints vast pictures with minute strokes. As Bill is being tormented by his black-and-white fantasy, Alice sits at home watching television, helping Helena with her homework, and eating a black-and white cookie. Consider, too, the movi she is watching. In the scene we se and hear, George Segal is sitting in café in Rome, across from the Colo seum. A waiter brings him somethin and Segal says "Grazie." The waite says "You're welcome." "If I were Ita ian," Segal mutters to himself, "h would have answered me in Italian What a wonderful, whimsical way improvise on the film's theme of th expectations and disappointments desire. We live in the subjunctive: only we could be someone else and g what we want. But when Bill gets wh he wants and enters the orgy, he se nothing but sterile coupling. There the fantasy of absolute gratificatio cynically projected from every corn of the culture, and there is the reali of the cookie and the child and th homework and the companion yo have chosen, and for whom, despi everything, you sit at home waitin Compared with the everyday reali of sex and emotion, our fantasies gratification are, yes, pompous an solemn in the extreme. That is wh the film's recurrent motif is of th Christmas tree. For desire is like Chris mas: it always promises more than delivers.

Kubrick's film is hardly, as son critics have said, an instance anti-erotic moralism. It is, i stead, honest about the power and n cessity and permanence of erotic lif It is about the *simultaneity* of irreco cilable desires. As the film proceed the dialogue increasingly takes th form of double entendre: "Would yo like to come inside?" the prostitu asks Bill. The gay desk clerk refers two tough-looking guys "you'd not li to fool around with" and giggle Ziegler gestures to the pool table a says he has been "knocking a few ba around." The orgy itself runs parallel the ball at the beginning, even as parodies social life. The Hungari with the long nose finds his mirror i age in a man wearing a mask with t very same nose. Pairs prolifera throughout the film, reminders of o double natures. A sculpture in Ziegle house, seen at the beginning of t film, is of two figures, a winged o bending over another without win

ple lift both their arms and raise
h their hands; there are symmetri-
doors and coffee cups; in Ziegler's
iard room, you see two pineapples,
erfect image of the banal duality of
desires.

don't know how the critics could
ve missed the tenderness of
brick's themes, the way he has
ise and Kidman look at each oth-
out of each one's unfathomable
ths—I's wide shut—the way he has
lman stroke Cruise's head after she
s him her violent second fantasy, as
ne is taking a maternal pity on the
n whom she, as the furious lover,
not help tormenting.

ndeed, the movie ends with a
ment apprehension of a marriage's
ile world. When Bill finally returns
ne at the end of his adventures, he
ls the mask he wore to the orgy,
l which he thought he lost, on the
l next to the sleeping Alice. This is
at they both have created, unwit-
gly, through their psychosexual pas
deux: the menace of an utterly lost
ividuality. Bill begins to sob, but
is sobbing for two opposite reasons,
xtricably entwined: he is afraid that
marriage has been destroyed, and
ughout his adventures he has failed
atisfy his desires. And so when Al-
says to Bill in the movie's last line,
u know, there is something very
portant we need to do as soon as
sible....Fuck," she is reiterating the
ibleness. Fucking is exactly what
y have to do, but sexual desire is
at got them into trouble in the first
ce. For there is no such thing as
king in a vacuum.

n the end, nothing is resolved, but
fundamental irresolution at the
rt of life is briefly illumined. Such
tanley Kubrick's final film. You can
derstand the film and honorably still
like it, but you cannot proclaim
r dislike of the film without basing
n your understanding. At a time
en we are surrounded by movies
ut killing, and movies about mur-
ing, and movies about slaughter-
; by cheap caricatured reflections
uman life; by dishonest and mon-
driven and career-driven drivel at
ry turn—at a time like this, you'd
nk someone would have given a
uine work of honest art its due.
, how I wish I were in Italy. ■

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THE FOOL'S PROXY

By J. Robert Lennon

When the war was over, Grant clipped his hair close to the scalp and rode to Eleven, where he found a man to drive him out to the station. The man's name was Harper. He was a textile dealer who wore good clothes often stained with the juice from exotic fruit he'd had sent special from California, which he could be found casually eating at any time. He wasn't eating now, but Grant could smell it on his sweet breath. The car he drove was sleek and new but beaten around the runners and tire wells by rocks and bits of hardened mud. He asked Grant if he was taking a trip and Grant said he was, and the two said nothing more to each other until they reached the station. By Grant's reckoning, it was not yet six A.M.

There had been a town here called Grissom, but nobody lived in it now. When Grant was a boy two Mexicans had been hanged here for stealing somebody's horses. This was long after such things were decreed by courts, but the men had no local family and not much English, and no one who knew of their crimes objected to the punishment. That they were guilty was beyond doubt. They were found on the range asleep by the stolen horses, with their Winchesters stupidly lashed to the riggings. Grant was not sure where they'd been hanged, possibly the lowest rung of the water tower, but he did remember that for some time nobody bothered to cut down their bodies. Not long afterward the last inhabitants of Grissom quit the area for good.

Take care of yourself, Harper told Grant, and extended his soft hand. Grant took it and nodded his thanks and got out of the car.

There was some doubt that the train would stop at all. He had sent a letter saying he would be here to meet it, but he had not requested a reply. If the train came he planned to get on it and ride it as far as it took him, and if it didn't he would go back to the ranch and resume work as if nothing had happened. His parents and brother would know what he had tried to do but would not be inclined to say anything about it.

As it happened an old man was waiting here, wearing a crisp new suit and clutching a shabby carpetbag. His jaw worked with an involuntary motion, but he regarded Grant with clear eyes that followed him as he walked to the only other bench on the tiny platform. The bench shifted under him, then steadied. Above him hung a sign with GRISSOM painted clearly on it. The windows of the station house behind him were covered by bare boards. Across the tracks stood a silo with its elevator in ruins at its foot, and behind it rose a solitary table of earth in the indeterminate distance, disfigured by a weird rocky outcrop the wind appeared to have ignored and that could have served as a stage on which giants performed for travelers of the past.

Grant took off his hat and looked over at the old man. The old man had been watching and now looked away.

Since the victory over Japan, Gra had given this journey a great deal thought, and he had pictured hims much as he was right now, seated a calmly awaiting his train. He had ima ined the rocking motion the tra would make and the swaying of his f low passengers with it and the soun less slosh of his breakfast coffee in t dining car. Less clear in his mind w his destination or what he might when he got there. He supposed the would be a railroad hotel with who and a bar and a soft-spoken bartend who would tell him where to go to fi work. He intended to reach the A lantic Ocean and walk barefoot in it, his shoes and socks behind him the beach. Beyond that, imaginati failed him.

Something moved in his periph al vision, and he looked up to find t old man coming toward him, holdi his bag close as if someone might ta it from him.

Time? the man said.

Grant had no watch. He said didn't know. This didn't seem to s isfy the old man, but he asked nothi further and remained standing betwe the benches, as if to return was m effort than he could bear to expend. strong wind passed like a ghost tr through the station, and both m touched their hands to their hats. Li began to gather as if pulled by t wind. Grant offered the man a seat his bench.

'Bliged, said the man.

He was on his way to Chicago, said, to visit with a son and his wife children. The journey filled him w

J. Robert Lennon is the author of The Light of Falling Stars *and* The Funnies, *both novels. He lives in Ithaca, New York.*

ad, because he could not remember
name of his son's wife or the names
is grandchildren or even how many
hem there were. He feared that he
uldn't recognize them at the sta-
n and that they would turn him
ay. Additionally, he feared the ride
is son's car to their home outside
city. He had seen pictures of the
usands of cars that raced along the
hways and worried about an acci-
t. Grant didn't know what to tell
n. These seemed like valid
s. He asked the man where
lived.

Oh, right 'round here.

Grissom?

The old man frowned with-
meeting Grant's eyes. Not
more, he said.

Sometime later the train
e into view in the distance.
ame slowly and didn't seem
get any larger as it ap-
ached, so that when it
pped before them it ap-
red a small thing to Grant,
erless to take them any sig-
cant distance. Its doors fell
n, but no one came to ush-
hem inside. Grant stood up
asked the old man if he'd
a hand with his bag, but
man ignored the question
made his own way onto
train and disappeared.

Grant followed with neither
uctance nor eagerness,
unting the three steps be-
se it was what he had an-
pated doing. Although the
was now bright, the car was
k. A few passengers sat in
ny pools of light cast through soiled
dows, while unoccupied seats re-
ned shadowed by heavy opaque cur-
ns. The passengers were asleep.
nt walked to the center of the car,
ed his bag to the overhead rack,
n thought better and set it down
a nearby seat. He slid in after it. No
was visible for the curtain, so he
bbed two handfuls of the fabric and
hed it aside. Already the train had
un to move. He watched the strange
te roll out of view, then brought his
onto his lap as if he might open it.
there was nothing inside that he
ded and he put it back.

He fell asleep. He sensed the brak-
ing of the train and the passage of oth-
ers in the aisle. Around him more cur-
tains were opening and whispered con-
versations grew louder. He felt a hand
on his shoulder and opened his eyes to
find the conductor standing over him,
one hand holding his tickets and
punch and the other plunged into his
change pocket. He asked how far
Grant was going.

Where's it headed to?

Chicago.



Okay, Grant told him, and paid.
Then he fell back to sleep.

When he next woke the sun was
high outside over a miniature range
of hills with cattle walking on them,
and a heavy man of about sixty sat be-
side him. The man had one hand in
Grant's bag, which Grant had left open
when he paid the conductor. Now the
man removed his hand.

Where're you headed, soldier?

Grant met the man's eyes, which
were small and hard, like plum stones.
Chicago, he said.

Son, you ought to know this ain't
Company B. You leave your belongings
unguarded beside you like that and
you will find them made off with.

Grant zipped the bag shut and
pushed it underneath the seat with his
calves resting against it. When he had
settled himself, the stranger stretched
his body out, shoving both feet under
the seat in front, and slipped off each
shoe using the toe of the opposite foot.
With his creased wool trousers and
starched shirt mussed by travel, he car-
ried the air of a modest businessman
and an odor of monotonous work re-
luctantly done. An occasion-
al tic wrinkled his nose and
mouth. He was ewe-necked,
with a large head that swayed
like a daisy when he talked.
He had not taken his eyes off
Grant.

Been out on the Pacific
coast, have you? Back from
where?

Grant glanced out the win-
dow. A motte of tall leaning
cottonwoods passed, cupping
a cluster of what could have
been broken tombstones. He
felt played out, though he'd
just woken up. He would have
been out riding line right now,
seeking fence to fix. Instead, it
was likely to be his brother
Max doing it. About now they
would all be acting like Grant
had never been.

Okinawa, he said, as the
graveyard hove out of sight.
Peleliu.

The man nodded. Not Iwo,
huh?

No.

Ever eat dog?

No, Grant said.

The man was laughing. Damn good
thing, he said. These boys come back
saying they ate dog as if it's an ad-
mirable thing. God damn. He stuck
out a bent hand, the knuckles tough
and enlarged like knots in a branch.
Sam Kroch, he said, high at the end
like a question, so that Grant did not
immediately know it was his name the
man was speaking.

Grant Person, Grant said presently
and shook the hand.

You a farm boy, son? You have got
a sun-pecked look to you.

Yessir.

You going home? Indiana? Illinois?

Indiana.

ration by Tim Bower

[illegible] hero back home, are you? Look at you, all in one piece. Some of these boys come back all tied up together like a pot roast. You get yourself shot?

The wound grew hot at the question, the one thing Grant had as evidence if he needed it. Scarred white and without hair, it had resulted when a horse dragged a rope hard around his calf, cutting a channel through his trousers and into the flesh. This was four years before. It could pass as a bullet wound if it had to.

I took a bullet in the leg at Peleliu, he said. Healed up good. He cleared his throat. I still favor it some, he said.

Kroch laughed as if at a clever joke. I don't doubt that, he said, not a bit. And he tipped his head back, still smiling, and went to sleep.

For a short time there were six of them, all boys. The oldest was called Edwin. He was eight the winter Grant was seven, naturally broader in the shoulders and face and taller due to his age. This was at the onset of the Depression, and of all the children only Edwin seemed to understand the gravity of the situation and under it grew serious and sure, like a person expected to take control of the outfit at any moment if necessary, which in fact he was. At seven Grant was still thought of as a child, his horsemanship a form of play not work, his assigned tasks around the place chores as opposed to duties. The others truly were children: Thornton, who was slow, even for a four-year-old; Robert, who at two and a half was Thornton's playmate and protector; Max, who was barely walking; and Wesley, the sickly newborn. In which way he was sick was unclear initially. He was declared colicky and cried evenings for many hours before sleep. He refused milk. When Grant thought about this time, which was not often, he remembered Max sucking greedily at the breast, his shod feed dangling off the chair, while Wesley lay silent and watchful nearby in the bassinet. Wesley was born tiny and did not grow significantly.

Their mother's name was Asta and their father called her Ann. His name was John. He was raised in the north of England and collected her from her home in Iceland during the first war. She had kept house with her mother there while her father raised sheep, and now in America she kept house and bore sons while her husband raised sheep. Growing up, Grant never heard a single word of Icelandic from her, and few of anything else. Nevertheless her English was perfect. Although she would not have been called beautiful, she stood apart from other women in the clarity and fullness of her features and by her great height, nearly six feet. She was feared and respected by the ranch men, most of whom she stood taller than. Among those who feared her was John, who was small and talkative and boastful, and whose strange skills, such as carving toys from pinewood and playing the fiddle, distracted him from ranch work, at which he was mediocre at best. Away from Asta he seemed to blame her for his ineptitude. He could often be heard wondering what good she had done him, with all of her supposed sheep smarts. In earshot of her he would blame the shiftlessness and disobedience of the boys, once they were old enough to blame. For her part Asta ignored his complaints and continued to provide him with sons. She knew as well as he did the worth, on a ranch, of six boys.

On Christmas night 1929 they ate dinner together alone, without the hands. This uncharacteristic family privacy made them all uncomfortable, and they struggled for things to say. Wesley nursed weakly for a short time, then once laid down began to cry, and the sound seemed to unhinge Asta, who held her knife and fork tightly but didn't touch them to her food. When John told her to go quiet him, Edwin got up from the table, went to the bassinet, and whispered in the baby's ear. In minutes he was asleep.

The following morning Wesley woke congested in the nose and throat and spent the day facedown on their mother's lap, expelling mucus. Two days later he began to turn gray, then dull purple in large blotches, and his fingers went cold and stiff. The following afternoon his head began to bulge at the fontanel. He stopped crying. That night he fell into a coma, and he died under the doctor's care i the late morning of January 1.

Grant had dreamed that a gent horse, a blood bay, had entered th house and knelt before the bassine and tiny Wesley had climbed onto i red back and ridden away into th night. That afternoon he went to h mother where she lay next to the bab still body and told her what he h dreamed, and without turning over face him she reached back and slapp him hard enough to knock him dow In the morning they buried the baby a wind-scraped corner of the pastu starveout where even the horses ne er bothered going. John enclosed t grave with fence, leaving ample roo around it as if he kne what was to come.

While Kroch slept Grant tried imagine what life in Indiana migh have been like had he actually live there. He expected it was gentler in I diana, with more time for sleep an less sickness among the animals. C perhaps there wouldn't have been a imals. They might have grown cor just that one thing, and the wor would have bought it from them. Th train was nearly to Minnesota no and night was falling. Passengers fill the compartment. The look of the made Grant glad Kroch had chos him. It was not uncommon during th war to see women alone or alone wi children, but the women in this c were accompanied, and all the so tary travelers were men. They varied age and appearance, but all had th eyes of outlaws, or so it seemed Grant. They carried bought bags wi few signs of use, as if they were on props stuffed with balled-up newsp pers. This train rocked much as he h imagined, but he had no sense of nea ness to anyone on it. Activity in tow they passed looked staged, and course with his first lie he had turn into an actor. This was not a simp matter of making up a story and tellin it to whomever he encountered; it w himself he was inventing, a version him who had spent years in the co pany of other young men and h known the drudge and racket of wa

But he hadn't. He had spent h youth in ever-increasing solitude, wit out reference to others. He had go

ong the men back home and made
impression, and had never paid his
n looks or talk any mind. He could
nish in the creases of land and not
thought of by anyone. Now sud-
nly he was traveling in a landscape
eyes.
He was able to sleep with his heels
nched tight against his bag for safe-
eping. When he woke it was to a
ne of straight, flat paved roads and
s that waited at intersections for
e train to go by. Towns flashed past
til they ran together, and this was
e city. Passengers woke as if by a
th sense. Kroch was among them,
clear eyes on Grant.
There she is, son, he said.
Grant looked out to make sure he
ant Chicago and not some specific
ucture. I reckon my daddy's here to
et me, he said.
Maybe I ought to wait around and
that. A hero's welcome.
Grant reached out and steadied him-
f against the seat in front, quelling
usea. The train was slowing. I ain't
y kind of hero, he said.
Kroch was laughing. The way you
l that story, I believe it.
I don't follow, he said without look-
.
Kroch was close now, right up at his
. You have got to convince yourself
fore you can convince other people,
y. You don't even say your name
e you mean it.
Grant felt him retreat, felt his body
e from the seat. He turned fast and
nd Kroch in the aisle peering down
him.
It's my name, Grant said, and saw
ople turn.
A smile found Kroch's face. Okay,
ant Person. Now you sound like a
nest man. The train moaned and
pped, and Kroch kept his balance
e a steel beam. People got up all at
ce, but Kroch was ahead of them,
down the stairs and across
the filthy platform.

Grant followed the other passen-
s through heavy glass doors into a
m of stupendous size crammed tight
th the sounds of footsteps and their
oes. It was like a cathedral where
u worshiped by walking. He stood
th his eyes shut while people arced
ound him from behind as if herded.

edit *v.*

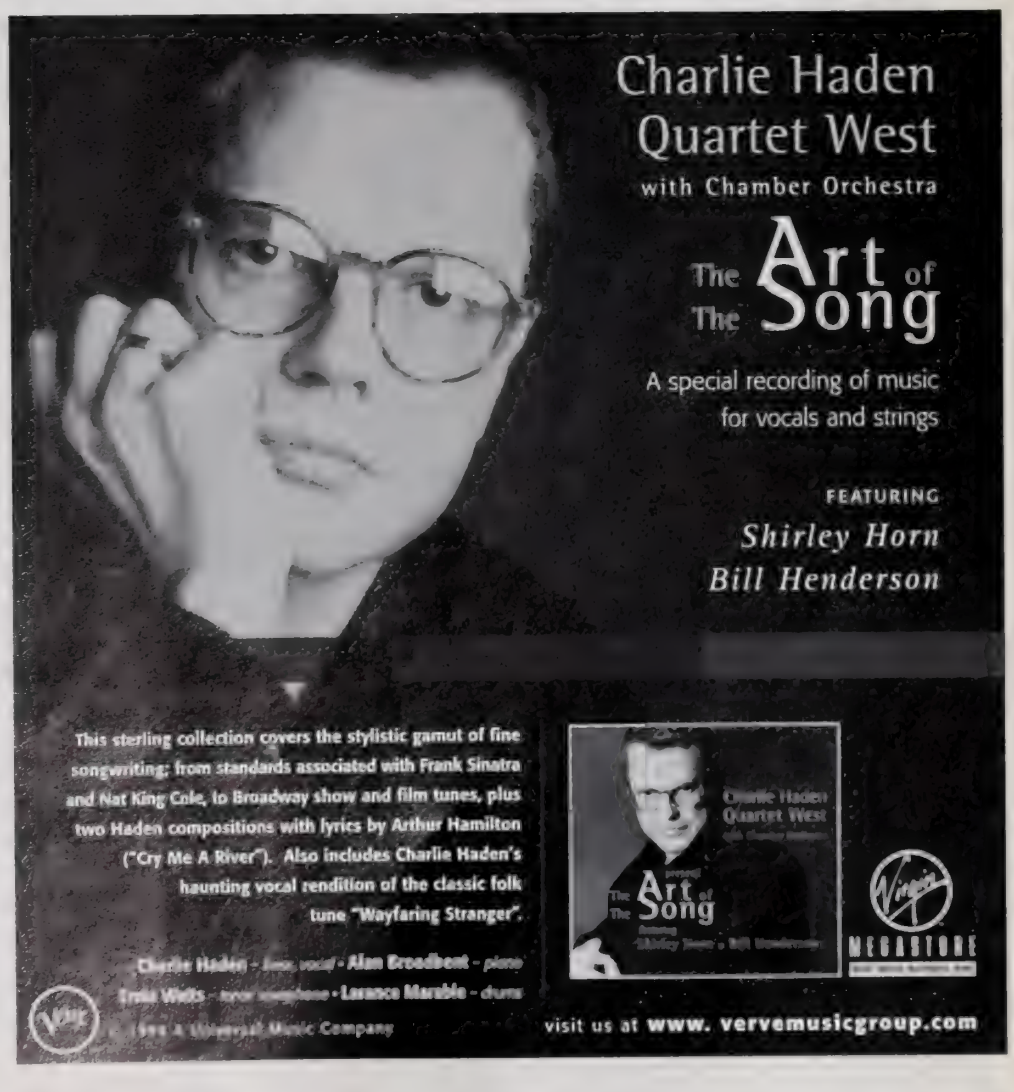
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they would crush one ...death if obstructed, as sheep ...nown to do. His bag, bumped by ..., was tugging at his hand like ...ed dog, so he found a place on ... high-backed pew and caught ...breath. In time a man and woman and child sat down nearby, and he looked toward the woman and said, I want to get a train to New York City.

She wore a pink dress with frills and a hat with fake flowers on it, and her hand went to her child's shoulder and then her husband's.

What? the man said turning. You said what?

I want to get the train to New York.

The man was holding a cigar, turning it in his hand. Well, you go to New York, soldier. It isn't any of my business. He brought out a silver guillotine from his coat and sliced the cigar end clean off. The cut end dropped to the floor.

Where? Grant asked him.

What! now with the cigar between his teeth. The child, a boy, was staring.

Where do I get the train?

The man snorted and pointed, then shook his head as if flinging Grant free of it. Then the woman stood, pulled her son from his seat, walked to her husband's opposite side, and sat down.

The man lit his cigar. Well? he said.

There was a train leaving on the hour. He bought a ticket and was shown where to go to get on. While waiting he came across a machine that dispensed sandwiches, and he put his coins into it. The carousel turned and he opened a door, then thought better of his choice and quickly shut it. But the next door he tried wouldn't give, and neither would the first one when he tried it again.

Nearby two doors yawned into light, and he could see cars moving on a street. He went out. The city looked like it did in pictures, except lived in, with buildings faded or crumbling from use and the cars nudging around one another with the scattershot instinct of insects. The order of city streets now seemed an illusion, like the smooth contours of rough land viewed from a distance. In each direction traffic lights changed in slow succession, a wave of red and then green sweeping across the city. A taxi stopped before him, and a man dashed toward it and climbed in. Grant watched the taxi pull away. He was hungry.

The train stopped frequently at stations and sometimes stood still in lush countryside for no apparent reason. When it moved it moved slowly. Grant's compartment was full. He washed himself in a rural station bathroom and changed his clothes. When he learned the price of food in the dining car he tried to abstain in part from regular meals, but at times hunger overtook him and he ate without concern for money or manners. The men and women who shared his table didn't speak to him, and he offered nothing to their conversation. He listened while they talked about Atlantic City. Men spent entire days making sand castles there. One could witness a seven-foot shark in a glass tank and a horse that jumped from a great height into the ocean. This last seemed hard to believe. His fellow diners asked their waiter if he knew the city, and when he said he did asked him if there really was a beach for coloreds and special entertainment for them as well. The waiter said that indeed there was, it was the hottest spot on the coast. One woman in the group occasionally met Grant's eyes with a kind look, and he thought of her soft features and long neck at great length as he went to sleep that night.

By the time the train reached the station Grant understood that he didn't want to be in New York after all. He considered the cars and lights he'd seen in Chicago, and the thought made him very tired. For a while he sat on a bench much like the one he'd sat on there, and he closed his eyes and daydreamed about home. The routine in which his days were milled was absent utterly, like a cycle of weather going on halfway around the world. He wished he had a horse to ride. He would find the beach, and the horse would test itself on the shifting sand. It would shy at first from the advancing water, then master itself and crash through the tide, leaving prints that washed away behind it. When he opened his eyes he watched his dining companions pass without noticing his presence there. When they had disappeared he made his way to a ticket window and asked how to get to Atlantic City.

He was told he could get a bus Grand Central.

Which way? he said.

But when he went outside and sa the whole of New York, the directio he'd been given eluded him. I watched travelers motion to taxis a tuck themselves inside and the ta fold into the flow of cars. He took l money from his bag and counted it

How much? he asked when he g in. The driver told him and Grant co sidered getting back out, but the dri was shrewd enough to have alrea started driving, and anyway he'd ma his decision and ought to stick to it

At Grand Central Terminal he pa all but three of his dollars for a tick The bus took him out of the city a along a busy road where identic house fronts crowded together li men lined up at a bar. They were tra eling south, so he looked left in t hope of seeing the ocean, but he cou not. Soon they turned away from t evening sun, and sand began to a pear along the road. The bus turn golden inside like the heart of a min star. Where it stopped he saw the bac of tall buildings and between them mass of people walking. He got off a heard the odd cacophony of a big ba and smelled fried food. On the oth side of a packed parking lot rose a flig of wooden steps, and he climbed the and found himself on a wide wood thoroughfare, where people laugh and clutched one another falling do drunk in fine clothes, and publicly e braced in the backs of carts towed running men, and pushed in and out penny arcades and theaters and ba Beyond all this was a cloudless pur sky that grew darker as it descended the horizon. The horizon was flat a absolute, the authentic edge of t world. This at last was the ocean.

He sat shoeless mere inches out reach of the ocean's tongue, eating fr a paper plate of hot potato pastries. had wanted meat but ended up buyi the first thing he laid eyes on. Bes him his lemonade was already emp He had two dollars and ten cents, a all his clothes were foul and wrinkl Night came sooner here, so back ho his mother was cooking supper for men. By now they had stopped w dering about him. Less than a week the house had been emptier at ni

an Grant could bear, and now, with-
t him, it was emptier still.
He would not have thought it pos-
le for an entire family to go wrong.
ey had been strong and numerous
d lived in a small valley that was
irs alone, or seemed that way: when
yone entered, the dust they raised
s visible from miles away, and visi-
s, even if unexpected, could be met
the road. Home was a domain. It
s permanent and unbreachable. In
rospect this was a childish way of
nking. Families die out, even the
rdiest lines. No blood could resist
l luck.
The second to die was Robert. He
ned six on the same June day in
33 that Edwin turned twelve. That
ne month a man just hired fell drunk
his horse and walked for several
eks afterward with a crutch. The
s were poking fun out in front of the
use, with Grant dramatizing the fall
l Thornton looking on from under
nade tree, laughing appreciatively in
weird, hoarse adult's voice. Robert
ersonated the remorseful hired man
ttering apologies and jerking his
crutch about, using as a prop the shot-
gun he'd been chasing pheasants with
earlier in the day. He had forgotten
to engage the safety, and when the
stock struck his boot top something
caught the trigger and a barrel dis-
charged under his arm and nearly took
it off his body. Robert remained stand-
ing. No one appeared at the noise;
there were a lot of people on the ranch
and a lot of reasons to fire a shotgun.
Robert's shirt swallowed up blood like
a patch of dry ground and quickly
turned black. He held the shot arm
with the opposite hand and dropped to
his knees. Thornton had continued to
laugh after the shot but now perceived
something amiss and fell silent. Grant
ran to his brother, who had pitched
onto his side now, and took the boy's
gray face in his hands, telling him stay
still, don't move. He ran to the barn
screaming to his father to come hurry,
grabbed a rotted wool sack, and balled
it up as he ran back to Robert's side.
The boy had his eyes shut and his dry
lips together. Grant shoved the sack
under the bleeding arm and pressed it
there to stop the flow. If this hurt
Robert he made no sign. Bits of grease
wool were poking from the sack and
lapping up the blood and shrinking to
slick strands with it. The shotgun lay
in the dirt nearby, and Grant snaked
out a foot and kicked it away. Thorn-
ton sat blubbering in the shade. Their
father arrived cursing and Edwin be-
hind him with a face that seemed al-
ready to have considered the possibil-
ity of such an incident and fully
accepted its inevitability. Unlike their
father, Edwin was not surprised.

And neither was their mother, when
John returned in the truck with
Robert's body to bury it. They had
aimed for the hospital in Ashton but
Robert died on the way. John didn't
stop at the house, only drove across
the bare dirt of the starveout to the
corner where Wesley lay, and waited
for Asta and the boys to follow. Edwin
brought the shovel.

She was not seen to cry then or ever
again that Grant could recall, not even
when Edwin shot himself in the stand
of lodgepole they harvested from the
hillside, or when the telegram came
informing her that Thornton had per-

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The years those incidents [illegible] were compressed in Grant's memory like frayed patches on a coiled rope. Certainly there were other things in between, his childhood adventures and schooling and the reckless driving of gravel roads, but these recollections faded quickly in the intense tragic light and made his short life seem worthless and futile. As for his mother, he could not recall any expression on her face save for the stoic glare she had adopted, a figurehead's face of the sort a person contrived for staring into a wild wind as if it were possible to find the source.

Night fell and the noises behind him died. The ocean crept up toward where he sat, and he moved himself back. When it approached a second time he stood and turned toward the city. The sand was treacherous, with broken bits of shell and rotting crabs that he could see in the light from the moon and from the buildings ahead. A sign was posted at the base of the steps that read: SHOES MUST BE WORN ON BOARDWALK. He sat on the steps and put them on. A group of young men passed behind him singing. On a bench a man was kissing a woman. After a moment he took his shoes off and climbed back down into the sand. The boardwalk was built on wooden pilings that created a sheltered space, and he ducked his head and situated himself under there, with a mound of sand as a pillow and his bag close beside him. He fell asleep to the sound of footsteps overhead.

It had to be noon, or nearly so. The traffic on the boardwalk was a relentless rumble and the air hot, even here in the shade. He came out into the daylight. People in various states of undress sunned themselves and leaped in the surf. Women's arms and legs were bare, and men held them close walking along the water's edge. A tall Negro was building a sand castle and had already finished one just beside it. Grant recognized the completed castle, from pictures he'd seen, as the Roman Colosseum. As he watched, two men approached the Negro and dropped money into a nearby paper cup, and he responded with a nod, not taking his eyes from the work. It seemed to Grant that the war's end had driven people to forget who they were and where their lives were leading, and to relinquish their money and secrets as if now there would be an unlimited supply. He wondered what the day of the week was—he had forgotten—and if it mattered to anyone.

On the boardwalk he bought a breakfast of sausage and eggs and toast for one dollar and ate it standing up, under a colorful umbrella. He walked as far as the boardwalk would take him, peering down each extravagant pier through its gaudy archway, to the massive halls, and costumed people passing handbills, and food stands and games of chance. Graceful birds of a sort he hadn't seen before swooped in loose formation around small children, who tossed bread in the air for them to catch.

Walking back, he stopped before a small crowd of people playing ball and ring-tossing games. One game involved throwing a baseball over the wooden counter and into a shallow basket. The basket had a convex bottom and was angled sharply toward the player. In another game players tried to throw a wooden ring onto a milk bottle. Both games were cheats. The ball reliably bounced out of the basket every time, and the rings were too small. What interested Grant was a parrot, gripping a perch to which it was tied by the foot with string. The parrot tottered back and forth on the perch, two steps one way and two the other, as far as it could go in either direction. It did this compulsively, silently.

Give him a coin, the proprietor said. He was ropy looking, with a crooked nose and a frayed straw hat, and his black eyes, which he blinked rapidly, were like the parrot's.

Go ahead, he said. Give him a coin, see what he does.

Grant had a penny, which he placed on the counter in front of the parrot.

It'll take at least a nickel, the parrot man said. As if in agreement, the parrot made a strangled sound, like a squawk.

Grant replaced the penny with a nickel. The parrot grabbed the nickel in its beak, flapped its wings, and flew to the rim of a tall glass container standing behind the perch. The string went nearly taut. Having steadied itself, the parrot dropped the coin, which landed with a dull sound on a pile nickels, dimes, and quarters at the bo tom of the container. Then the par returned to the perch. Behind Gra someone applauded.

Hey, is that something else? the p rot man said.

Ain't it supposed to talk? Gra asked him.

The parrot man glared. He's su posed to do exactly what he just di

Parrots are supposed to talk.

Well, this one does exactly wha tell him to, mister. He's supposed to over there and drop that nickel, a that's exactly what he did.

Grant gave this some thought. right then, he said, and, deciding h been duped like everybody else, mov on.

He bought dinner. This left h with thirty cents. The afterno passed, and he considered that might skip supper and sleep again the sand, but what then in the mo ing? He went back to the parrot m and asked him if he had any work. N body else was at the stand. The par man blinked. Do I look like I got a work for you, mister?

I just got here. I don't have a money.

What do I care? the parrot man sa but then, Where do you come fr anyway?

As if to balance against future li Grant told him about Eleven.

You fought the war?

Yes.

The parrot man nodded. I was a co over in France. Boy, I don't ever wa to pick up a fry pan again, you kno

What about the bird? Grant sa The parrot paced, occasionally ope ing and closing its beak.

What about him?

You probably got better things do than clean up after it, Grant sa I could look after that bird. I co feed it and clean up after it.

The parrot man shook his head told you I ain't got no work. But som thing about the idea appealed to h Grant could tell. For the briefest m ment the skin of his face, whi heretofore had not seemed sufficien cover his skull, slackened, and he to on the look of a normal man, free the burden of the parrot.

I'll take whatever you can give

rant told him. I don't want for much. ist enough to eat with.

You're staying someplace re- ectable, right? This bird needs a roof er his head. And as if recognizing at he had committed himself to rant's offer, his face snapped back to its original configuration.

I got a room, Grant lied. They reed on an amount and it was done. rant went off to get a room, with in- ructions to return later for the parrot.

There was not much in the way of oms. As he walked west the rates opped. When they got low enough he alked north until he found a woman ho would let him wait until the next ay to start paying. She was heavy and d, with a pale expressionless face like reflection in a china plate, and she sat a wooden folding chair behind a imy linoleum counter. A scratched ass bowl was sitting on the counter ith a handlettered sign: DO NOT AND ME YOUR MONEY PUT IT IN THE JP. From an open door behind her is- ed the sound of a radio. She dropped key into the glass bowl and he took out. She said that he had better pay vo nights tomorrow night or she ould send her husband up to kick him it. Grant said he understood.

She leaned forward ever so slightly id said in a low voice, This place is ll of niggers. They will steal the fill- gs out of your teeth.

Yes, ma'am, said Grant.

The lobby was painted with what ight once have been a cheerful yel- w but had been corrupted by water ains and the husks of dead insects. low table had old magazines on it, id there was a dry astringent smell if hundreds of newspapers were ored nearby.

He went to his room. It was about six et by ten, with a high ceiling and a rrow mattress bowed in the middle as a ghost were sleeping on it. There as a chair and a small table and a tiny oset with three wire hangers inside. A allow sink had a sliver of soap on it id a square mirror above. The walls ere stained but not too badly. His indow overlooked an alley and a naller building, and if he leaned to he side and pressed his head to the ass he could see a strip of beach far off the north. For a while he watched he strip of beach until the shadows of the fancy hotels threw themselves over the sand, obscuring its bathers. He lay down on the sunken mattress. It was not uncomfortable, but he doubted its strength. He lay gingerly as he might ride a very old horse.

This room was all right, though it had too much in it for its size. He looked up and considered the ceiling's great height. All that empty space up there with no way to use it. He closed his eyes and reviewed his war story. Japan. He pictured palm trees and little flat thatch houses, and the Emperor's men peering out of them with their rifles.

That story ought to have been true. The local board had considered their deferment applications and told John to send one of the boys, one only. Max was too young to go, though he begged. Thornton did not understand what he was getting into. It ought to have been Grant who went and who was sunk in the South Pacific. But their father kept him, because he did not trust Max to work reliably and because Thornton was the kind of help he could easily hire. With Edwin dead he needed to teach someone to run the ranch. Max argued that he could take Thornton's place, that he could go and call himself Thornton Person and pass for eighteen, but John would have none of it. I won't have my sons lying, he said, there's no honor in a lie.

No honor in staying home, Max said.

Grant might have said anything at all, but he kept his mouth shut. It is awful quiet around here, Max said to him, and their father did not speak up in Grant's defense.

I got work to do, Grant said and got up from his chair. They were all in the kitchen, the three boys and their mother, her back to them, washing a sinkload of dishes.

Hey Grant! Thornton was saying, Hey, where you going? We're just talking. It was intolerable to Thornton that they quarreled and intolerable that their father's will be questioned. The boys towered above John Person like miraculous crops.

It was never clear to Grant why their father mistrusted Max, who was fifteen in 1943 when Thornton was sent away, and who had never once appeared late to do his work or skipped school or en-

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[illegible] to any foolish thing more than [illegible]. But John disliked him. He made [illegible] effort to conceal it. And every time [illegible] opened his mouth in criticism of Max, he would praise Grant before he closed it, and while Grant had no use for this misplaced attention he was powerless to refuse it, the way a thirsty man can't help drinking bad water. John acknowledged the rivalry that sprang up between them but did nothing to set it right, believing the boys ought to be able to work out their problems themselves.

He often said with apparent disgust that Max took after his mother, and this was true. Like her, Max was competent and self-reliant. She was the braver of their parents, Grant saw now, because she never hesitated to love them and did not stop when they began to die. She once surmised to Grant that she was chosen to lose her children because she was strong enough to withstand it, which gave Grant to wonder if he then was chosen to be lost.

He returned to the stand a few hours past dark and waited on a nearby bench for the parrot man to close down. When he did he gave Grant a wooden box with a handle and a cage with a thick cloth draped over it. He explained that the box had the parrot's food in it and told Grant how much to give the parrot and when.

It's in here? Grant said, lifting the cage.

He goes to sleep, said the parrot man. Okay, you all set?

I need some money.

You ain't done anything yet.

You'll pay me tomorrow? My landlady needs her money.

The parrot man backed up a step as if he thought he was being tricked. If you bring him here and take care of him all day you'll get your money. I can't give you any more or less than that.

Grant nodded, satisfied, and left. But he went back. Hey, he said, this parrot got a name?

The parrot man started, a small movement that nonetheless shook his entire body. You know what, he said, and his eyes grew limpid and sad like the rainwashed windows of an abandoned house. You know what, I never call him a goddamn thing. I just talk to him. I don't call him nothing at all.

When he reached the stairs down to the street Grant looked back at the game stand. The parrot man still stood at the counter, staring off at the starlit outline of the sea. Grant raised a hand to him, but the parrot man never turned.

He worked several weeks as the parrot's keeper, feeding it the seed the parrot man had provided and leaves off a head of lettuce he'd bought from a grocery. He was reluctant to ask the landlady to refrigerate the lettuce so he kept it on the floor of his closet, where it got increasingly limp and discolored. The parrot did not seem to mind. Mostly it slept under its cloth but at least once each night woke up and spoke in an unfamiliar language. Whether it was a foreign language or one of the parrot's own devising Grant could not tell. At these times he spoke back to the parrot, and it listened to what he said. In the daytime he worked at the stand wiping up the parrot's droppings and sorting its coins at the day's end. The parrot man allowed him breaks, which he spent exploring the boardwalk. There was a hotel for rich people that looked like a wedding cake and a place where cars of the future could be seen and touched. And of course there was the horse, which as promised jumped into the ocean hourly with a girl on its bare back. The girl wore a bathing suit and smiled all the way down, even as the water came up to engulf her. Grant thought she must be brave and dreamed of meeting her, but he could not imagine how to approach her or what to say if he did. The horse, on the other hand, though it possessed a beauty flying through the air, up close proved old and tired, its coat coarsened by the salt water.

Grant did not feel that his job was secure. When he returned with the parrot that first day the parrot man grabbed it from him, as if he had been holding it for ransom. After that the parrot man seemed more confident in Grant, at least for a short while. But the next week he appeared morose and sometimes took over Grant's work for him with a kind of gruff impatience. Some nights he said the parrot looked sick, and he prevented Grant from taking it back to his room. Grant saw no evidence of any illness but reasoned that he wouldn't know a sick parrot [illegible] he saw one anyhow. The parrot ma[illegible] paid him regardless.

After one September night witho[illegible] the parrot, Grant woke earlier tha[illegible] usual and left his room to sit on th[illegible] beach and plan or at least imagin[illegible] what he might do next. Although [illegible] was before ten in the morning, hu[illegible] dreds of people were out in the cool a[illegible] standing on the sand in their stre[illegible] shoes. There were no bathers at th[illegible] hour. Grant walked through the crov[illegible] listening for clues to their purpose he[illegible] but learned only that something w[illegible] expected to happen, some kind [illegible] show, and that it would happen o[illegible] at sea. The presence of these people [illegible] what he had come to think of as h[illegible] beach irritated him, and he found the[illegible] proximity unnerving. Still he chose [illegible] spot and waited.

Pretty soon a dot appeared out [illegible] the water and resolved into the sha[illegible] of a boat. The static of conversati[illegible] became a thrum and dropped off e[illegible] tirely as more boats bulged onto t[illegible] horizon and laved into clear view, as[illegible] brought by the tide. From newspap[illegible] photographs he'd seen, Grant was ab[illegible] to identify these as transports. It was [illegible] one like them that Thornton w[illegible] killed. The ship had not been attack[illegible] but suffered an explosion on board a[illegible] sunk. It was easy to imagine what t[illegible] must have been like. After all, t[illegible] death belonged to Grant and had si[illegible] ply been lent to his idiot brother, w[illegible] gratefully wrapped it around hims[illegible] like a poisoned blanket. He imagin[illegible] Thornton hunkered in his tiny cabi[illegible] straining to assemble in his mind [illegible] the evidence of danger, the deaden[illegible] blast and the rushing water and t[illegible] sudden darkness, the slide of obje[illegible] from their customary places. And [illegible] nally the ocean's blind hungry clen[illegible]

Just offshore now, the ships yawn[illegible] open to frenetic applause, and fr[illegible] the guts of them came soldiers w[illegible] knelt in the surf and fired upon t[illegible] onlookers, and got up and ran, hea[illegible] with seawater, onto the hard wet sa[illegible] and fired again. Women screamed a[illegible] a few fainted dead away. Soldiers pul[illegible] up short and theatrically dropp[illegible] writhing in mock death. And Gr[illegible] knew genuine pain as the bullets [illegible]

Continued on page

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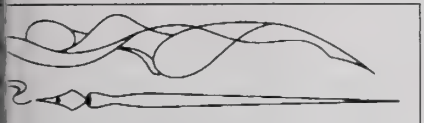
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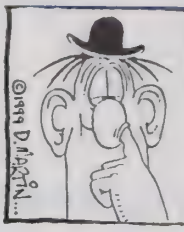
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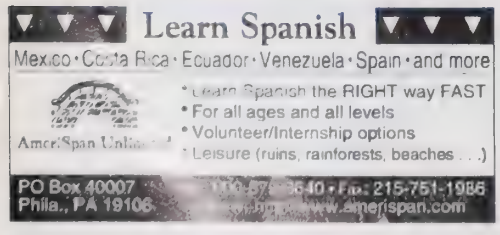
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STORY

Continued from page 92

tered him, even as he understood the
to be imaginary; they found his hea
and pierced it, tore the breath out
his lungs, swept his legs out from u
der him. They glowed inside him li
irons. He was branded from withi
the destruction his brothers h
claimed was also his, was Max's a
their mother's and father's. It waited
him back home like a once loved d
turned rabid and fierce.

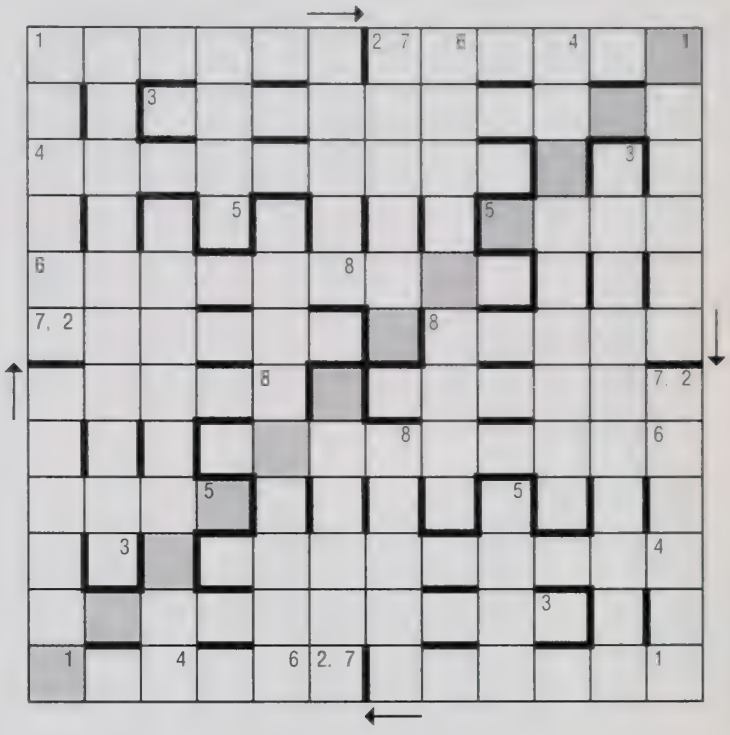
He lay contorted in the sand forci
sobs from his body, oblivious to t
sympathetic shadows falling acr
him, to the hands on his arms a
back and head. But he would not
helped. He wanted instead to fill t
ground with his tears and claim it as
own. He wanted to make himself
impossible promise, one he wo
sooner die than break but which
knew was already as good as broke
that he was never going to go back

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Change for a Quarter

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.



This month's diagram has four-way symmetry; if any side were rotated to the top the diagram would be exactly the same. Clues are offered for the eight Across words in the top half of the diagram only—in each of the four rotations. In other words, answers to clues at 1 Across and 2 Across will be entered left-to-right across the top line, top-to-bottom down the far right column, right-to-left across the bottom line, and bottom-to-top up the far left column—thereby ensuring that in all four rotations the top half of the diagram will read correctly left-to-right.

The four entries at each number are clued together in random order. Solvers are to determine in which quadrant each answer is to go. However, there is only one correct final diagram rotation, which will be specified by the shaded letters in the diagram's diagonal.

Answers include one proper name and two common foreign words. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 79.

1 ACROSS (6)

a. Second-rate roué (with an accent)
b. Songs sung at first in *Coconuts*
c. They're for necking in bed—fool around
d. Custer exercised muscle

2 ACROSS (6)

a. North African makes two chilling sounds!
b. Dickie takes roadster to get a gas container?
c. Root for serving a little blow with pot in it
d. Like floating figures in math, it leaves you breathless

3 ACROSS (10)

a. In/out, out/in, study America without stopping
b. Stretch in height, holding a halter
c. True retail is cooking the books
d. Thrones? Things are often strained there!

4 ACROSS (9)

a. Stylish—or just sharp? *(hyphenated)*
b. Model, tart, bit player, siren
c. Highlight from "Cream," say, in B flat, but dropping the third
d. Make an observation about when Juliet took the poison and retired *(two words)*

5 ACROSS (4)

a. Brief class in math recalled—it used to be a cinch!
b. Make a video, but take time off for scat
c. Make-up test (keep it the way it was)
d. Flop-houses' sofa ill-treated? Quite the opposite!

6 ACROSS (9)

a. Last protection for where lady's slippers grow?
b. Sounds like the First Lady's fall "Listen-In"
c. Casanova's lover, in a carpet, with a gold filling
d. Most irregular! Seven-Up drinks in type registered in Utah

7 ACROSS (6)

a. With two shapes surprisingly brim full of . . . of being uplifted
b. Contractual outcome? Get real
c. I'm ribbed, teased—but it's paid off
d. Tool lets in glitter

8 ACROSS (5)

a. There's little room in the operating system for digs about a college
b. Cheri can get loaded in Pigalle
c. What steno writes or how it could be written!
d. They're revolting—or it's revolting

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address on a postcard to "Change for a Quarter," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by October 11. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the December issue. Winners of the August puzzle, "Much Ado About Nothing," are Lee E. Abraham, Austin, Texas; Anna Bricker, Ashland, Ohio; and Pam Prothro, Atlanta, Georgia.

TARNISHED GOLD

The Bank of England's recent decision to sell off half its gold reserves—sending the price of gold to a twenty-year low i July—may come as a relief to the inhabitants of the countries below, where gold mining has wreaked havoc in the l decade. Constrained by environmental and labor regulations at home, American, Canadian, Australian, and Europe mining companies have turned increasingly to remote, developing countries, digging mines of unprecedented size and structiveness in relative obscurity. Many of these projects have caused significant deforestation, forced migration, and release of industrial waste—cyanide, arsenic, lead, and copper—into nearby waterways, killing all life in several rive Local opposition has led to riots, human-rights abuses, and, on the island of Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, a ten-y secessionist war in which an estimated 15,000 people died.

Venezuela
1. Cristallex property
2. KM 88 area
3. Las Cristinas mine
4. La Camorra mine
5. Yuarari River
6. Minerven mine

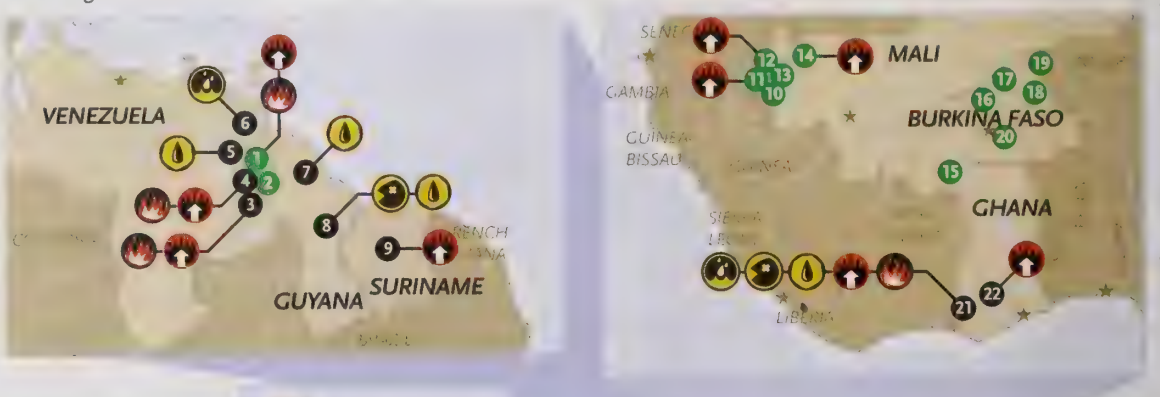
Guyana
7. Mazaruni River
8. Omai gold mine

Suriname
9. Gross Rosebel mine

Mali
10. Sadiola
11. Tabakoto
12. Kaneiba district
13. Medinandi
14. Segala

Burkina Fas
15. Dossi-Kiere district
16. Yako Kaya Ouahigouy district
17. Arbinda district
18. Dori Yalago
19. Essakane
20. Kwademer

Ghana
21. Tarkwa min
22. *cluster of fiv mines near Tarkwa*



Indonesia
23. Kelian mine
24. Gunung Pongkor mine
25. Haruku Island mine
26. Batu Hijau mine
27. Grasberg mine

Philippines
28. Bicol claim
29. Dumara claim
30. Marcopper mine
31. Western Mining Corp. mine



KEY		
Mining	Waste dumped in waterway	Forced migration
Prospecting	River or fishery killed	Riots
	Toxic spill	Deaths

Papua New Guinea
32. Ok Tedi mine
33, 34, 35. undersea prospecting
36. Porgera mine
37. Tolukuma mine
38. Misima mine
39. Panguna mine*
40. Lihir mine

Solomon Islan
41. Gold Ridge mi

* *Closed, pending finalization of Bougainville's 1998 peace agre*

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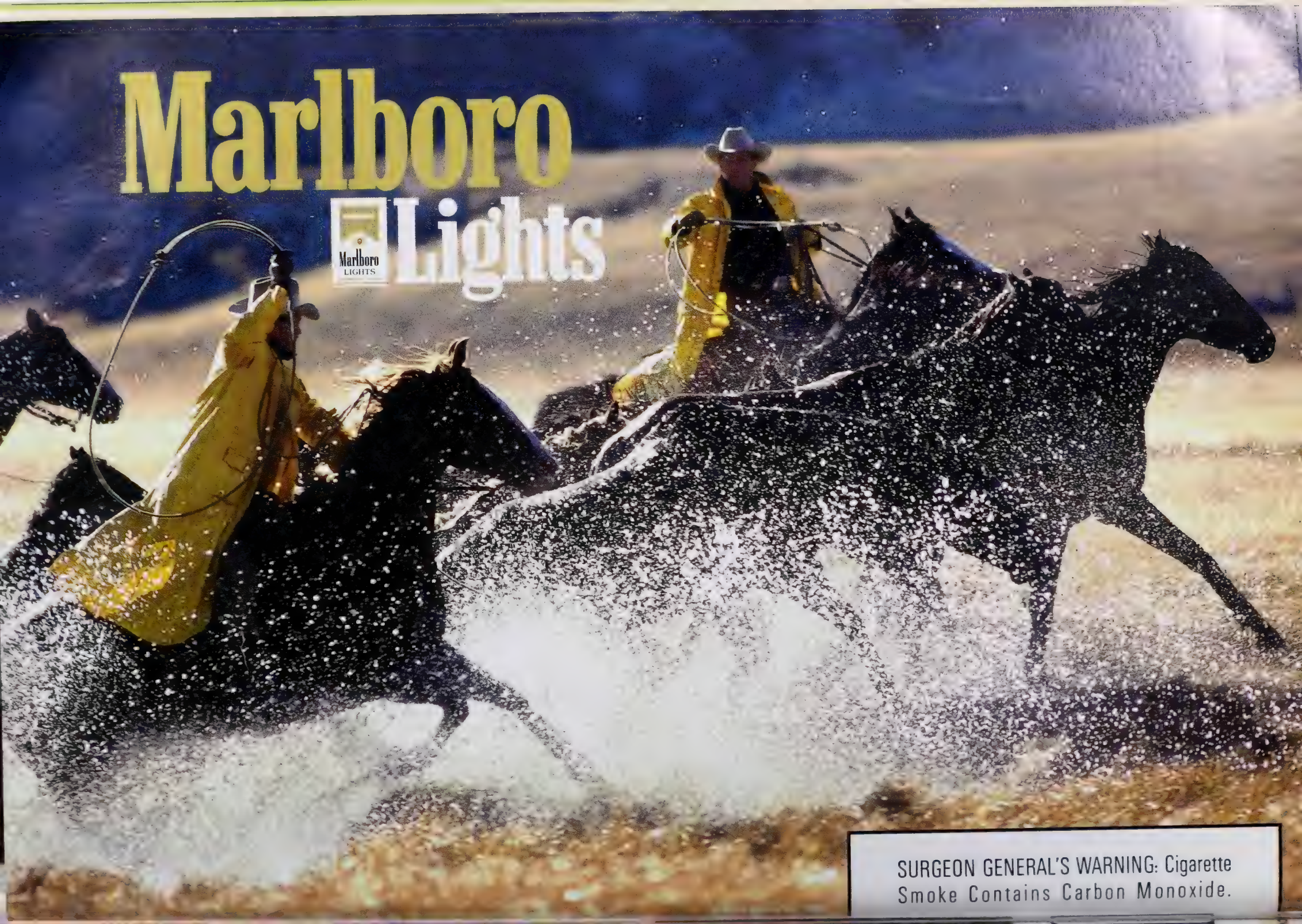
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featured archive writer this month is Virginia Woolf, 1882–1941.
STRATION BY TULLIO PERICOLI

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LETTERS

The Sly Wink of Fiction

Once upon a time, in the land of M.F.A.s, I dutifully noted a professor's pronouncement that the short story was moribund and that the only known antidote was the anti-story. We were force-fed awful stuff, often in translation and riddled with white space. And that's the kind of material we "workshopped," with sly winks to the reader and no pity, but lots of irony. Nobody much liked these anti-fictions, but that seemed not to be the point. Then a strange thing happened. The short story came back, on its own, and without footnotes. The anti-story had been a joke. On us.

Vince Passaro's essay ["Unlikely Stories: The Quiet Renaissance of American Short Fiction," August] is one more example of longing for the narrative in-joke. Unfortunately, in order to ride a New Wave of fiction into print, the hip new critic feels it necessary to pillory an Old Wave. After a few brave kicks at Hemingway's corpse, Passaro, in an incredible gestalt, lumps together writers as varied as Raymond Carver, Richard Ford, Jayne Anne Phillips, and Tobias Wolff, and christens them "the second Hemingway period," to be compared unfavorably with the new generation of writers represented by Lorrie Moore, Lydia Davis, and David Foster Wallac To this effect, Passaro employs tl breathlessness of automobile-ad cop "Today's American short fiction is mo various, more successfully experime tal, more urbane, funnier, and more b ingly ironic than that written in t Hemingway tradition . . . more intelle tual, and . . . more psychologically ri and confrontational. . . ." What can mean to say that a writer is "funnie than Hemingway?

Passaro admires the intellectualis of new fiction, but when intelligen fails to shine through the narrative self, footnotes carry the load. This is t literature of attitude rather than eve of surface over depth, of a thousa points of reference. In other words is fiction that reads like criticism.

Passaro recognizes neither the da humor in the realistic fiction that dismisses nor the non-ironic comp sion in the New Wave stories that celebrates. It is hard to say who s fers more from the comparison, bu do know one thing: slamming c generation of writers in order to h the next is demeaning to both, a finally, just plain mean.

John Hildebrand
Eau Claire, Wis.

Yes, the Internet and televisi and high-speed schedules are also blame, but I suspect that people staying away from fiction beca most of it is boring. It's true, Vince Passaro claims, that much

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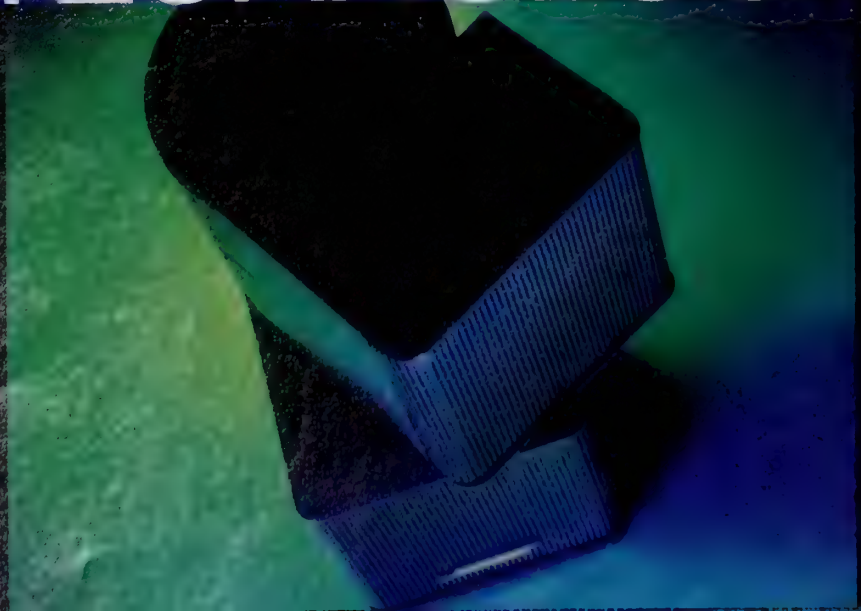
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the new fiction is smart and witty and well written. It's just that the stories reflect the feeble angst of the majority class and are not of much use to the rest of us. One is hard-pressed to find a populist James Baldwin or Bernard Malamud among our present literary establishment.

Instead of chasing bulls in Pamplona, writers are gathering in Tuscany for writers' retreats (the word "retreat" reinforcing the notion that writers are pulling away from the very world they should confront). Fiction now exists in the unattainable upper ether, and many of us feel left out of a very swanky party.

Kathleen de Azevedo
San Francisco

Vince Passaro concludes, "Now that the commercial landscape is shrinking, shrinking, shrinking, and there is no longer money in literary prose for any but a handful of practitioners, American fiction might be free enough to muster one more golden age." The theory that writers who are paid less well will produce greater works thanks to purer motivations is off the mark. It ignores the reality that short-fiction writers who must earn their living outside of fiction spend less time writing. Consider the athletic equivalent: Michael Jordan the part-time college basketball coach or Sammy Sosa the sometimes plumber.

Susan DeGrane
Chicago

Vince Passaro applauds the departure of new fiction from the "stoical, serious, pared-down approach" favored by Ernest Hemingway. But the concept of idiosyncratic or inventive writing he credits new writers with is hardly specific to the Nineties. It applies to every era of artistic breakthrough. Fiction that attempts to emulate Hemingway's but falls flat is flat not because of a shortcoming in Hemingway's style but because academies and workshops unsuccessfully encourage writers to replicate that style instead of embracing new ideas.

Leslie Dutcher
New York City

As usual, a critic's understanding o the greatness of Ernest Hemingway i derailed by the distracting image of drunk bastard who shot apart his toi lets when one of his many abused wive angered him. Writers such as William Burroughs, says Vince Passaro "changed the way we see the world Hemingway changed the way we se Pamplona." If we see the world as hallucinatory nightmare brought o by a drug habit, then, yes, I suppos Burroughs accomplished this notabl feat and Hemingway did not.

Even more insulting is the referenc to Hemingway's "anti-intellectualism that "meshed well with his ow marked lack of intelligence." It ma be tempting, but it is wrong, to sugge that Hemingway wrote without con scious regard to his own minimal style We must remember that Hemingwa himself had a phrase for such literat critics. He called them "the eunuchs literature."

William P. Frogameni
Toledo, Ohio

It's true that today's writers are o ten better at writing than Hemingwa was, but they are not better storyteller Anyone can learn how to write wel but one cannot learn how to be a goo storyteller. You either have it or y don't. Until the story makes a com back and people write not just becau they feel like it, because their wor sound good together, fiction will co tinue its current downward slide.

George R. Shultz
Terre Haute, Ind.

Peace Training

Scott Anderson and Sebasti Junger's simultaneous reporting fro the Greek and Turkish sides of t divided island of Cyprus ["Di patches from a Dead War," Augu was a refreshingly balanced analy of not only the island's present situ tion but also its tortured past.

I was an American diplomat a signed to Cyprus between 1971 a 1975. I can attest that the write cogent observation that in Cypr history is everything is corre There is a morbid fascination a enthusiasm for "my" version of t

st, which is used to justify the
nd hatred and tit-for-tat behaviors
at persist. Why is the tenacious
brace of 20 or 200 or 2,000 years
history so much more psychologi-
ly and socially satisfying than the
ernatives?

Americans have a hard time un-
standing this phenomenon: we
accustomed to "solving" our so-
l problems quickly. We throw
ney at them, we develop govern-
nt programs aimed at them, our
dia focus on them with a frenzy
t in itself is harmfully distracting.
e may indeed paper over profound
ustices and differences, but we en-
ge in all this activity because we
ieve that for every problem there
ndeed a solution.

The report from Cyprus reminds
that for much of the rest of the
rld, the only "solution" to a prob-
n is no solution.

vid D. Grimland
lumbus, Mont.

After reading about the en-
nched animosity in Cyprus, it is
rd not to agree with Scott An-
rson's observation that perhaps
he best that can be done is to
mply stand between the fighters
lefinitely." But the report failed
convey the tremendous role
yed by external forces both in
petuating and in mitigating con-
ts of this kind. Changing inter-
s and pressure from third parties
ve led to significant progress to-
rd peace in conflicts as seemingly
ractable as those in Mozam-
ique, El Salvador, Cambodia, and
e Middle East. Such expressions
interest and pressure from both
eece and Turkey have been weak
d infrequent in the Cyprus situa-
n. The pressure of peace-loving
ighbors must be brought to bear
all those with an interest in per-
tuating the standoff, for a
eace" made only of patrols and
lice cannot endure forever.

mish Nixon
xford, England

'Dispatches from a Dead War"
kes clear that truces imposed by



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outside forces—as in Korea, Bosnia, and Ireland—only serve to keep the pot simmering. Here's an alternative: these depressed areas can help themselves by boosting their own economies. For example, improve tourism by offering battlefield scenes complimentary with lunch. Serve visitors binoculars with their wine at the sidewalk cafés so they can observe the sentries firsthand. Artfully arrange frames around the bloodstains on restaurant walls. Open martyr museums in Belfast and Kosovo. For a truly authentic experience, transport tourists in the same buses that refugees used to escape. Voilà! Economies are helped, countries become self-reliant, and we can get out of the humanely inspired and well-conceived but poorly implemented job of saving the world's populations from themselves.

Alice Copeland Brown
Canton, Mass.

Genghis Khan, Humanitarian

Cecelia Holland's musing on the probable ascendancy of the Mongols had Genghis Khan's third son lived ["The Man with the Golden Horde," Readings, August] is bold and enlightening, but flawed. Would the Mongol invasion of Europe in 1242 have been a catastrophe for European civilization? Absolutely. Would that have been a bad thing? Not necessarily.

Consider: no capitalism, no Inquisition, no murderous acquisition of gold in the name of God, no Industrial Revolution with its death mills called factories, no World War I, and, of course, no World War II.

The Mongol retreat to Asia allowed Europe to develop into competing bands of marauding colonizers who would assault the people of the Americas, Africa, India, and Asia with a savagery from which the world has yet to heal, leaving even the earth itself wounded. Holland presents "the death that saved Europe" as a lucky event. But looked at from the point of view of the untold millions whom the Europeans would enslave and massacre, the death of Ogodai was cataclysmic.

Stefan D. Schindler
Philadelphia

Save the Chickens

Thank you for exposing some o the appalling conditions endured b workers in poultry plants ["Fow Trouble," by Christopher Cook, An notation, August]. I marched on picket line with chicken-factor workers in the 1980s. That's when learned that some line workers wor diapers to avoid being docked pay fo bathroom breaks and that som worked despite the pain of carpa tunnel syndrome because the weren't covered for sick leave. I w invited into their homes in the shan tytown behind the processing plan where many lived without runnin water or escape from the stench, an were sold "poor cuts" of chicke cheap. Today, conditions in many o the plants remain hideous for huma beings. However, conditions for th birds are far worse.

I used to keep rescued chickens. called them "my girls." They had a much personality as any dog and whole lot more than some people I'v known. They played ball with chick peas and bits of melon, fought ove the best perch to nap on, gossiped be hind the shed, and loved to sit peace fully on my lap and get all gussied u for the rooster. They had their ow language and used it to announce th arrival of my old dog, whom two o them adored and often sat on top o Today, each American is estimated t eat about thirty-one of my girls ever year, despite the availability of so "chicken" that tastes pretty much lik the real dead bird but comes withou the cholesterol or the cruelty.

But this may change, as more an more young people are rejecting fles foods and giving a damn about ani mals, no matter how small or weird o unfamiliar those animals may be to u

Ingrid E. Newkirk
President, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)
Norfolk, Va.

Editor's Note: We gratefully ac knowledge the Laurence Mille Gallery in New York City for provid ing "Densified Oil Drums #4," a pho tograph by Edward Burtynsky tha appeared on page 23 of the Septem ber Readings section.



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NOTEBOOK

Asset management

By Lewis H. Lapham

Nothing makes one so vain as being told that one is a sinner.

—Oscar Wilde

For quite a few years now the business media have been touting the wisdom of what they call "trimming out the fat," and although I never know precisely what the phrase means—why the incompetent chairman retires with an honorarium of $50 million while 20,000 of his former employees receive notices of dismissal—I understand the general principle. Money attaches itself to velocity, and a successful corporation cannot afford to carry around excess weight. The competition is too fierce, the markets too volatile, the new technologies as fast-moving as cancer cells. The chairman's $50 million weighs practically nothing—a row of numbers on a computer screen, a handful of credit cards, maybe a gold watch as thin as the wing of a moth. The 20,000 employees, on the other hand, require heavy maintenance and take up too much storage space, also too much light and air. They stand in the way of progress and block the view of the future.

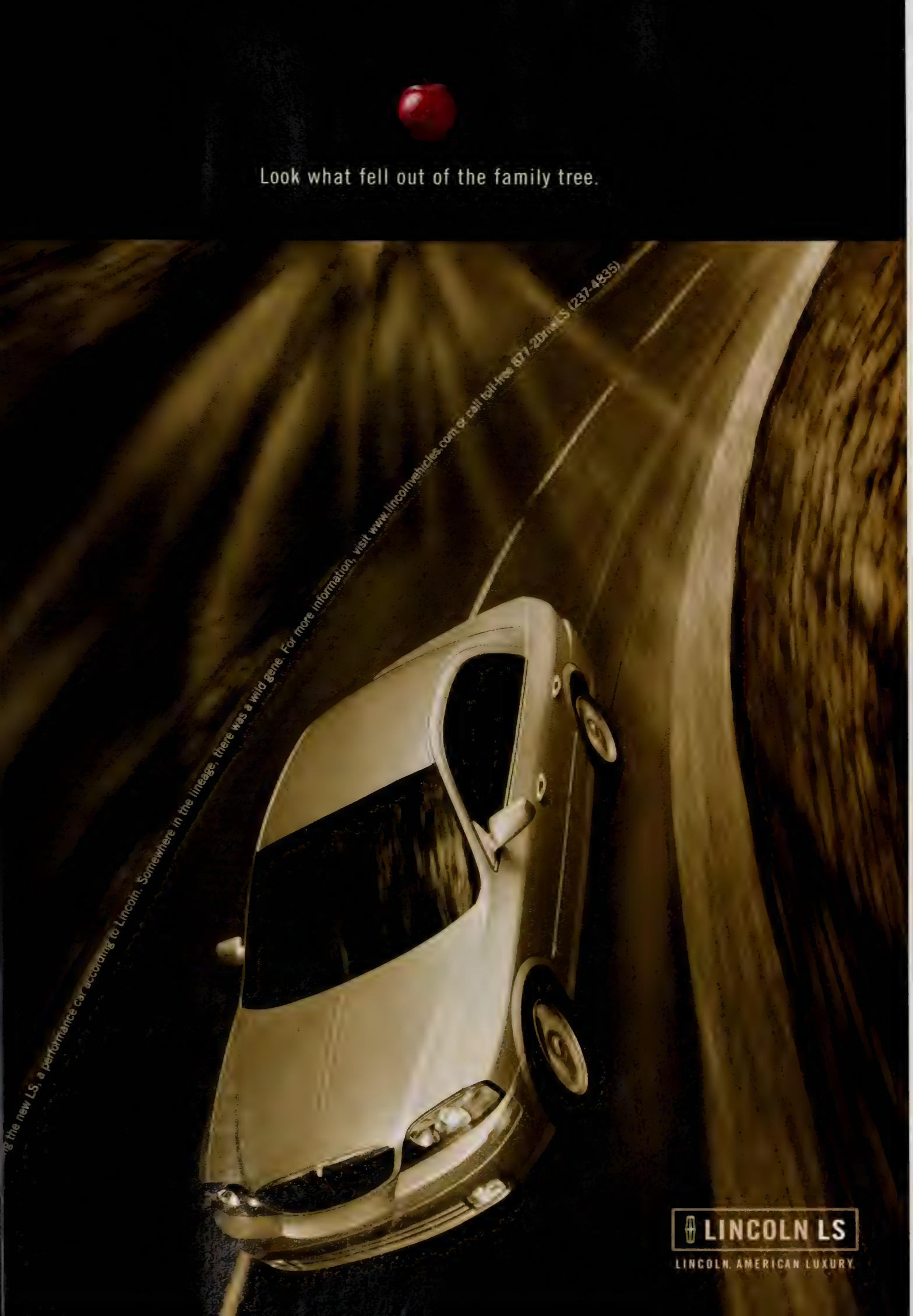
Not unlike a chorus of press agents promoting a spa in Arizona, the corporate spokespersons announcing the merger of companies extol the wonders of benign subtraction—"streamlining" the distribution systems, "downsizing" the workforce, "eliminating redundancy." Similar messages show up most everywhere else in a society devoted to the causes of comfort and convenience. Four-color illustrations in the women's magazines recommend the glamorous paring down of one's diet, thighs, and living-room furniture; telephone and cable television services work toward a single strand of fiber-optic glass bearing the burden of all the words in all the books in all the world's libraries; fashion designers find the ideal form of feminine beauty in runway models reduced to minimalist silhouettes, as light as political campaign promises, as disposable as paper towels.

A trend so firmly established does not brook contradiction, and over the next twenty years we no doubt can expect to see the strategies of merger and simplification applied to the Western cultural and intellectual tradition. Too many outworn ideas clutter the attic of civilization with premises no longer valid, and structures of thought once splendid in the light of a fifth-century morning or a nineteenth-century afternoon (Arthurian legend, Ptolemaic astronomy, Marxist socioeconomic theory) stand around in the corners with the Roman swords and medieval suits of armor. Most of the scientific scribblings haven't weathered the storms of time, but several of the philosophical and religious propositions retain elements of meaning that might be made to fit our own modern predicament. Properly restructured, of course, and with a sharp eye for trimming out the fat.

Because the heaviest weights of paper and the largest collections of art owe their existence to the inspiration of the Christian Church, the new management team might wish to make a beginning with the con
cepts of Heaven and Hell. Quit
clearly we no longer need both e
tablishments, each with its ow
procedures and tables of organiza
tion, its own letterhead, advertisin
budget, and mission statement. A
the behest of President Ronald Rea
gan, Heaven relocated its headqua
ters to America in the winter o
1983, and it doesn't make muc
sense to continue to fund a gate
community only slightly superior t
the ones in Florida and Califor
nia—the destination within eas
reach of the commercial airline
the doorkeepers glad to accept a
the major credit cards.

Eliminating the redundancy o
Heaven forces the question abou
whether to retain the seven cardina
virtues or the seven deadly sin
Which isn't to say that the virtue
won't be missed. Always admirabl
and unfailingly welcome in com
mencement speeches, they add a
atmosphere of old-world charm t
any boardroom or Senate office i
which their framed portraits han
quietly on the walls. But they don
meet the requirements of the glob
market. Impossible to sell in larg
volume and serving no purpose a
White House dinners, the virtues r
main hard to practice either in the
classical forms (wisdom, courag
temperance, and justice) or und
their Christian names (faith, hop
and charity).

The sins speak more directly t
the emotions and the whims of th
moment, and it is on the sins, sing
or in synergetic combination, that


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consumer society depends for its amusement and 95 percent of its gross domestic product. They aren't as much fun as the virtues, and they don't provide their constituents with anywhere near the same degrees of freedom (either of body or mind) but they are very good for business. The sins in all their denominations (venal as well as mortal) sustain the volume in the stock market, employ the otherwise unemployable, excite the fevers of speculation, stimulate the passions for sexual and political novelty. Trim out the fat of the seven virtues, and nothing bad happens to the price of real estate or the Dow Jones Industrial Average; take away the seven deadly sins, and the country goes promptly broke.

And yet, despite their many valuable contributions to society over the last 1,500 years, the sins continue to attract a good deal of adverse criticism, some of it warranted but much of it intemperate and ungrateful. The medieval schoolmen can be forgiven their diatribes because they didn't live in a consumer society, and they didn't understand that temptation is the blessed state of being that generates sales. Modern critics familiar with the revelations of John Maynard Keynes (also with the miracle in the desert of unlimited credit) cannot plead the same excuse. Their attachment to sentimental metaphor binds them to the rhetoric of the past, to a mercantile rather than a capitalist view of human desire, and they fail to see that the sins—when properly appreciated as the mainsprings of social progress—incorporate the functions of the virtues.

PRIDE

Leave vanity out of the equation and who would run the government or The Walt Disney Company? What politician would stand for public office? Who would paint another toenail or sing another song?

The old preachers dwelled at length on the evils of self-love and self-promotion, assigning traits of character to a puff of Dutch velvet or a scrap of Spanish lace. More often than not they mistook the ornament for the man, and they discounted the uses of vainglory as

ıre for bad conscience and the best remedies against the awful recogtion of one's own weakness, studity, and fear.

Left to its own devices and unenmbered by sermons, pride accomishes the tasks of charity. University esidents offer "naming opportunies" to wealthy patrons who bestow e gifts of libraries and football stadins. Were it not for at least some nall measure of pride, why else ould Ted Turner give $1 billion to e United Nations or Bill Gates set ide the same amount for the educaon of proud, well-deserving college idents?

Pride goeth before destruction, ıt destruction sells cosmetics, airaft carriers, and newspapers.

COVETOUSNESS

The collapse of Soviet Commusm can be read as a parable about hat happens to a society that seeks banish the sin of covetousness. oorly informed critics, most of em foreigners or leftists, fail to noce that among American conmers the acts of getting and ending serve a spiritual, not a marial, purpose. The faithful regard e rights of purchase as the proofs grace, and they go shopping in uch the same way that medieval lgrims stopped to pray at wayside rines. The transaction brings with a presentiment of everlasting bliss, so the comfort of having acknowlged the perfection of the supertural design.

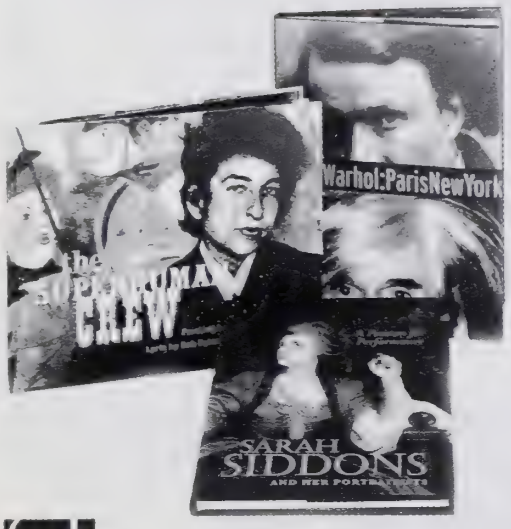
Similar to the rite of communion, e rituals of consumption partake of e body and blood of divinity, and e more costly the substance conmed—a dress by Valentino, an nce of Peruvian cocaine, a threeonth cruise around the world iced at $265,000—the more perctly the communicant enters into a ıion with the invisible hand of od. Because nothing is superfluous d everything counts (yea, even to e least of chocolate-covered hazelıts and the sayings of Newt Ginich), the consumption of cheap ys and low-end pornography bemes an act of piety as devout as e buying of a Gulfstream IV or the esident of the United States.





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ANGER and LUST

The twin glories of the news an entertainment business. Suppress ei ther one of them in favor of their vir tuous antonyms—i.e., with the peac that passeth all understanding and th chastity of Snow White—and the grea American television audience woul rise in open rebellion. The Nationa Football League would depart int bankruptcy, taking with it the fashio industry, large sectors of the legal pr fession, the manufacturers of soap an automobiles who package their proc ucts with the pornographic images tha sell the services and move the good The few journalists still at large migh learn to content themselves with mak ing lists of yesterday's temperature reac ings, but in the houses of Congress th politicians would have nothing to sa to one another; neither would the ac tors in the World Wrestling Federatio or the characters in the novels Danielle Steel.

GLUTTONY

The supreme law of the consum society holds that nobody ever h enough, and America's sustaine prosperity follows from a gener sense of unassuaged emptiness an perpetual discontent. The doctrin of rugged individualism presuppos an insatiable appetite ("Be All Yo Can Be," "You Can Have It All" and whenever the economy runs i to sufficiently serious trouble, the a thorities in New York and Washin ton prescribe the same remed —place enough cash in the hands the American consumers, and th will stampede through the world markets like a herd of famished bu falo, setting in motion the happy s quence of events that leads to mo spending, more investment, mo confidence, more traffic deaths, mo missiles, more amphetamines.

Understood as indomitable coura and unbounded optimism, the vo ciousness of the American appet guarantees the safety of the free wor were it not for our steadfast buying European luxury goods and cheap C nese labor (the annual trade defi currently estimated at $300 billio the armies of Slobodan Milosevic a Saddam Hussein would be standi at the gates of Paris.

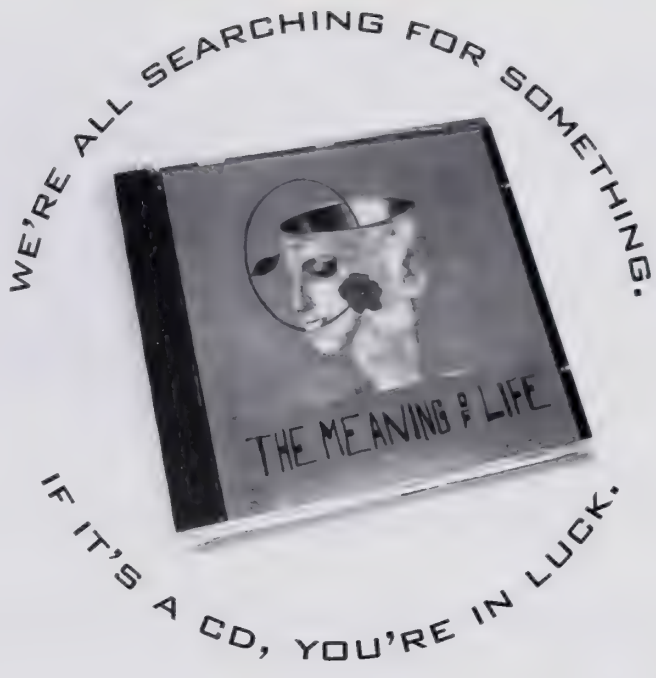
ENVY

A theoretically egalitarian society
at invites all of its citizens to com-
te on the same footing for the
me inventories of reward sets up a
rket for demonstrable inequality.
e market trades in the currencies
envy, which increase the rates of
penditure in the showrooms of
f-esteem for people who fix their
f-worth by the degrees of their as-
ciation with private schools, ex-
sive clubs, precious brand names.
Understood not as a sin but as a
tem of measurement or a means of
ucation, envy sharpens the powers
observation, exercises the memo-
teaches arithmetic. Celebrity bi-
raphies take the place of the lives
the saints.

SLOTH

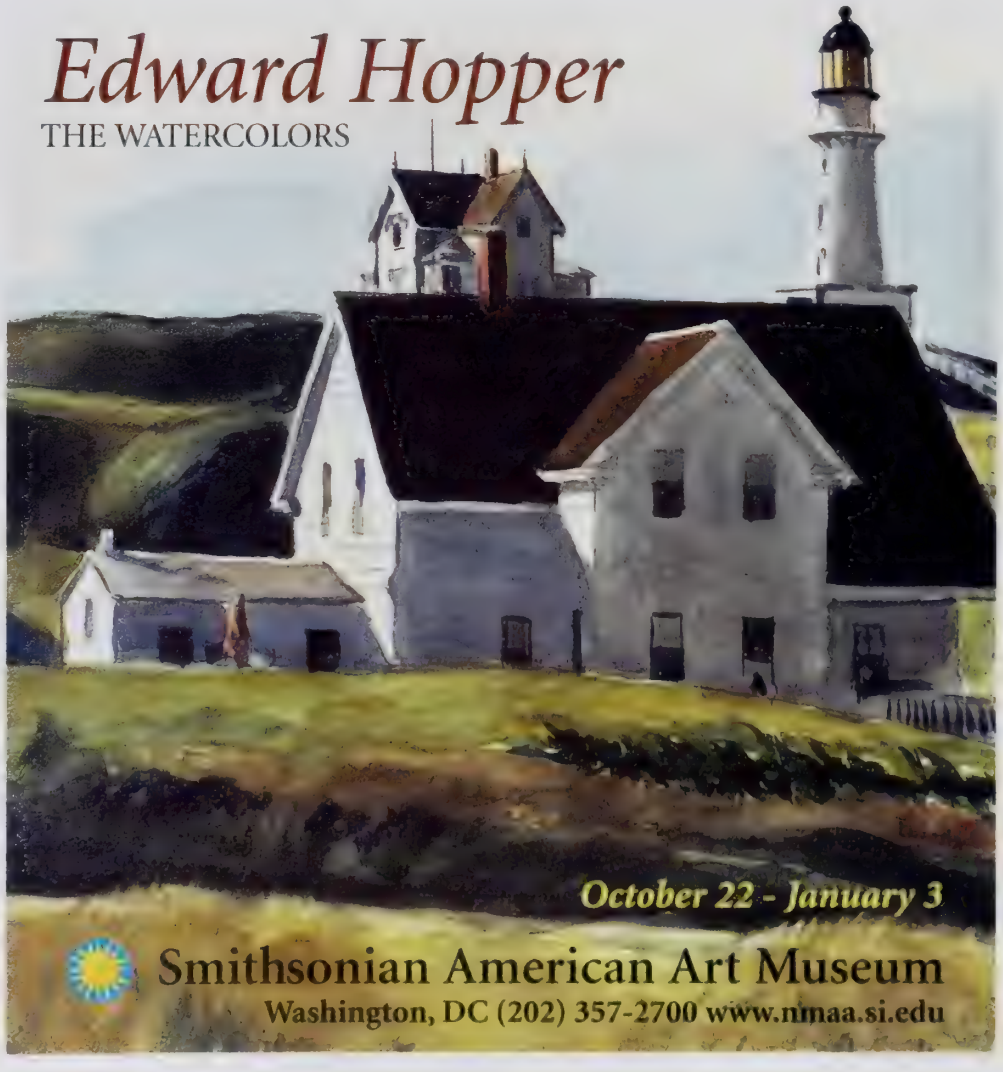
Although preserved as a sin in the
ristian scheme of things, sloth in
consumer society expresses the
tues of temperance and humility.
ated placidly on a couch in front
the television set, the ideal Amer-
n citizen can muster just enough
ergy to change the channel and
sh the buttons that bring the dia-
ond from the shopping network,
der the pizza and the *Playboy*
vie, answer yes or no to the ques-
ns on an opinion poll. The habit
mind promotes political stability
d nurtures the body of ideal citi-
ns not likely to incite a riot or
arrel with the police.

Space doesn't permit detailed
alysis of all the advantages sure to
low from the merging of the
tues with the sins; the organizers
he new and much simplified Web
undoubtedly will find other vo-
oularies that can be discarded,
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s should prove significant.
The keeping track of answered
l unanswered prayers can be out-
rced to the Bahamas; the angels,
of them remarkably good-looking
ople, should have no trouble find-
work as headwaiters in New
rk restaurants, lap dancers in Las
gas, personal trainers in Beverly
ls. ■



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HARPER'S INDEX

Change since 1987 in a U.S. household's average annual spending on health insurance : +$323.28
Change since then in a household's annual spending on medical services, supplies, and drugs : –$99.69
Percentage of American *ER* viewers who say they learn important health-care information from the program : 53
Percentage change since 1995 in the number of surgeons worldwide using maggots to cleanse wounds : +400
Estimated portion of annual spending on the treatment of gunshot wounds that comes from the federal government : 1/2
Estimated tons of depleted-uranium from bullets fired in the Gulf War that are still scattered across the battlefields : 320
Total U.S. arms sales to Indonesia since it invaded East Timor in 1975 : $1,200,000,000
Amount by which the President's ten-year defense budget exceeds that of House Democrats : $158,000,000
Amount by which it exceeds that of House Republicans : $206,000,000
Total votes by which Democrats lost six key districts and the chance to regain control of the House last year : 21,898
Percentage points by which voter turnout for Russia's last national election exceeded U.S. turnout in 1996 : 21
Ratio of the revenue Russia expects to collect this year to the revenue New York City collected : 7:8
Average number of arrests made last year in New York City for every crime reported there : 1.1
Number of East Harlem ATM machines offering free service for the neighborhood's 11,000 welfare recipients : 7
Number of Upper East Side ATM machines offering free service for the neighborhood's 700 welfare recipients : 120
Average percentage of revenue on a Wisconsin for-profit welfare agency's contract this year that will be profit : 17.1
Average percentage of revenue of a Fortune 500 company last year that was profit : 5.3
Chance that a Texan living below the poverty line receives welfare : 1 in 10
Federal anti-poverty funds granted Texas since 1996 that have not been spent : $149,000,000
Ratio of the average annual amount a white American spends on lottery tickets to what a black American spends : 1:5
Number of Washington, D.C., police assigned to a neo-Nazi American Nationalist Party march last August : 1,426
Number of marchers : 4
Portion of the fifteen languages in which the Census Bureau will run ads this month that are Asian : 2/3
Portion of the words in *Webster's New World Dictionary* memorized by one non-English-speaking Thai Scrabble champ : 2/3
Percentage of the tiles included in Scrabble games produced in the U.S. this year that will be made in China : 100
Ratio of the number of live turkeys imported to the U.S. last year to the number exported : 3:2
Percentage of turkeys tested by the Agriculture Department in 1996 and 1997 that were infected by campylobacteria : 90
Rank of campylobacteria among the most common bacterial causes of diarrheal illness in the U.S. : 1
ercentage change since 1996 in the number of American adults using the Internet to obtain health-care information : +218
largin by which the ten-member Kansas Board of Education voted to drop human evolution from the curriculum this year : 2
Number of presidential candidates besides Bill Bradley who have publicly criticized the Kansas board's decision : 0
Average NBA player's salary in Bill Bradley's rookie season : $46,700
Number of the last ten WNBA coaching vacancies that have been filled by men : 7
atio of lines devoted to Hillary Rodham Clinton in the 1999 *Who's Who in America* to those devoted to her husband : 4:1
Percentage of Americans who said in November 1991 that they had not "heard enough" about Bill Clinton : 82
Number of consecutive days last spring that Michael Moore trained a camera on Lucianne Goldberg's apartment : 45
umber of months that a Christian group has trained a camera on Jerusalem's Golden Gate, hoping to film Christ's return : 7
Number of films about Y2K disasters that Hollywood studios are planning to release in the next four months : 0
Number about battling Satan : 2

Figures cited have been adjusted for inflation and are the latest available as of September 1999. Sources are listed on page 100.
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READINGS

[Essay]

GIVE WAR A CHANCE

From an essay by Edward Luttwak, in the July/August issue of Foreign Affairs. *Luttwak's most recent book is* Turbo-Capitalism. *His essay "Speculative Crimes and Global Punishment" appeared in the December 1998 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

An unpleasant truth often overlooked is that although war is a great evil, it does have a great virtue: it can resolve political conflicts and lead to peace. This can happen when all belligerents become exhausted or when one wins decisively. Either way the key is that the fighting must continue until a resolution is reached. War brings peace only after passing a culminating phase of violence. Hopes of military success must fade for accommodation to become more attractive than further combat.

Since the establishment of the United Nations and the enshrinement of great-power politics in its Security Council, however, wars among lesser powers have rarely been allowed to run their natural course. Instead, they have typically been interrupted early on, before they could burn themselves out and establish the preconditions for a lasting settlement. Cease-fires and armistices frequently have been imposed under the aegis of the Security Council in order to halt fighting. NATO's intervention in the Kosovo crisis follows this pattern.

But a cease-fire tends to suspend war-induced exhaustion and lets belligerents reconstitute and rearm their forces. It intensifies and prolongs the struggle once the cease-fire ends—and it does usually end. This was true of the Arab-Israeli war of 1948–49, which might have come to a close in a matter of weeks if two cease-fires ordained by the Security Council had not let the combatants recuperate. This also has been true recently in the Balkans. Imposed cease-fires frequently interrupted the fighting between Serbs and Croats in Krajina, between the forces of the rump Yugoslav federation and the Croat army, and among the Serbs, Croats, and Muslims in Bosnia. Each time, the opponents used the pause to recruit, train, and equip additional forces for further combat, prolonging the war and widening the scope of its killing and destruction. Imposed armistices, meanwhile—again, unless followed by negotiated peace accords—artificially freeze conflict and perpetuate a state of war indefinitely by shielding the weaker side from the consequences of refusing to make concessions for peace.

Today, cease-fires and armistices are imposed on lesser powers by multilateral agreement—not to avoid great-power competition but for essentially disinterested and indeed frivolous motives, such as television audiences' revulsion at harrowing scenes of war. But this, perversely, can systematically prevent the transformation of war into peace. The Dayton Accords are typical of the genre: they have condemned Bosnia to remain divided into three rival armed camps, with combat suspended momentarily but a state of hostility prolonged indefinitely. Since no side is threatened by defeat and loss, none has a sufficient

incentive to negotiate a lasting settlement. Because no path to peace is even visible, the dominant priority is to prepare for future war rather than to reconstruct devastated economies and ravaged societies. Uninterrupted war would certainly have caused further suffering and led to an unjust outcome from one perspective or another, but it also would have led to a more stable situation, which would have let a postwar era begin. Peace takes hold only when war is truly over.

A variety of multilateral organizations now make it their business to intervene in other peoples' wars. The defining characteristic of these entities is that they insert themselves in war situations while refusing to engage in combat. In the long run, this only adds to the damage. If the United Nations helped the strong defeat the weak faster and more decisively, it would actually enhance the peacemaking potential of war. Peacekeepers chary of violence are also unable to effectively protect civilians who are caught up in the fighting or deliberately attacked. At best, U.N. peacekeeping forces have been passive spectators to outrages and massacres, as in Bosnia and Rwanda; at worst, they collaborate with it, as Dutch U.N. troops did in the fall of Srebenica by helping the Bosnian Serbs separate the men of military age from the rest of the population. Multinational commands, moreover, find it difficult to control the quality and conduct of member states' troops, which can reduce the performance of all forces involved to the lowest common denominator. This was true of otherwise fine British troops in Bosnia and of the Nigerian forces in Sierra Leone. The phenomenon of troop degradation can rarely be detected by external observers, though its consequences are abundantly visible in the litter of dead, mutilated, raped, and tortured victims that attends such interventions. The true state of affairs is illuminated by the rare exception, such as the vigorous Danish tank battalion in Bosnia that replied to any attack on it by firing back in full force, quickly stopping the fighting.

The most destructive of all interventions in war are humanitarian relief activities. The largest and most protracted is the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). It was built on the model of its predecessor, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA), which operated displaced persons' camps in Europe immediately after World War II. The UNRWA was established immediately after the 1948–49 Arab-Israeli war to feed, shelter, educate, and provide health services for Arab refugees who had fled Israeli zones in the former territory of Palestine.

By keeping refugees alive in spartan conditions that encouraged their rapid emigration or local resettlement, the UNRRA's camps in Europe had assuaged postwar resentments and helped disperse revanchist concentrations of national groups. But UNRWA camps in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip provided on the whole a higher standard of living than most Arab villagers had previously enjoyed, with a more varied diet, organized schooling, superior medical care, and no backbreaking labor in stony fields. They had, therefore, the opposite effect, becoming desirable homes rather than eagerly abandoned

[Supplication]

A PRAYER FOR AFRICA

From a letter discovered with the bodies of two Guinean boys, Yaguine Koita, fourteen, and Fodé Tounkara, fifteen, found dead in the cargo hold of an airplane in Brussels last August. Translated from the French by David Miller.

Excellencies, gentlemen, and responsible citizens of Europe:

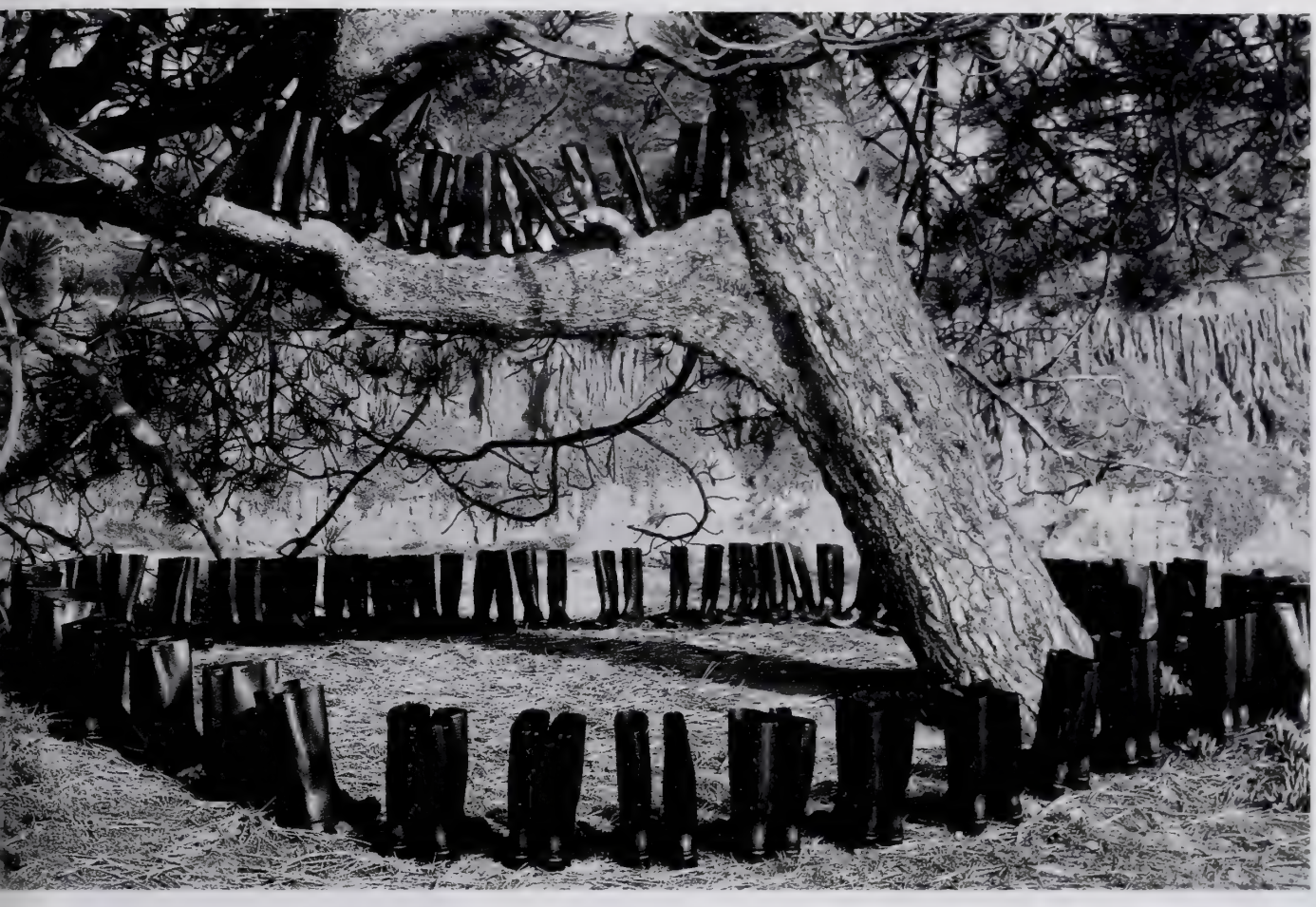
It is our great honor and privilege to write to you about our trip and the suffering of the children and youth in Africa. We offer you our most affectionate and respectful salutations. In return, be our support and our help.

We beseech you on behalf of your love for your continent, your people, your families, and above all your children, whom you cherish more than life itself. And for the love of God, who has granted you all the experience, wealth, and power to ably construct and organize your continent. We call upon your graciousness and solidarity to help us in Africa. Our problems are many: war, sickness, hunger, lack of education, and children's rights. We want to study, and we ask that you help us to become like you.

We beseech you to excuse us for daring to write this letter to you, important people whom we truly respect. It is for you, and to you only, that we can plead our cause.

And if you find [illegible] we have sacrificed our lives, it is because we [illegible] much in Africa. We need your help in our struggle against poverty and war.

Be mindful of us in [illegible]a. There is no one else for us to turn to.



100 Boots in a Field," from a series of photographs of 100 black rubber boots by Eleanor Antin, was on display last summer at the Los ngeles County Museum of Art. Antin's book, 100 Boots, *was published by Running Press in June.*

transit camps. With the encouragement of several Arab countries, the UNRWA turned escaping civilians into lifelong refugees, who gave birth to refugee children, who have in turn had refugee children of their own.

During its half-century of operation, the UNRWA has thus perpetuated a Palestinian refugee nation, preserving its resentments in as fresh a condition as they were in 1948 and keeping the first bloom of revanchist emotion intact. By its very existence, the UNRWA dissuades integration into local society and inhibits emigration. The concentration of Palestinians in the camps, moreover, has facilitated the enlistment of refugee youths by armed organizations that fight both Israel and one another. The UNRWA has contributed to Arab-Israeli violence and still retards the advent of peace.

If each European war had been attended by its own postwar UNRWA, today's Europe would be filled with giant camps for millions of descendants of uprooted Gallo-Romans, abandoned Vandals, defeated Burgundians, and misplaced Visigoths. Such a Europe would have remained a mosaic of warring tribes, undigested and unreconciled in their separate feeding camps. It might have assuaged consciences to help each one at each remove, but it would have led to permanent instability and violence. The UNRWA has counterparts elsewhere, such as the Cambodian camps along the Thai border, which incidentally provided safe havens for the mass-murdering Khmer Rouge. But because the United Nations is limited by stingy national contributions, these camps' sabotage of peace is at least localized.

That is not true of the proliferating, feverishly competitive nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that now aid war refugees. Like any other institution, these NGOs are interested in perpetuating themselves, which means that their first priority is to attract charitable contributions by being seen to be active in high-visibility situations. Only the most dramatic natural disasters attract any significant mass-media attention, and then only briefly; soon after an earthquake or flood, the cameras depart. War refugees, by contrast, can win sustained press coverage if kept concentrated in reasonably accessible camps. Regular warfare among well-developed countries is rare and offers few opportunities for such NGOs, so they focus their efforts

[Synonyms]

KURDS TO LIVE BY

From a list of forbidden terminology and government-sanctioned substitutes issued last summer by Turkey's Interior Ministry to the country's official press immediately before the trial of Kurdish guerrilla leader Abdullah Ocalan. On June 29, Ocalan was convicted of treason and sentenced to death for his role in the fifteen-year-long civil war between the Kurds and the Turkish government. The list was obtained by Stephen Kinzer, a reporter for the New York Times.

Guerrilla—*Terrorist*

Urban guerrilla—*Terrorist element*

Rural guerrilla, rebel—*Bandit*

Refugee—*Shelter seeker*

Rebellion, Kurdish uprising, Kurdish rebellion, Kurdish national independence war, Kurds' independence struggle, revolution, armed revolt—*Terrorist actions*

P.K.K. [Kurdistan Workers Party], separatists, separatist gang, separatist group—*Terrorist organization P.K.K.*

Operation, military sweep, security operation—*Search for terrorists and criminals, pursuit of criminals*

Temporary cease-fire—*Break in terrorist actions, temporary halt of terror*

Calling for peace—*Stopping terrorist actions temporarily*

Guerrilla commander—*Person in charge of regional terrorists*

Kurdish militia—*Those who help and conceal terrorists, terrorist collaborators*

Leader of the organization—*Those accountable for terrorist actions*

Marxist-Leninist organization, Marxist-Leninist P.K.K.—*Terrorist organization P.K.K.*

Crime against humanity—*Terrorist crime, mass murder, massacre*

Kurdish parliament in exile—*Meeting under the terrorist organization P.K.K.'s control*

Member of Kurdish parliament—*Member of the terrorist organization*

Kurdish flag, so-called Kurdish flag—*Symbol of the terrorist organization*

Kurdish nation—*Formation in northern Iraq*

Iraqi Kurdish leaders—*Heads of northern Iraqi tribes*

National assembly, regional assembly—*Terrorist meeting*

Kurdish, of Kurdish background—*Turkish citizen, our citizens who are identified as Kurds*

on aiding refugees in the poorest parts of the world. This ensures that the food, shelter, and health care offered—though abysmal by Western standards—exceeds what is locally available to non-refugees. The consequences are entirely predictable. Among many examples, the huge refugee camps along the Democratic Republic of the Congo's border with Rwanda stand out. They sustained a Hutu nation that would otherwise have been dispersed, making the consolidation of Rwanda impossible and providing a base for radicals to launch more Tutsi-killing raids across the border. Humanitarian intervention has worsened the chances of a stable, long-term resolution of the tensions in Rwanda.

To keep refugee nations intact and preserve their resentments forever is bad enough, but inserting material aid into ongoing conflicts is even worse. Many NGOs that operate in an odor of sanctity routinely supply active combatants; defenseless, they cannot exclude armed warriors from their feeding stations, clinics, and shelters. Since refugees are presumptively on the losing side, the warriors among them are usually in retreat. By intervening to help, NGOs systematically impede the progress of their enemies toward a decisive victory that could end the war. Sometimes NGOs, impartial to a fault, even help both sides, thus preventing mutual exhaustion and a resulting settlement. And in some extreme cases, such as Somalia, NGOs even pay protection money to local war bands, which use those funds to buy arms. Those NGOs are therefore helping to prolong the warfare whose consequences they ostensibly seek to mitigate.

Too many wars nowadays become endemic conflicts that never end because the transformative effects of both decisive victory and exhaustion are blocked by intervention. Unlike the ancient problem of war, however, the compounding of its evils by disinterested interventions is a new malpractice that could be curtailed. Policy elites should actively resist the emotional impulse to intervene in other peoples' wars—not because they are indifferent to human suffering but precisely because they care about it and want to facilitate the advent of peace. The United States should dissuade interventions instead of leading them. New rules should be established for U.N. refugee relief activities to ensure that immediate succor is swiftly followed by repatriation, local absorption, or emigration, ruling out the establishment of permanent refugee camps. And although it may not be possible to constrain interventionist NGOs, they should at least be neither officially encouraged nor funded. Underlying these seemingly perverse measures would be a true appreciation of war's paradoxical logic and a commitment to let it serve its sole useful function: to bring peace.

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[Dispatch]

IN BALANCE WITH THIS LIFE, THIS DEATH

From My War Gone By, I Miss It So, *by Anthony Loyd, to be published in January by Grove/Atlantic. Loyd, a former platoon commander in the British Army, is a special correspondent for the* Times *of London, for which he has covered the conflicts in Bosnia, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, and Kosovo.*

Chechnya, 1995. I was trying to sleep, swinging in and out of half-consciousness, too tired to open my eyes but too tense to let go. My mind cartwheeled through the unsettled twilight between the two zones, numbed by the vodka, which, although it enervated my mouth and the ends of my fingers, was not strong enough to override the horror of the weeks past. Eventually I must have drifted off, though I cannot remember how I awoke.

The dead child arrived in my room without warning, standing listlessly at the end of my bed, the suddenness and severity of his presence chopping me out of sleep with a single blow. A second before, I had been alone; now this. He was silent, and as I started upright he stared into my eyes with an unwavering gaze that seemed like an accusation. Two small severed heads lay on the blood-covered table behind him, their hair black and matted, white eyes rolled upward.

I had seen the dead child (or what was left of him) only a few days before. He was a Chechen. A Russian jet had bombed his mountain village home in a botched attempt to destroy a nearby bridge. Five 100-pound bombs had transformed him, his two sisters, and their mother into butcher-rack-size lumps of flesh. The severed heads of the two girls, curiously untouched by the blast, had stared blankly from a ghastly pile of severed limbs. Two other sisters had survived, blood-masked and mangled, tiny children with enormous wounds. Now he had returned to me, his body whole again, strangely luminous against the dark of the night.

Suddenly I was alone again. The window was rattling to shellfire, and signal flares were illuminating the night sky outside. The fighting was coming very close. I lit a cigarette and got out of bed, determined to stay awake until the dawn.

No [illegible] frightens me as much as the shell. Bul[illegible] certain hope. Put a sizable enough piece of concrete between yourself and the firer and you will be untouched. Run between cover, for it is difficult even for an experienced shot to hit a man who sprints fast. Even when people around you are hit, the wounds seldom seem so bad, unless the bullet has tumbled in flight or hit them in the head. But shells can do things to the human body you never believed possible: turn it inside out like a steaming rose, bend it backward and through itself, chop it up, shred it, pulp it—mutilations so base and vile they never stopped revolting me. And there is no real cover from shellfire. Shells can drop out of the sky and land at your feet, or smash their way through any piece of architecture to find you. Some of the ordnance the Russians were using was slicing through ten-story buildings before exploding in the basement. Shells could arrive silently and unannounced, or whistle and howl their way in, a sound that tears at your nerves more than it warns you of anything. It's only the detonation that always seems the same—a feeling as much as a sound, a hideous suck-roar-thump that in itself, should you be close enough, can collapse your palate and liquefy your brain. And their violence is nonspecific. A bullet may or may not have your number on it, but I am sure shells are engraved with "to whom it may concern."

In Sarajevo we thought it was a bad day if a few hundred shells fell on the city. During the second half of the battle for Grozny, the Russians sometimes fired over 30,000 shells a day into the southern sector. It is an area less than a third the size of Sarajevo.

And so Grozny had the life torn out of it by the second most powerful military machine on the planet, and the lethal dynamics were breathtaking in every sense. A concrete killing zone, it looked as if a hurricane of shrapnel had swept through every street, leaving each perspective bearing the torn pitted scars, the irregular bites of high-explosive ordnance. The remaining trees were shredded and blasted horizontal, while the snow on the pavement was covered in a crunching carpet of shattered glass.

Artillery, tanks, mortars, rocket systems, jet aircraft, helicopter gunships—the permutations of incoming fire were endless. It left the dead plentiful: dead people blown out of their flats; dead pigeons blown out of their roosts; dead dogs blown off the street. Death became too frequent and too abundant to deal with, so that often the bodies were left where they had fallen, to become landmarks in their own right: "Turn left past the dead guy with the yellow shopping bag and his wife, then right to Minutka . . ."

is drive to frame the environmental debate, e President Al Gore believes, "Our insatiable e to rummage deep beneath the surface of earth, remove all of the coal, petroleum, and er fossil fuels we can find, then burn them as ckly as they are found – in the process filling atmosphere with carbon dioxide and other lutants – is a willful expansion of our dysfunctional lization into vulnerable parts of the natural world." have a more positive way of seeing things.



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"Schoolroom, Village of Shipelicki, April 1995," by Canadian artist David McMillan, from a series of photographs the area surrounding Chernobyl, Ukraine. The photograph was on display last fall at the Hong Kong Arts Centre.

The city inched rather than slid toward capture, and after a while the shelling all but paralyzed our movement. Even when we did endure the frightful risk of the streets, it called for a disproportionate expenditure of energy, for the fear and horror of it all eroded our resilience like a poison. Then, sheltering in the squat from the bombardment one day, as we seemed to do more and more of the time, we heard a young Russian woman calling us from the street outside. "Our house is hit," she said simply. "There are many dead and wounded."

We stumbled out into the white desolation and ran slap into a thickset woman muffled in a coat held together by a string belt. She was shrieking hysterically, unhinged with rage, shock, and grief. In one hand she brandished an awkward-looking club. It took me a few seconds to realize it was the severed leg of a man. With her left hand she tugged frantically at a sleigh. On it lay the chopped bloody bundle of a corpse. Through some sacking the remaining leg dragged a scarlet wake in the snow. For long seconds the woman screamed her sound into us, the leg flying back and forth [illegible] to thigh, as we stood, stunned. Then suddenly she turned away and raged off into the wilderness, dragging the sleigh with its dismembered body behind her. Dumb with shock, we next walked into a scene every bit as dreadful. In a nearby street, shellfire from a Russian battery had landed among a group of old people. As we approached, we could see their corpses sprawled in a random shatter of torn flesh and body parts.

Everyone was dead, we thought. But as I passed the body of an old man, one leg missing, the other a tangled mash barely connected to his torso, a hand twitched and grasped my ankle. "My God, oh my God, my legs," he started to cry. I freed my foot and began to take photographs of him, so shut down in those moments that I even noticed that the spread of the other bodies was too wide to allow for a strong composition. Then I knelt down beside him to put tourniquets on his wounds, though the blast seemed to have cauterized them already. It seemed better to do anything than allow my mind to soak up the impact. So I carried on until one of my friends stopped me.

"Anthony, leave him, there's no point, there's no point," he said.

Across the ravaged city streets the giant tread of artillery fire continued. It seemed to be moving back toward us. Except for the thumping concussions, there was no sound but the old man's cries. I stood up and mouthed a stream of cold logic like an automaton. "There are no people and no cars—no place to take this man." I might as well have been reading his death sentence. "No morphine and not enough dressings." The incoming got closer. Our fear was tangible, a thick mantle upon us, heavier by the second. The old man sensed what was about to happen and grasped again at my ankle. He was crying loudly by then, begging us not to leave him. One fresh barrage, and we ran. We were gibbering with self-loathing and guilt, but we ran anyway.

Back in shelter we sloshed whiskey down our throats and argued frantically about what we should have done or could have done. I felt that we had used our helplessness as an excuse to run at the approach of the shellfire. If only it had been as simple as run or die. It wasn't. We ran because we freaked out. I felt I was a pornographer, a voyeur. A couple of the others, who had been involved with wars longer than I had, appeared not to question our actions. One even said that the Russian girl had only come to fetch us in the first place because she wanted journalists to witness what had happened. That was bullshit. She had come because she thought that as foreigners we might have some way to help her with the casualties: a car to get them out, drugs, anything. We had nothing. All we had done was take our photographs and leave the only survivor to die.

Next morning the bodies were still there. Stiff and cold in the stained snow.

[Interview]

ASSAULT AND PEPPER

From an August 7 interview with instructors at the Cambridge, Massachusetts, Police Academy conducted by Hazel Trice Edney, a reporter for the Cambridge Chronicle, *the* Somerville Journal, *and the* Boston Tab. *Robert F. Ames is a "use of force" instructor. Frank Gutoski is a pepper-spray instructor.*

HAZEL TRICE EDNEY: Under what circumstances are people tolerant of pepper spray?

ROBERT F. AMES: Indigenous people from different countries that have the heavy pepper addition to their diet. I can't say myself, exactly, that I've seen anybody, but I have heard of stories of other people that—because of whatever drugs that they were on—they were so violent that the spray had little or no effect on them.

EDNEY: Another officer said that he was taught that Latin Americans can be tolerant of pepper spray.

[Invitation]

A WELL-REGULATED MILITIA

From a letter sent in July to concealed weapons permit holders in Sioux County, Iowa, by Jim R. Schwiesow, the county sheriff.

Dear Concealed Weapons Permit Holder:

These are troubling times. I personally believe that the potential exists for some very trying, perhaps even catastrophic, events to come to pass during the next few years, bringing about lawlessness of a magnitude unprecedented in our memory. And I strongly suspect this may happen within the next six to twelve months. One would have to be totally deluded not to perceive the depravity present in our nation today.

If a catastrophe actually does occur, we will certainly see the collapse of many state and federal agencies, and the fact is, the sheriff's office may need your help. We must be able to rely upon people who are solid, decent of character, and law-abiding. As a holder of a permit to carry concealed weapons, you have been certified as morally and psychologically fit, and I have faith in your integrity.

I propose to put together a stand-by force composed solely of concealed weapons permit holders. This would be strictly a volunteer pool of trustworthy people that I could summon in dire times. I urge you to give serious consideration to this call. I have provided, with this letter, a short form of acceptance.

Sadly and tragically, this nation has renounced the Christian principles upon which it was founded. Be not deceived, good friends. God will not be mocked. If He withholds His presence from this nation and leaves us to our own devices, we are indeed in *deep* trouble. And I believe that time is at hand.

AMES: Yes.

FRANK GUTOSKI: Also people who handle peppers. If you work in a produce department or a food-processing plant, or if you cook or consume peppers. Mexican Americans, ah, tend to be pickers. And most of the Mexican Americans that work in the food industry around here, mostly they're restaurant owners, waiters and waitresses, and cooks. They're handling peppers. And so Cajuns, Mexican Americans, Pakistani Indians.

EDNEY: Do they teach you this in the criminal justice academy?

GUTOSKI: The training council, yes. It's part of the instructor certification course.

EDNEY: Does a rookie officer then have a perception that they should spray more when confronted with a Mexican suspect?

AMES: It's more an explanation for the officer that if you spray somebody and it has no reaction, it may be that that person is of Hispanic descent or maybe a Far East Indian type. It doesn't mean spray him more, because more does nothing. Before we had this knowledge, it was just go, go, go, but the longer we've had it, we find that we don't have to go again and again and again. If they continue with their violent maneuvers, you have to access your force continuum, your next level, which would be your baton.

EDNEY: And then the next level would be deadly force?

AMES: Yeah, but presumably you would have enough officers there to assist you, and you would be able to get this person under control. That's the reason we went for this, so people wouldn't get hurt. It's all to control violent behavior, another tool for police. These are all tools for us. Batons are tools, pepper spray is a tool, even your firearm is just a tool. We don't look at these things as weapons.

EDNEY: A pepper-spray instructor sprayed me in Boston, and it was quite humbling.

GUTOSKI: Well, it's not only humbling. The psychological effect is overwhelming. It made you want to get down on the ground, didn't it? When I was sprayed—and I consume a lot of hot foods, but nothing that would prepare me for being sprayed in the face—I was out of the picture for a good forty minutes. And that's with immediate first aid. Most people are affected that way.

AMES: Most people grab their eyes and their nose and stuff, evacuating a lot, and everything starts coming out of their nasal passages. You can see that they are in turmoil. They can't see. They go through certain things that you can recognize, that tell you, okay, now I can take control of this person.

EDNEY: I felt like I was drowning.

GUTOSKI: Well, panic is part of the package. It's supposed to make you fearful because you're an aggressor. Now, if we didn't have that option, the next morning you'd be nursing bruises one way or the other. The officer

[Complaint]

SHE'S COME UNDONE

From a lawsuit brought last summer by M.F.H., an Australian patient, against Gold Coast District Health Service in Queensland, Australia, where she underwent surgery for a brain aneurysm.

On July 16, 1996, the plaintiff suffered hemorrhage and hematoma of the right frontal lobe. On July 19 she underwent a craniotomy and clipping of a cerebral artery aneurysm. During the surgery the plaintiff's right frontal bone was removed from her skull and could not be replaced due to gross swelling. The plaintiff's right frontal bone was retained at the hospital to be replaced electively once the swelling subsided. On or about August 2, 1996, the defendant noticed that the plaintiff's right frontal bone was lost.

It is alleged that the defendant:

– failed to ensure that the plaintiff's right frontal bone was adequately secured;
– failed to ensure that the plantiff's right frontal bone was not thrown out in the rubbish;
– failed to retain the plaintiff's right frontal bone at all.

As a result of the negligence, the plaintiff suffered the following losses and damages:

– the need to have a titanium metal plate inserted in place of her right frontal bone;
– permanent deformity resulting from titanium plate insertion;
– sleep disturbances involving nightmares;
– distrust of doctors;
– irritability;
– social withdrawal;
– reduced sexual and emotional functioning;
– inability to understand how the hospital could lose part of the plaintiff's skull;
– perception that the right frontal bone may have been fed to an animal.

The plaintiff seeks $[illegible].



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might also, but that's two people nursing bruises, two people that would have had to go to the emergency room, whereas with pepper spray only one had to go to the emergency room. So it saves. And hey, there are people who have been struck in the head who didn't mean to get struck in the head. But when you're trying to break somebody's collarbone, it's awfully close to the head. And if you have a large-armed, barrel-chested person that could basically break your back if he gets his arms around you, or take your head off if he pummels you, to take that person down, you have to hit them over and over and over again to break his collarbone, because it's his arms you're afraid of. If you hit him in the head, the next morning you're at the medical examiner's office. If you spray him, he's a baby in three seconds. That's why it's such a great tool.

AMES: It's a great tool.

EDNEY: One of the doctors said overspraying causes blisters inside the mouth—also lacerations to the eyes, the eye socket, inside the eye—because the spray reacts so strongly on the mucus membranes.

AMES: I didn't even know about the lacerations to the eye. It could cause that.

EDNEY: In your years of teaching, have you ever run into a situation where you would say that pepper spray was misused or overused?

AMES: No. As a matter of fact, I would say that some officers get into such a brawl that when they use the spray, more officers get sprayed with it than the arrestees. He'll try to hit the guy, and because he's wrestling with an officer, more times than not he'll end up spraying it in another officer's eyes. I've had that happen more times than anything else. As I said before, this is a great tool. I can't tell you how great it is.

[Will]

INFINITE JEST

From the last will and testament of actor Del Close, who died last March. Close, a former circus fire-eater, was a longtime director and actor with Chicago's Second City comedy troupe, which he left in 1983 to join the ImprovOlympic. His will was executed in July.

I, Del Close, of Chicago, Illinois, revoke all prior wills and codicils and make this my Will.

I give my Chris Farley clock, word ball, magic wand, notebooks, clippings, public-relations items, and pictures to Charna R. Halpern, if she survives me.

I give all my books to Larry Coven, if he survives me.

I give my snake candleholder to Melanie Blue, if she survives me.

Notwithstanding my Letter of Direction signed November 12, 1997, which directs that my body be cremated, I give my skull to the Goodman Theatre, to play Yorick in a production of *Hamlet*, or for any other purposes the Goodman Theatre deems appropriate.

[Complaints]

TIME TO HATE THE DONUTS

From comments posted on www.dunkindonuts.org, a forum for customer opinions created two years ago by David Felton, who was upset that the Dunkin' Donuts shop in West Hartford, Connecticut, could not explain why it did not carry skim milk. On June 30, Dunkin' Donuts announced plans to acquire the site. In August, 600 complaints were posted and the site received 1.75 million hits.

I love Dunkin Donuts. My favorite donuts are the vanilla cream ones. I like how they make me feel light-headed when I eat them because the cream is so sweet.

My daughters and I used to love to go to DD in Newport, New Hampshire, but there is one employee who, no matter what time you go there, has icing on her face or hanging off her chin. It's disgusting.

Once I went to Dunkin Donuts and I found a tooth in my muffin. I told them and they said that it wasn't.

I think that the donuts are all old considering they have to bring them on a truck to the DD on Sunset Point and US Highway 19 in Florida from Clearwater! Then we have to take them home and microwave them so we can eat them! WE WON'T TAKE THIS ANYMORE!!!

I have always been very potent in the bedroom, until a Dunkin Donuts store opened near my

home. I was tempted by their Bavarian cream donut and began eating several a day. At the same time, I began having difficulty getting and sustaining an erection. After several weeks of impotence, I made what I believe to be a connection between my donut consumption and my sexual disorder. I immediately stopped eating the donuts, and within three days I found I was back to my usual virile self. I cannot be sure, but the possibility that Dunkin Donuts caused this problem leads me to believe that research needs to be completed and caution must be taken.

WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH YOU PEOPLE? I WENT TO 16 DIFFERENT DUNKIN DONUT SHOPS TO GET BLUEBERRY-FILLED DONUTS AND NOT ONE OF YOUR SHOPS HAD ANY. NEXT DAY I PLACED AN ORDER FOR 3 DOZEN BLUEBERRY-FILLED DONUTS AND WHAT DID I GET? RASPBERRY-FILLED. I WASTED 2 DAYS! 2 DAYS! YOU DUNKIN DONUT PEOPLE GET YOUR ACT TOGETHER.

I stop for a coffee and donuts every day on my way from work. That's over 200 chocolate donuts a year!

[Literary Criticism]

IS THERE A DEAD MULE IN IT?

From "Equine Gothic: The Dead Mule as Generic Signifier in Southern Literature of the Twentieth Century," by Jerry Leath Mills, in Volume 29, number 1, of The Southern Literary Journal. *Mills was a professor of English at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for thirty years before his retirement in 1996.*

Almost everybody interested in modern literature in America agrees that there is something distinctive about Southern writing; but nobody has managed to define convincingly the crucial element that unites the various authors generally thought of as Southern. Literal-minded criteria, such as an author's residence in the South or use of the South as setting, have been suggested, but these usually fail to address fundamental distinctions as to how the South itself is to be defined. Is it a certain number of states or a matter of latitude and longitude? Or is it a state of mind and spirit, an instinctive set of responses that certain writers carry with them wherever they choose to live and write? Proponents of this latter view, that Southernness is a subjective state, cite a variety of intangible qualities, such as a strong sense of place, a concern with history, an interest in religion, a propensity for "gothic" elements of horror and the grotesque, a strongly biblical narrative tradition, a deep sense of loss and defeat, and so on. But any of these elements can be discerned in the thought and art of writers who are in no other way Southern.

Although many indisputably great critics have attempted to define Southern literature, they all seem to me to have missed the wagon entirely, and I wish to advance my own modest proposal as a counterbalance and corrective. My survey of around thirty prominent

[Automobile]

ROAD KILL



A photograph of Julian Stock's Skull Car (First Edition), *by Harrod Blank. Blank is at work on* Wild Wheels II, *a documentary on art cars and their makers. Art cars by Stock and Blank were on display at ArtCar Fest '99 in Berkeley, California.*

twentieth-century Southern authors has led me to conclude, without fear of refutation, that there is indeed a single, simple, litmus-like test for the quality of Southernness in literature. The test is: *Is there a dead mule in it?* As we shall see, the presence of one or more specimens of *Equus caballus x asinus (defunctus)* constitutes the truly catalytic element, the straw that stirs the strong and heady julep of literary tradition in the American South.

The survey below is organized, coroner-wise, under headings denoting cause of death.

1. *Asphyxiation.* Coal dust and mine gases are evidently what sealed the fate of the titular beast in Hubert J. Davis's short story "The Multilingual Mule," set in the mines of southwestern Virginia.

2. *Beating.* This unsavory episode, as recalled by a character in Larry Brown's novel *Dirty Work,* occurs in revenge for a friend killed by a mule kick:

> What he did was beat that fucking mule to death. Yep. Saw my daddy do that. . . . And I heard him talking to that mule. Said you son of a bitch I'm going to beat your fucking brains out. Oh he hurt that son of a bitch before he died. Took a sledgehammer handle to him. I saw some bad shit over there but my daddy beating that mule to death was one of the worst things I ever saw.

3. *Collision with railroad train.* William Faulkner's "Mule in the Yard" relates the progress of an insurance fraud conducted by a member of the Snopes family and an accomplice named Hait, in which numerous mules are sacrificed on the rails for false claims of accidental death.

4. *Decapitation by irate opera singer.* Cormac McCarthy, who surpasses even Faulkner in the mayhem he visits upon literary mules, includes in his 1994 novel *The Crossing* the following dialogue about a mule whose recalcitrance proves insufferable to the artistic temperament of a singer assigned to tend him in a road company:

> What was it he done to the mule?
>
> He tried to cut off the head with a machete. . . .
>
> I wouldn't have thought you could cut off a mule's head with a machete.
>
> Of course not. Only a drunken fool would attempt such a feat. When the hacking availed not he began to saw. . . .
>
> What happened to the mule? The mule?
>
> The mule died. Of course.

5. *Drowning.* This is Faulkner's most commonly employed means of dispatch for the mules in his canon. In the flood scenes he renders in "Old Man" we inevitably find drowned mules floating downriver. Faulkner's drowned mules tend to fall into the decorative or ornamental category, employed chiefly for drama, mood, and atmosphere.

6. *Falls from cliffs.* The novel *Blood Meridian* establishes Cormac McCarthy as the unchallenged king of literary mule carnage. No fewer than fifty-nine specific mules die in the book, plus dozens more that are alluded to in groups and bunches. Mules are shot, roasted, drowned, knifed, and slain by thirst; but the largest number, 50 out of a *conducta* of 122 mules carrying quicksilver for mining, plummet from a single cliff during an ambush, performing an almost choreographic display of motion and color:

> the animals dropping silently as martyrs, turning sedately in the empty air and exploding on the rocks below in startling bursts of blood and silver as the flasks broke open and the mercury loomed wobbling in the air in great sheets and lobes and small trembling satellites.

Clyde Edgerton achieves a similar combination of violence and grace in the fall of Old Jake the pack mule in the novel *Red Eye.*

7. *Fall into subterranean cavity.* Near the conclusion of Cormac McCarthy's *Child of God,* "Arthur Ogle was plowing an upland field one evening when the plow was snatched from his hands. He looked in time to see his span of mules disappear into the earth taking the plow with them." These doomed mules qualify as highly functional in the story, since a search for their bodies leads to the discovery of a number of human corpses stored in the caves underground for sexual use by the necrophiliac Lester Ballard.

8. *Freezing.* In *Me and Gallagher,* Arkansas novelist Jack Farris moves his characters out to Montana, where it is cold enough to—guess what?

9. *Gunshot wounds.* The high quotient of gunplay in Southern fiction quite naturally extends to some of the mules that grace its pages. Some are shot by accident, like poor Jenny in Richard Wright's "The Man Who Was Almost a Man." In John William Corrington's novel *The Upper Hand,* a mule gets shot for love. The lady at issue later remarks, "I let you alone about that mule because it was the only time anybody ever killed anything over me even if it wasn't but a mule." Of intentional shooting victims, the largest massacre at once is probably that of the two dozen executed in Tony Earley's "The Prophet from Jupiter," so that their carcasses can be used to shore up a rift in an overstressed dam.



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10. *Hanging.* A notoriously decadent scene in Truman Capote's *Other Voices, Other Rooms* shows us a mule named John Brown, with a spittoon tied to his leg, hang himself lunging from a balcony over the ballroom of a dilapidated antebellum mansion.

[Catalogue]

AARDWOLVES AND FOSSAS AND KRAITS—OH MY!

From a partial list of animals banned as pets last June by the New York City Department of Health.

All dogs other than domesticated dogs, including but not limited to hyena, dingo, jackal, dhole, fennec, zorro, bush dog, and aardwolf.

All cats other than domesticated cats, including but not limited to lion, tiger, leopard, ocelot, jaguar, puma, caracal, jaguarundi, margay.

All bears, including polar, grizzly, and black bear.

All fur-bearing mammals of the family Mustelidae, including but not limited to badger, ermine, skunk, otter, zorille, and wolverine.

All carnivorous mammals of the family Viverridae, including civet, mongoose, genet, binturong, fossa, linsang, and suricate.

All bats.

All front-fanged venomous snakes, including cobra, mamba, krait; all sea snakes; all Laticaudinae (sea krait); any member of the family Pythoninae; any member of the family Varanidae, including white-throated monitor, Bornean earless monitor, and Komodo dragon.

All large rodents, including gopher, paca, marmot, beaver, sewellel, viscacha, and hutia.

All even-toed ungulates, including deer, giraffe, and hippopotamus.

All odd-toed ungulates other than domesticated horses, including zebra, rhinoceros, and tapir.

All hyrax.

All pangolin.

All sloth and armadillo.

All insectivorous mammals, such as aardvark, anteater, shrew, gymnure, desman, tenrec, mole, and hedgehog.

All gliding lemurs.

11. *Old age.* Although a majority of literary mules die with their traces on, at least one simply ages out in Doris Betts's wonderfully titled story "The Dead Mule." Its body cavity provides a cache to conceal fifty-six half-gallon jars of a bootlegger's prime corn liquor, at least until the sheriff gets wind of the ruse.

12. *Overwork.* As Reynolds Price observes in *Blue Calhoun,* it takes a sorry man to work a mule to death: "Back then *white trash* didn't mean poor or lazy. People saved it to use on vicious families ... who beat their children mercilessly or plowed their mule till it died in harness."

13. *Stab wounds.* A frontier woman in William Humphrey's *The Ordways* skewers a mule between the ribs with a kitchen knife in order to set before her family a meal with biblical overtones: "Unleavened bread, yes; they were unused to any other kind. But it was not the Paschal Lamb that the Ordways slaughtered before the flight from Tennessee, it was the family mule."

Since the subject arises so opportunely at this point, it seems appropriate to discourse briefly on the rich subtopic of *mulephagy,* or the adaptation of mule meat to culinary requirements. We find mule consumption popular among both Blue and Gray in short stories by Mississippi author James Street. Attribution of a taste for mule meat constitutes a slur in Margaret Skinner's Memphis novel, *Old Jim Canaan.* But mules are consumed readily by man, beast, and fowl in McCarthy's *Blood Meridian.*

14. *Thirst.* Alkali flats in *Blood Meridian* yield no shortage of "the black and desiccated shapes of horses and mules. . . . These parched beasts had died with their necks stretched in agony in the sand."

15. *Vesicular stomatitis.* Down in Black Ankle County, where Joseph Mitchell sets "Uncle Dockery and the Independent Bull," the weather turned bad one January and "two mules got sick and died of something called *vesicular stomatitis,* or horsepox."

The data cited above, although far from exhaustive, should be more than adequate to establish the textual basis for a distinct Dead Mule Zone containing writings by male and female, African American, and Caucasian authors of various geographical points of origin but all generally regarded as Southern in the ways their books are promoted and discussed at large. I believe that I have clarified a link that banishes vagueness as to what really constitutes "Southern Literature" as a meaningful denotation of genre.



Bad Route, *a painting by Mexican artist Miguel Calderón, whose work will be on display this month at the Institute of Visual Arts in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*

[Dialogue]

STRANGE FRUIT

From a pretrial deposition of Richard J. Troy, the head of maintenance for American Airlines in Los Angeles, in a $10.5 million racial-harassment suit filed last year against the airline by Charles L. Walker, who worked under Troy's supervision. Walker found a depiction of himself in the bathroom next to the words "kill all niggers" and discovered several nooses hanging in the workplace.

RONALD WILSON [Walker's attorney]: Okay, now let's go back over this, because you piqued my interest when you said you have never heard of lynchings before.

RICHARD J. TROY: I am aware that that occurred, and I am aware that, I guess, the method of doing that was to use a rope. However, I didn't connect the two.

WILSON: What did you think, if anything, those nooses in your workplace meant?

TROY: I thought it was somebody's—

CHARLES GANGEMI [American Airlines' attorney]: I object. You haven't laid a foundation as to his knowledge concerning the nooses and at what point in time.

WILSON: So you wrote a memo about the nooses?

TROY: Correct.

WILSON: When?

TROY: I believe it was after someone spoke with me and told me that that could be offensive to some people.

WILSON: Okay, just so we're clear. Do you believe that displaying nooses at the workplace could be offensive to certain employees?

TROY: At this point in time I do.

WILSON: Do you believe that displaying nooses at the workplace could be considered a form of harassment?

TROY: No, sir, I don't.

WILSON: Why not?

TROY: A couple of reasons: number one, no one was specifically identified as a recipient of the noose. And I just did not believe—I do not believe—that it was a form of harassment.

WILSON: Is there any type of graphic display, like graffiti or a noose or a sign, that you would consider a form of harassment?

TROY: Well, it would need to be more specific.

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WNELSON

WILSON: Well, say, a swastika, a Nazi swastika. Would you consider that to be a form of harassment if it were prominently displayed in the workplace?

TROY: I would consider that to be in poor taste and unprofessional.

WILSON: But it wouldn't be a big deal in your mind?

TROY: All I can tell you, Mr. Wilson, is that I would not place a whole lot of emphasis on it unless it were directed at somebody.

WILSON: You mean unless there was a name attached to the swastika?

TROY: Yes.

[Essay]

COUNTRY MATTERS

By Hayden Carruth, in the Summer issue of The Sewanee Review. *Carruth's most recent book is* Beside the Shadblow Tree.

Identity. For forty years or more my literary colleagues—writers, critics, editors—have referred to me as, in effect, a "farmer-poet." I've resented this term because almost always it has insinuated a certain degree of latent condescension, but this is a personal matter and doesn't need to be written about. What I'd like to do here is simply set the record straight—briefly, I hope humbly, and perhaps usefully. If accuracy and honesty are necessary to the arts, as I've always tried to insist, then this is a matter of some importance. Moreover, showing how far artistic life now has drifted away from country life may be generally desirable. I think it is.

I am not a farmer. I never have been. In the scale of country life, farmers are the elite, the landholders, the employers. Their social, political, and even aesthetic attitudes go a long way toward establishing the tone of rural existence, just as their economic and practical activities establish its material base. A few farmers are women, a few are men, but most are couples. They are mutually and equally engaged in the thousands—literally thousands—of tasks and skills required to run a farm through its seasonal changes: barn work, fieldwork, yard work, house work, garden work, orchard work, woods work; cooking, harvesting, and preserving; tending the hens and ducks; supervising the help. The list is formidable and endless. The couples work together because they have to: otherwise the work would not be done. They are people of substance in the community. Workers, yes, but also proprietors. And of necessity they are also people of intelligence and experience. They are responsible. They are, or at least they once were, determinative in the national consciousness.

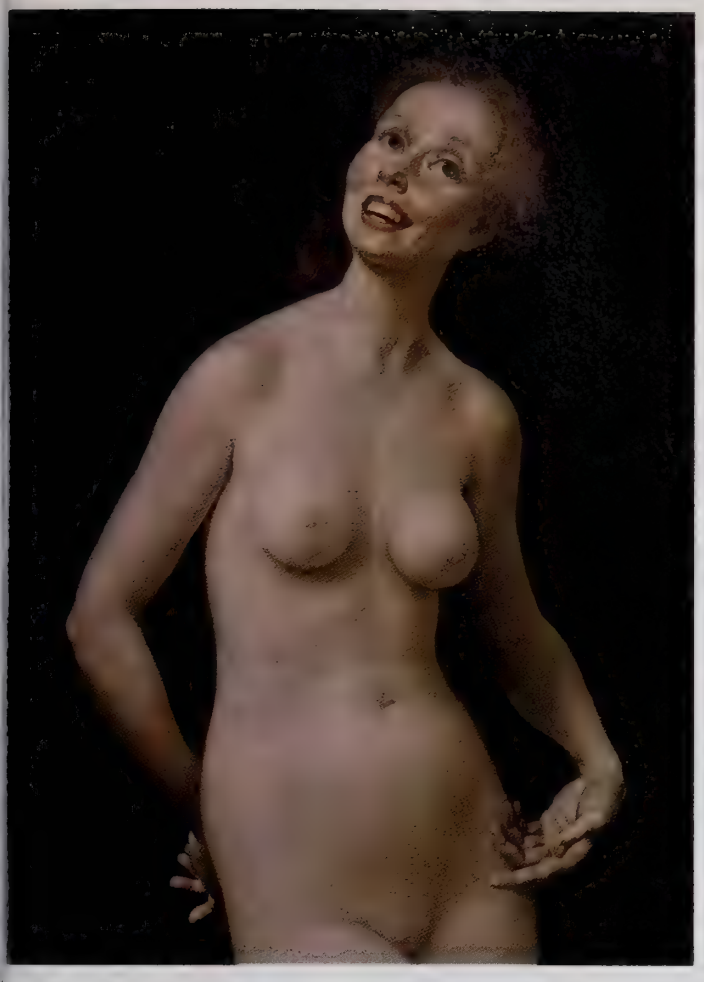
Granted, most agricultural communities have a center, a downtown, which may be presided over by the banker and his wife, a few shopkeepers and teachers, a Catholic priest and a Protestant minister, perhaps a doctor and a lawyer, maybe even a librarian. These are the town dwellers, few in number but often noisy, sometimes snooty. They give themselves airs. But they depend on the farmers, and in a proper community this is understood.

The rest of the country people, the nonfarmers who live outside the town, are the scroungers. They hunt and fish and wrest their livings from the soil as best they can. They have gardens. They work for the farmers, often as part-time help. They work on the road gangs, and in the old days they worked on the railroads and canals. They cut pulp in the woods; they raise a pig or two; they mow the banker's lawn; they work in the gravel pits and quarries; they whittle wooden Indian maidens for tourists and duck decoys for hunters and collectors; they make quilts and baskets; they eat fiddleheads, lamb's-quarters, and milkweed in season. In the spring they work in sugarhouses, and in the fall in cider mills. They shovel snow, sand, gravel, stones, and shit.

They are full of country lore and rural speech. They know that when the yellow jackets make their nests up high, the snow will be momentous in the coming winter. They know that a green Christmas means a full graveyard at Easter. They know that the night of the full moon is always clear and cold.

In the South these people are called poor white trash, but in the North we have no equivalent, which is perhaps our good fortune. At any rate, these are the people among whom I have lived and worked. In northern Vermont my holding was eleven acres, mostly nonarable, and a five-room, jerry-built house: no barn, no smithy, no toolshed. I had a small garage, a woodshed, a henhouse, and a shack where I did my writing. In rural upstate New York, where I live now, I own about twenty acres and another five-room house. These are not farms, not anywhere near. Farms are all around, of course, big ones and small, prosperous and impoverished, some working and some abandoned. But trailers, double-wides, and hovels are all around, too. The extent of the rural slum ought to be obvious to anyone who takes a drive off the interstate. That's where I live.

Some farmers have liked me and appreciated the help I could give them in their work. Others disliked me and thought I was incompetent. In neither case did the facts that I had a col-





aughing Nude, *and* The Go-See, *by John Currin. Currin's work is currently on display at the Andrea Rosen Gallery in New York City.*

lege degree and wrote poetry in my spare time have much to do with the way I was received. A little, but not much. Mostly I was looked upon as a country jack, a guy who could do rough carpentry, help with the haying, milk cows and spread manure, clean a carburetor and repair a broken electrical fixture. I could sweat a copper joint. I sold eggs to my neighbors and hauled wood in my old 4 x 4 pickup. Sometimes I and my truck were hired to make deliveries to outlying farms in winter.

Thousands and thousands like me are living in the remote hills throughout northern North America. Many of us are inbred, brain-damaged, and schizophrenic, but many are healthy too. All of us are socially déclassé, to say the least.

The point here is that we are unknown. As the population of the United States has concentrated more and more in the cities, as the common entertainments have catered more and more to urban tastes, as politics has clung more and more to big business and the corporate capitalists, country people in general have been pushed out of the picture. But farmers, the landowners, still have a voice, though a small one, and they are still recognized. The rural underclass, on the other hand, has disappeared. For the vast preponderance of the American populace, it simply doesn't exist.

Thoreau was a country bum. So was Robert Frost. So, in her origin, was even so elegant a person as Louise Bogan, and it shows in her work. People who came from the underclass or chose to assimilate themselves to it have been among the most perceptive in our history. And the reason is simple: the rural underclass is the closest to the land, living right there in the muck and misery of it. They know more about nature than the naturalists because they know it in their lives, moment to moment. They know it accurately. And if, once in a blue moon, one of them writes about it, that writing will be as fundamental as Genesis.

Necessity in much of my life has forced me to live among these people. I have been a rural communist with a small *c*. At the limit of my life I hope I'll be forgiven if I insist, briefly, on my identity. That is to say, right now.

I Wish I Could Shimmy. People say nowadays that I am agoraphobic because I'm unwilling to fly to Ireland or San Francisco. Actually it's

[illegible] is what a number of people have told [illegible]. But they don't know what they're talking [illegible] they don't have an inkling.

Agoraphobia is when a stranger enters the house and you go to the attic and lie down with your face pressed into the darkest corner, under the slanting slats of the roof. It's the scream lurking in your gorge, so ready to burst that the least noise above a cat's purr makes you tremble: when the marching band from the high school practices in the street outside, you sit in the back of the closet; when the March wind lashes the treetops at night, you crawl behind the sofa. Agoraphobia is when every night at 2:00 A.M. for five years—that's 1,825 nights—you go out loaded with Thorazine to walk in the street beneath the dark, blank windows of the houses on either side, and you never get more than a hundred yards from your door. Agoraphobia is when you cannot say hello to your oldest friend on the phone. It is when you can converse only with your cat. It is when writing a line of poetry on paper is like squeezing hardened glue from a tube. It is when related phobias become determinative: you cannot climb to the second rung of a stepladder without vertigo; you cannot walk into a room whose ceiling is six inches lower than the ceiling of your own room without cowering and trembling. It is when you shake like a sycamore leaf in the breeze whenever you are left alone in the house. It is when you smoke six packs of cigarettes a day. It is when you order them by the gross from the mail-order house and pay for them with borrowed money.

Agoraphobia is when night after night in loathing, in dreams or awake, you fuck yourself. Agoraphobia is when you breathe and eat the dust of oblivion.

Ten years later, recovering, you take 2,000 milligrams of Thorazine and step out of your brother's car at the curb. You walk across the sidewalk and enter the drugstore; you stand at the soda counter; you order a Coke; you drink it. Then you run for the car again. Coca-Cola is the most awful medicine in the world.

A few unfortunates will understand these words and will add to them their own horrifications. The rest of the world, the vast populace—the millions and billions, I guess—will find them only nonsense, the sheerest and most dismissible. Yet these words are, in fact, representative of the materiality of a large part of their author's life, a part that has deeply though covertly biased the rest.

I wish I could shimmy like my sister Kate.
She shakes it like jello on a plate.
My mama wanted to know last night
Why all the boys treat Kate so nice.
Everybody in our neighborhood
Knows she can shake it and that's understood.
I may be late but I'll be up to date
When I can shake it, shake it, shake it like Kate,
When I can shimmy like my sister Kate.

[Poems]

THIS IS WHERE YOU MUST LIVE

Three poems by Paul Celan, translated from the German by Heather McHugh and Nikolai Popov, in the Fall issue of Literary Imagination, *the review of the Association of Literary Scholars and Critics, based in Mount Pleasant, Michigan. A collection of McHugh and Popov's translations of Celan will be published next year by Wesleyan University Press.*

Come, we are cutting out
nerve cells
from the
rhomboid
fossa
—multipolar duckweed,
ponds spotlit till blank—

From still-reachable centers
ten fibers drag
half-recognizable things.

◆

Windfield bound for winter: this
is where you must live, granular, like a
pomegranate,
concealing
the crust of early frost,
with a darkening penstroke
across the goldyellow shadow of
your star-spattered wing—
yet you were never
only bird or fruit—
the supersonic wing
you
songed into being.

◆

Weather hand—
the bog puddle shows it the way
through the dark paludal wood.

Luminescence.

One who, one-
legged, pedals the peat organ bellows
gets for his efforts a bright shaft
of loss.

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IN DEFENSE OF THE BOOK

On the enduring pleasures of paper, type, page, and ink

By William H. Gass

When Ben Jonson was a small boy, his tutor, William Camden, persuaded him of the virtue of keeping a commonplace book: pages where an ardent reader might copy down passages that especially pleased him, preserving sentences that seemed particularly apt or wise or rightly formed and that would, because they were written afresh in a new place, and in a context of favor, be better remembered, as if they were being set down at the same time in the memory of the mind. Here were more than turns of phrase that could brighten an otherwise gloomy page. Here were statements that seemed so directly truthful they might straighten a warped soul on seeing them again, inscribed, as they were, in a child's wide round trusting hand, to be read and reread like the propositions of a primer, they were so bottomed and basic.

Jonson translated or rewrote the quotes and connected them with fresh reflections until their substance seemed his own, and seamlessly woven together, too, which is how the work reads today, even though it is but a collection of loose pages taken, after his death, from the defenseless drawers of his desk. The title, extended in the manner of the period into an explanation, reads, *Timber: or, Discoveries; Made upon Men and Matter: as they have flow'd out of his daily Readings; or had their refluxe to his peculiar Notion of the Times;* and it is followed by an epigraph taken from Persius' *Satires:* "To your own breast in quest of worth repair, and blush to find how poor a stock is there." With a flourish whose elegance is lost on our illiterate era, Jonson fills his succeeding page, headed *Sylva*, with a justification of his title in learned Latin, which can be translated as follows:

> (here are) the raw material of facts and thoughts, wood, as it were, so called from the multiplicity and variety of the matter contained therein. For just as we are commonly wont to call a vast number of trees growing indiscriminately "a wood," so also did the ancients call those of their books, in which were collected at random articles upon various and diverse topics, a wood, or timber trees.

My copy of *Discoveries* has its own history. It came from the library of Edwin Nungezer (Catalogue #297), whose habit it was to write his name and

William H. Gass, author of Finding a Form *and* Reading Rilke, *is the director of the International Writers Center at Washington University in St. Louis. His most recent essay for* Harper's Magazine, *"Shears of the Censor," appeared in the April 1997 issue.*

WE SHALL NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT A BOOK IS, AND WHY A BOOK HAS THE VALUE MANY PERSONS HAVE, IF WE FORGET HOW IMPORTANT IS ITS BODY



A Book of Common Prayer, by Miriam Schaer, 1996. Courtesy of The Rotunda Gallery / Brooklyn Information and Culture

the date of his acquisition on the title page (2/22/26), and his name, date, and place, again, at the end of the text, when he had finished reading it (Edwin Nungezer, Ithaca, New York, October 17, 1926). He underlined and annotated the book as a professor might (mostly, with a kind of serene confidence, in ink), translating the Latin as if he knew boobs like me would follow his lead and appreciate his helpful glosses. I have already quoted one of his interlineations. My marginalia, in a more cautious pencil, are there now too, so that Ben Jonson's text, itself a pastiche drawn from the writings of others, has leaped, by the serendipitous assistance of The Bodley Head's reprint across the years between 1641 to 1923, not surely in a single bound but by means of a few big hops nevertheless, into the professor's pasture a few years after, and then into mine in 1950, upon the sale of his estate, whereupon my name, with stiff and self-conscious formality, was also placed on its title page: William H. Gass, Cornell, '50. Even so, the book belongs to its scholarly first owner; I have only come into its possession. I hold it in my hand now, in 1999.

Another book, which is also a library but in a different way, George Saintsbury's *A History of English Prose Rhythm*, provides testimony concerning what happens when the guest is taken to a hostelry of transformatory power such as Ben Jonson's inn is:

> ... the selection, coadaptation, and application of the borrowed phrases to express Ben's views constitute a work more really original than most utterances that are guiltless of literature.

In setting down the provenance of my copy of *Discoveries* I have also done the same for the following sentence, which I put a faint marginal line beside while researching opinions about metaphor for my dissertation (now, thank God, a distant memory); it is a sentence that (having served in several capacities since) I know quite by heart, and treasure, inasmuch as it is as personal and particular to me now as its book is, having absorbed so much of myself, like the paper wrapped around fish and chips.

> What a deale of cold busines doth a man mis-spend the better part of life in! in scattering *complements*, tendring *visits*, gathering and venting *newes*, following *Feasts* and *Playes*, making a little winter-love in a darke corner.

We shall not understand what a book is, and why a book has the value many persons have, and is even less replaceable than a person, if we forget how important to it is its body, the building that has been built to hold its lines and language safely together through many adventures and a long time. Words on a screen have visual qualities, to be sure, and these darkly limn their shapes, but they have no materiality, they are only shadows, and when the light shifts they'll be gone. Off the screen they do not exist as words. They do not wait to be reseen, reread; they only wait to be remade, relit. I cannot carry the screen beneath a tree or onto a side porch; I cannot argue in *their* margins; I cannot not enjoy the memory of my dismay when, perhaps after years, I return to my treasured copy of *Treasure Island* to find the jam I inadvertently smeared there still spotting a page precisely at the place where Billy Bones chases Black Dog out of the Admiral Benbow with a volley of oaths and where his cutlass misses its mark to notch the inn's wide sign instead.

My copy, which I still possess, was of the cheapest. Published by M. A. Donohue & Co. of Chicago, it bears no date, and its coarse pages are jaundiced and brittle, yet they've outlived their manufacturer; they will outlive their reader—always comforting yet a bit sad. The pages, in fact, smell the age, their decrepitude, and the jam smear is like an ancient bruise; but as well as Marcel did by means of his madeleine, like a scar recalling its accident I remember the pounding in my chest when the black spot was pressed in Billy Bones's palm and Blind Pew appeared on the road in a passage that I knew even then was a piece of exemplary prose.

That book and I loved each other, and I don't mean just its text: that book which then was new, its cover slick and shiny, its paper agleam with the tossing sea and armed, as Long John Silver was, for a fight, its binding tight

For complete information about the artists' books accompanying this essay, see page

he elastic of new underwear, not slack as it is now, after so many openings nd closings, so many dry years; that book would be borne off to my room, where it lived through my high school miseries in a dime-store bookcase, and t would accompany me to college too, and be packed in the duffel bag I carried as a sailor. Its body may have been cheaply made by machine, and there nay have been many copies of this edition printed, but the entire press run has by this time been dispersed, destroyed, the book's function reduced to ts role as my old school chum, whom I see at an occasional reunion, along with editions of Malory and Mann, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, Hardy and Spengler, gloomy friends of my gloomy youth. Each copy went forth into bookstores to seek a purchaser it would make fortunate, and each has had its history of success or failure since, years of standing among rarity and leather, ay, when suddenly, after a week of weeping that floods the library, it finds itself in some secondhand ghetto, dumped for a pittance by customarily callous heirs into a crowd of those said, like cars, to have been "previously owned."

We all love the "previously owned." We rescue them like orphans rom their Dickensian dismay. I first hold the volume upside down and give ts fanned-out pages a good ruffle, as if I were shaking fruit from a tree: out will fall toothpicks and hairpins, calling cards and bits of scrap paper, the wellpressed envelope for a stick of Doublemint gum, a carefully folded obituary of the book's author, the newsprint having acidulously shadowed its containing pages, or, now and then, a message, interred in the text, as I had flutter rom a volume once owned by Arthur Holly Compton (and sold to me by he library of his own university). It was the rough draft of a telegram to the J.S. High Commissioner in charge of our occupation troops in Germany requesting the immediate dispatch of Werner Heisenberg to the United States.

Should we put these feelings for the object and its vicissitudes down to simple sentimental nostalgia? to our commonly assumed resistance to change? think not; but even as a stimulus for reminiscence, a treasured book is nore important than a dance card, or the photo that freezes you in mid-teeter t the edge of the Grand Canyon, because such a book can be a significant vent in the history of your reading, and your reading (provided *you* are significant) should be an essential segment of your character and your life. Unlike the love we've made or meals we've eaten, books congregate to form record around us of what they've fed our stomachs or our brains. These are not a hunter's trophies but the living animals themselves.

In the ideal logotopia, every person would possess his own library and add t least weekly if not daily to it. The walls of each home would seem made of books; wherever one looked one would only see spines; because every eal book (as opposed to dictionaries, almanacs, and other compilations) is mind, an imagination, a consciousness. Together they compose a civilization, or even several. Utopias, however, have the bad habit of hiding in their earts those schemes for success, those requirements of power, rules concerning conduct, which someone will one day have to carry forward, employ nd enforce, in order to achieve them, and afterward, to maintain the continued purity of their Being. Books have taught me what true dominion, what right rule, is: it is like the freely given assent and labor of the reader who will dream the dreams of the deserving page and expect no more fee than the eward of its words.

A few of us are fortunate enough to live in Logotopia, to own our own library, but for many this is not possible, and for them we need a free and pen public institution with a balanced collection of books that it cares for nd loans, with stacks where a visitor may wander, browse, and make discoveries; such an institution empowers its public as few do. In fact, it has no ival, for the books in the public library are the books that may take temporary residence in yours or mine. We share their wealth the way we share the pace of a public park. And the benefits include the education of the body olitic, an education upon which the success of democracy depends, and

UNLIKE THE LOVE WE'VE MADE OR MEALS WE'VE EATEN, BOOKS CONGREGATE TO FORM A RECORD AROUND US OF WHAT THEY'VE FED OUR BRAINS



Shades, by Robert Rauschenberg, 1964.
Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art, New York City

THE SCIENCES, IT IS ALLEGED, NO LONGER USE BOOKS; NEITHER DO THE PROFESSIONS, SINCE WHAT EVERYONE NEEDS IS DATA, DATA DAY AND NIGHT

one that is largely missing from the thrill-seeking, gossip-mongering, a mindless masses who have been content to place their governing, as well their values, faiths, and future plans, in the hands of the crudest commerc interests. The myths that moved us to worship in ways preferred and plann by the Church, or to feel about things in a manner that served the intere of the State, have less power over our souls now than the latest sale of sho which promise, through the glory of their names, the pleasures of sex and hea and social rank, and give new meaning to the old expression "leap of faith

My high school had no library worthy of the name "book," so I wou walk about a mile downtown to the public one to borrow, in almost every ca a new world. That's what a library does for its patrons. It extends the self is pure empowerment. I would gather my three or four choices, after del erations governed by ignorant conjecture, and then, before leaving, I wou sit at one of the long wide tables we associate with the institution now a read a page or two farther than I had while standing in the stacks. I scorn the books deemed appropriate for my age and selected only those I would understand. Reading what I didn't understand was, for one blissful period my life, the source of a profound if perverse pleasure. I also liked to look the card pasted in the back of the book to record previous borrowings—a ca that is, like so much other information, there no longer or discreetly inco plete. It gave me a good deal of satisfaction to be taking home some rarely re symbolically dusty, arcane tome. I checked out both my books and my pr at the same desk. See, O world, what I am reading and be amazed: Joyce, We Carlyle. Well, Wells I could understand. That, I would realize later, was w was the matter with him.

And the Saturday that *Ulysses* was denied me because my ears were young to hear its honesty was a large red-letter day, burned upon my sy bolic bosom wherever it was then kept, for on that day I learned w righteous indignation was; I realized what libraries were re ly for, just in the moment that my own was failing its fu tion.

Public libraries have succumbed to the same pressures that have ov whelmed the basic cultural functions of museums and universities, aims t should remain what they were, not because the old ways are always be but because in this case they were the right ones: the sustaining of standa the preservation of quality, the conservation of literacy's history, the e cation of the heart, eye, and mind. Now libraries devote far too much of t restricted space, and their limited budget, to public amusement. It is a of philistine life that amusement is where the money is.

Universities attract students by promising them, on behalf of their pare a happy present and a comfortable future, and these intentions are passed al through the system like salmonella until budgets are cut, research requ ments are skimped, and the fundamental formula for academic excelle is ignored if not forgotten. That formula is: a great library will attract a g faculty, and a great faculty will lure good students to its log; good stud will go forth and win renown, endowments will increase, and so will the ity of the football team, until original aims are lost sight of, academic ef slacken, the library stands neglected, the finer faculty slip away, good stud no longer seek such an environment, and the team gets even better.

The sciences, it is alleged, no longer use books; neither do the professi since what everyone needs is data, data day and night, because data, like d soothe the senses and encourage us to think we are, when at the peak of heap, on top of the world. Of course, libraries contain books, and books tain information, but information has always been of minor importance cept to minor minds. What matters is how the information is arranged, it is understood, and to what uses it is put. In short, what matters is the the data's in. I just employed the expression "It is a fact of philistine lif That is exactly what the philistine would like the library to retrieve f Just the facts, ma'am. Because facts can be drawn from the jaws of som



m like teeth; because facts are goods like shoes and shirts and, well, books. his week the library is having a closeout sale on facts about deserts. Get yours w. Gobi will be gone soon, the Sahara to follow.

Frequently, one comes across comparisons of the electronic revolution with at of writing and printing, and these are usually accompanied by warnings those suspicious of technology that objections to these forward marches e both fuddy-duddy and futile. But Plato's worries that writing would not veal the writer the way the soul of a speaker was exposed; that spontane- would be compromised; that words would be stolen (as Phaedrus is about steal them in that profound, beautifully written dialogue), and words uld be put in other mouths than those of their authors; that writing does t hear its reader's response; that lying, hypocrisy, false borrowing, ghost- iting, would increase so that the hollow heads of state would echo with ed words; and that, oddly, the advantages and powers of the book uld give power and advantage to the rich, who would learn to read d would have the funds to acquire and keep such precious vol- nes safe: these fears were overwhelmingly realized.

The advent of printing was opposed (as writing was) for a mber of mean and self-serving reasons, but the fear that it uld lead to the making of a million half-baked brains, and use the illicit turning of a multitude of untrained heads, as a nsequence of the unhindered spread of nonsense was a fear that s also well founded. The boast that the placement of books many hands would finally overthrow superstition was t entirely a hollow hope, however. The gift ve a million minds a chance at in- pendence.

It was the invention of photography, I member, that was supposed to run painters t of business. What it did, of course, was make ists out of them, not grandiose or sentimental de- ibers. And the pixelation of pictures has ren- ed their always dubious veracity as unbeliev- e as any other shill for a system. If blessings are mixed, are calamities. I note also that although the horse-drawn coach wagon nowadays carries rubes in a circle around Central Park, there more horses alive and well in the world than there ever were.

So will there be books. And if readers shut their minds down the better stare at pictures that rarely explain themselves; and if readers abandon read- g to swivel-hip their way through the interbunk, picking up scraps of juicy a here and there and rambling on the e-mail in that new fashion of gram- matical decay, the result will be to make real readers, then chief among the last who are left with an ability to reason, rulers. Books made the rich richer. Books will make the smart smarter.

The elevator, at first, seemed merely helpful, and the high-rise splen- against the night sky—what you could see of it. Recordings allow us to ar a few elevating strains from the "Ode to Joy" several times a day, the nius long ago beaten out of it. And those miracles of modern electronics t have allowed us to communicate quickly, easily, cheaply, gracelessly with ery part of the world permit us to do so in private and in every remove from e to face. Air travel is comfortable, affordable, and swift (right?) and en- es us to ignore geography, just as we ignore climate, because we have /AC and, in addition, can purchase terrible tomatoes any season of the ar from stores that are open all night.

Books in libraries, however awful some of them assuredly are, have been eened by editors who have a stake in their quality and their success. Once shelves, they may receive from readers the neglect they deserve. But at e end of all those digital delivery channels thrives a multitude of pips ose continuous squeaking has created static both loud and distressing. Amid

THE HORSE-DRAWN WAGON NOW CARRIES RUBES AROUND CENTRAL PARK, BUT THERE ARE MORE HORSES ALIVE THAN EVER BEFORE. SO WILL THERE BE BOOKS



Scarpidon, by Steven C. Daiber, 1990–98.
Courtesy Gallery of South Orange, New Jersey

LIBRARIES ACQUIRE WHAT WE CANNOT AFFORD, RETAIN WHAT WE PRIZE AND WOULD ADORE, RESTORE THE WORN, IGNORE FASHION, AND REPULSE PREJUDICE

the sound of a million popoffs, how shall we hear and identify a good though when it pops *out*?

The library is meant to satisfy the curiosity of the curious, offer to stuff stu dents with facts, provide a place for the lonely where they may enjoy the com panionship and warmth of the word. It is supposed to supply handbooks fo the handy, novels for insomniacs, scholarship for the scholarly, and make avai able works of literature to those individuals they will eventually haunt so suc cessfully; these readers, in self-defense, will bring them finally to life.

More important than any of these traditional things, I think, is the env ronment of books the library puts its visitors in and the opportunity for di covery that open stacks make possible. When I wish to look up a word—"go liwogg," which I've encountered spelled with two g's—or when I wish t plenish my mind with some information, say, about the ill-fated Library Alexandria, why don't I simply hit the right keys on my machine, where bot a dictionary and an encyclopedia are imprisoned? Well, I might, if th spelling of "golliwog" were all I wished to know, if researches, however larg or small, were not great pleasures in themselves, full of serendipity; for I hav rarely paged through one of my dictionaries (a decent household will hav a dozen) without my eye lighting, along the way, on words more beautifu than a found fall leaf, on definitions odder than any uncle, on grotesques suc as "gonadotropin-releasing hormone" or, barely above it—what?—"gombeen which turns out to be Irish for *usury*. I wonder if Ezra Pound knew that.

Similarly, when I walk through the library stacks in search of a number have copied from the card catalogue, my eyes are not watching my feet o aimlessly airing themselves; they are intently shelf-shopping, running alon all those intriguing spines, all those lovely shapes and colors and sizes. Tha is how, one day, I stopped before a thick yellow-backed book that gave i name in pale blue letters: *The Sot-Weed Factor*. Although publishe by Doubleday, so there was probably nothing of value in it, I still pulle the book from its place. What did the title mean? I read the first pag as is my habit. Page 1 and page 99 are my test spots. Then I bore home, neglecting to retrieve the book for which I had begun m search. Instead, for two days, in a trance of delight and admiratio I read John Barth's novel. That is why I stroll through the encycl pedia, why I browse the shelves.



CATHY CARVER

Everything in the World, by Janet Zweig and Laura Bergman, 1996. Courtesy Janet Zweig

One does not go to a library once, look around, and leave as if ha ing seen it. Libraries are not monuments or sights or notable pile churches by Wren, villas by Palladio. Libraries, which acquire th books we cannot afford, retain the many of which we are ignoran the spate of the new and the detritus of ancient life; libraries, whic preserve what we prize and would adore; which harbor the neglec ed until their time to set forth again is marked, restoring the wo and ignoring fashion and repulsing prejudice. Libraries are for lif centers to which we are recycled, as recursive as reading itself.

If I am speaking to you on the phone, watching your tinted sha ows cross the screen, downloading your message from my machin I am in indirect inspection, in converse, with you; but when I re the book you've written, you are as absent as last year, distant as Ca sar's reign. Before my eyes, asking for my comprehension, where I star in the stacks or sit in the reading room, are your thoughts and fee ings, hopes and fears, set down in sentences and paragraphs a pages . . . but in words not yours, meanings not mine, rather words a meanings that are the world's.

Yes, we call it recursive, the act of reading, of looping the loop, continually returning to an earlier group of words, behaving like Penelo by moving our mind back and forth, forth and back, reweaving what's u woven, undoing what's been done; and language, which regularly returns to its origin, which starts us off again on the same journey, older, altere Columbus one more time but better prepared each later voyage, knowing bit more, ready for more, equal to a greater range of tasks, calmer, confide

fter all, we've come this way before, have habits that help and a favoring nd; language like that is the language that takes us inside, inside the sennce—inside—inside the mind—inside—inside where meanings meet and are modified, reviewed, and revised, where no perception, no need, no feeling or thought, need be scanted or shunted aside.

I read around in this reprinted book I've rescued until I stumble on—liscover—my sentence, my marvel, my new found land.

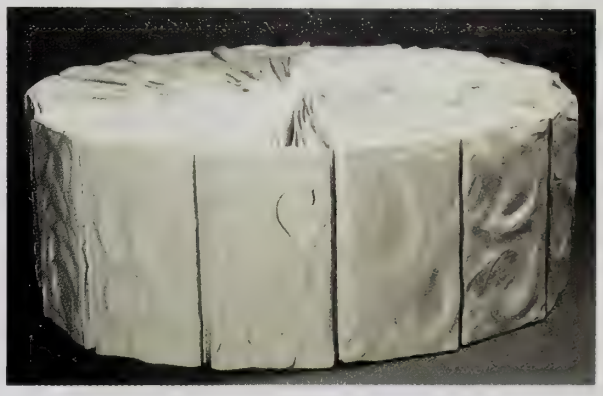
What a deale of cold busines doth a man mis-spend the better part of life in! in scattering *complements*, tendring *visits*, gathering and venting *newes*, following *Feasts* and *Playes*, making a little winter-love in a darke corner.

This sentence is a unit of human consciousness. It disposes its elements e the bits and pieces of a collage, and even if a number of artists were giv- the same materials: say, a length of ribbon, empty manila folder, cellolane wrapping, sheet of blue paper, postage stamp, shocking-pink crayon; a number of writers were allowed a few identical words and asked to m a phrase—with "was," for instance, out of "that," or "fair," or nen," and "all"—they'd not arrange them in the same way, make the ne object, or invariably ask, in some wonder, "then was all that fair?" if a point were being made in a debate. Among them, only James Joyce uld write of paradise, in *Finnegans Wake*, "then all that was, was r."

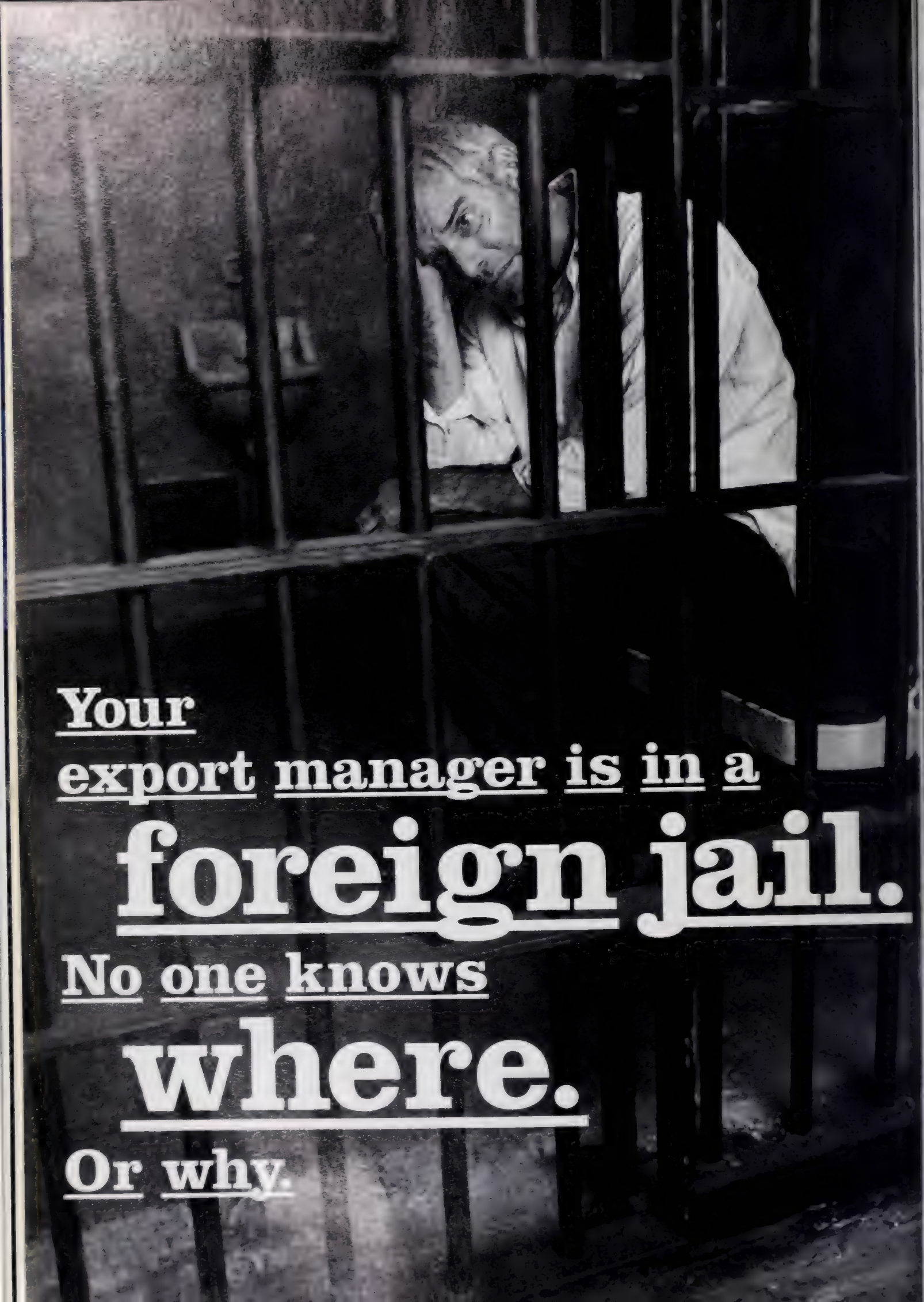
In this process of constituting a unit of human perception, thought, d feeling, which will pass like every other phase of consciousness inothers—one hopes—still more integrated and interesting, nothing is ore frequently overlooked or more vital to language than its pace and rasing: factors, if this were ballet, we would never neglect, because we e well aware how the body of the dancer comes to a periodic point of ise before beginning another figure; and how the central movement the torso is graced and amplified by the comportment of the arms, the t of the head and smile of the eyes; and how the diagram of one gesre is made to flow into another; and how the dancer must land from a leap, wever wide or high, as if a winged seed; and how the energy of movement controlled by the ease of its execution within the beat and mood and colof the music until we see one unified flow of expression. So too must the nguage keep its feet and move with grace, disclosing one face first before owing another, reserving certain signals until the end, when they will reverberate through the sentence like a shout down a street, and the vowels ll open and close like held hands, and the consonants will moan like aybe someone experiencing pleasure, and the reader will speed along a climbg clause, or sigh into a periodic stop full of satisfaction at this ultimate rese of meaning: a little winter-love in a dark corner.

Every day, from the library, books are borrowed and taken away like tubs chicken to be consumed, though many are also devoured on the premises, the Reading Room, where traditionally the librarian, wearing her clichés, ushes an already silent multitude and glares at the offending air. Yet there, in someone's rented room, or even by a sunny pool—who can predict the ces where the encounter will occur?—the discovery will be made. And nger will find the place and mark it before the book's covers come closed; its reader will rise and bear her prize out of the library into the kitchen, ck to her dorm room, or, along with flowers and candy, to a bedside, in a e bag onto the beach; or perhaps a homeless scruffy, who has been hudng near a radiator, will leave the volume behind him when he finally es, as if what his book said had no hold on his heart, because he cannot ord a card. Yet, like Columbus first espying land, each will have discovd what he or she cares about, will know at last what it is to love—a comonplace occurrence—for, in the library, such epiphanies, such enrichents of mind and changes of heart, are the stuff of every day. ■

SOMEWHERE, THE DISCOVERY WILL BE MADE, AND A FINGER WILL MARK THE PLACE, AND THE READER WILL RISE AND BEAR HER PRIZE OUT OF THE LIBRARY



Frosting, by Meg Belichick, 1991.
Courtesy of The Rotunda Gallery / Brooklyn Information and Culture


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export manager is in a
foreign jail.
No one knows
where.
Or why.

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THE SWEET HEREAFTER

Our craving for sugar starves the Everglades and fattens politicians

By Paul Roberts

Like any modern farming town, Clewiston, Florida, de facto capital of the American sugar industry and, by its own estimate, "America's Sweetest Town," reveals itself to visitors well beyond the city limits. Thirty miles out, the famous sugarcane crop begins—tall, genetically tailored, and emerald green—stretching out like nappy AstroTurf as far as the eye can see. Next come the thick, mile-high smoke clouds as the freshly cut cane fields are burned off. And then comes the smell: the funky, earthy, sickly-sweet odor of cane juice being boiled down into coarse blond crystals of raw sugar. Six months a year, twenty-four hours a day, in Clewiston or anywhere else in the Rhode Island–size piece of drained swamp known as the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA), the scent is inescapable and unmistakable, a territorial marker that makes newcomers grimace and reminds everyone else what money smells like.

On this particular October afternoon, one week before Election Day, 1998, the lucrative bouquet is especially sharp in downtown Clewiston. Not only has the cane harvest begun but U.S. Sugar Corporation, headquartered here since 1931, is planning a huge bash for the opening of its new sugar refinery. Located on the south side of town, the refinery towers twelve stories over the flat former swamplands, a colossal monument to prosperity in the age of consolidated agribusiness. After today, U.S. Sugar will no longer need East Coast refiners to turn its raw crystals into white table sugar but will sell directly to the customer, in everything from 2-pound bags for homemakers to 100-ton railcar loads for industrial users. This is the kind of vertical integration that already defines most of the food industry, and its arrival in Clewiston is being treated like the discovery of oil, or the acquisition of a pro football team, or something less earthly altogether: for indeed, J. Nelson Fairbanks, CEO of U.S. Sugar, is a fiercely religious man who believes his company is on a mission from God and who is, in any case, throwing a party of biblical proportions. Already, workers are unfolding a circus-size tent that, when erected, will boast stadium-caliber air-conditioning, a magnificent stereo sound system, a full-size catering kitchen, and seating for 750. The guest list reads like a who's who of sugar: lobbyists and industrial sugar users, analysts and reporters, local lawmakers, top state politicians, and congressmen—even Fairbanks's arch rivals, Alfonso "Alfy" Fanjul and his brother, Jose "Pepe," authentic sugar barons whose neighboring cane holdings are the biggest in America and whose political connections in Tallahassee and Washington are so famous that Hollywood has based movie villains on them.



BURNING CANE FIELD

The political tone of the festivities is no accident. Sugar has always been on intimate terms with government, for without it the industry could not enjoy its current size and wealth. For example, until recently, growers like Fairbanks and the Fanjuls relied on a federal "guest" worker program for a steady supply of cheap, docile Caribbean cane cutters. And although that particular embarrassment is gone cane producers remain absolutely beholden to other forms of governmental intervention. Nearly every acre of sugarcane in south Florida is irrigated and drained via a costly, tax-supported system of pumps, dikes, and canals that effectively prevents the Everglades Agricultural Area from reverting to swamp while keeping Lake Okeechobee, to the north, from flooding. Unfortunately, this system, in combination with the heavy fertilizers sugar farmers apply to their fields, has degraded the remaining "pristine" Everglades downstream, yielding years

Paul Roberts is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine. His last piece for the magazine, "The Federal Chain-Saw Massacre," appeared in the June 1997 issue

Photograph by Chris Brown / Sip

litigation and an environmental tastrophe that will cost taxpayers billion to fix. But not sugar. Although Florida cane farmers are footg part of the cleanup cost, their small are is all but buried under another, ore pervasive government ndout: a federal sugar program at keeps the domestic price of gar some 50 percent above the rld market price. This sweet otectionist deal not only adds a ckel profit to every pound of gar produced by large U.S. cane mers but has abetted the Everades' decline by encouraging rming in marginal swamplands at could not be profitably plant- otherwise.

Sugar is, in effect, getting paid do some serious ecological dame, an argument made by environmentalists, free-traders, and her critics each time Congress authorizes the sugar program, t to little avail.

ch time, the instry prevails with impressive blend political skill and sources. Between 90 and 1998, merican cane rmers and their metime allies—gar-beet farmers, gar refiners, and e makers of high-ictose corn syrup HFCS)—poured me $13 million to presidential d congressional mpaigns and tens millions more into local races, escially in Florida, where sugar has ent at least $26 million on everying from referendums to supporting Bush for governor in 1998.

That's a lot of money, especially from industry less than one tenth the size automobiles or oil, and it has forged hain of political obligations and alnces that is immune to even the st vigorous good-government crazes. ree years ago, for example, the sug- lobby not only throttled a congresnal attempt to phase out sugar price pports (persuading six of the bill's -sponsors to switch sides) but dished out some $23 million to stop a Florida proposal to tax growers for Everglades restoration. And just this April, sugar lobbyists in Tallahassee pushed through a last-minute bill weakening federal authority over Everglades cleanup, then convinced newly elected Governor Bush to sign the law immediately, before incensed environmentalists could mount a veto campaign.

Nor is the White House immune to sugar's charms. In 1996, just hours after Al Gore proposed his own sugar tax and vowed to make the Everglades the centerpiece of the administration's environmental policy, Alfy Fanjul called Clinton, interrupting the President's meeting with Monica Lewinsky, to remind him of the vast sums the Fanjuls had pumped into Clinton's presidential campaigns. (Lewinsky would later remember the caller's name as "something like 'Fanuli.'") Gore's tax proposal vanished, as did the administration's interest in genuine restoration. This July, Gore presented Congress with an $8 billion, twenty-year Everglades restoration plan, which calls for ripping out hundreds of miles of dikes and claims to let the swamp flow free and wild again. What Gore failed to mention, however, is that the plan is crippled because, at the behest of sugar lobbyists, it leaves virtually untouched the cane farms that helped to create the mess in the first place. If anything, the new refinery in Clewiston is really a colossal monument to a relatively small industry's success in utterly dominating an entire segment of American policy.





HARVESTING CANE IN THE USA (ABOVE); SUGARCANE (LEFT)

With two days till the opening, Clewiston is abuzz with a homecoming-game excitement. Dignitaries have begun to arrive and the hotels are full. The *Clewiston News*'s "Special Clewiston Sugar Refinery Grand Opening Issue" has hit the stands, and a small army of U.S. Sugar publicists has prepared a paralyzing concoction of press releases, backgrounders, tours, and free food for the coming media hordes. Arriving in Clewiston, I'm greeted by Laura Jamieson, a cordial, businesslike flack assigned to me by U.S. Sugar's public relations firm in Miami. Over a small table in the dimly lit Everglades Lounge, Jamieson thanks me profusely for my interest in sugar, passes me several pounds of press material, then outlines my itinerary for the next two days—a nonstop series of refinery visits, executive interviews, and

otographs by Chris Brown/Sipa (top); Melanie Acevedo/Photonica (bottom)

annual feasts, culminating in a front-row seat at the refinery opening, with side excursions for a fishing trip or a tour of Miami Beach, if the journalistic need arises. It's a blend of Southern hospitality and sophisticated "communications strategy," a full-court press designed to keep me exhaustively informed, thoroughly occupied, and completely out of mischief while I'm in Clewiston.

In contrast, U.S. Sugar's main competition, the Fanjuls, and their company, Florida Crystals, seem altogether indifferent to the press. Neither Alfy nor Pepe will consent to speak to me even by phone, and requests to visit the company's vast offshore cane holdings in the Dominican Republic are steadfastly ignored. The brothers' reclusiveness isn't surprising. Whereas Fairbanks and U.S. Sugar have continued to bank on their image as sugar pioneers with close ties to the land, the Fanjuls have no such cachet. Rich, controversial, and Cuban-born, with Palm Beach mansions and a $500 million fortune, the brothers are easy targets for muckrakers from *60 Minutes* to the *National Enquirer*, most of whom portray the Fanjuls, in not so subtle racist undertones, as symbols of why America is going down the toilet. The unkindest cut was *Striptease*, a satirical 1996 film featuring two cutthroat Cuban-American sugar barons, their toadying congressman, and the dancer that brings them all down. *Miami Herald* columnist Carl Hiaasen, on whose novel the movie was based, called his barons Joaquin and Wilberto Rojo. But any reader of the south Florida society pages had no difficulty recognizing Alfy and Pepe, their collection of yachts and politicians, or their family's elitist disregard for those who work their lands. "Christopher had never been to the farm, but he'd seen photographs," writes Hiaasen of Joaquin Rojo's womanizing, barhopping son. "The cane field looked like a stinking hellhole; he was astounded at the fortune they produced. There



THE CLEWISTON REFINERY

was so much money that one couldn't possibly spend it all."

Begging off a dinner invitation from Jamieson and her P.R. colleagues, I spend my first night exploring America's Sweetest Town, a task that takes all of about ten minutes. Clewiston's 6,348 residents live in a narrow crescent, bounded on the north by the huge earthen levee that keeps Lake Okeechobee from overflowing its banks and in every other direction by cane—a sea of green that laps up against backyards and parking lots, playgrounds and curbs, and fundamentally shapes every aspect of life within. In fact, although cane is grown in some eighty tropical and semitropical nations and states—and sugar beets nearly everywhere else—few spots on earth render the bizarre spectacle of the modern sugar industry quite so visible as south Florida. Three counties south of Lake Okeechobee account for more than half the country's cane production, a focus on sugar so intense and deeply entrenched that, depending on the time of year, a visitor will find not only the U.S. Sugar Corporation and the Sugarland Highway but also Sugar Industry Appreciation Week, the Sugar Festival, the Taste of Sugar Country Dessert Contest, the "Miss Sugar" Beauty Pageant, and even, in the small black town of Harlem, a Miss Brown Sugar contest. Driving slowly down Clewiston's main street, hunting for something other than political ads and Christian rock on the radio, I nearly rear-end a green Ford pickup making a left turn. The driver, wearing the customary straw planter's hat, stares searchingly at me in his rearview mirror, then smiles warmly and makes his turn. His bumper sticker reads: WE RAISE CANE.

Factory and farming towns have always found quaint ways to celebrate their economic mainstays, but there is more to sugar's pull than mere dollars. Sugar has power because almost no one who has once tasted sugar ever wants to do without it. We love sugar and our affection is physical, an involuntary, evolutionary adaptation that guided our ancestors to fruits and other crucial carbohydrates and that seems to involve the same pleasure-producing neural chemistry associated with opiates. That may or may not explain why people kicking heroin crave sugary snacks, or why, in lab tests, even healthy subjects eat significantly more food when it's sweetened. But it certainly does make clear why the food industry now adds sucrose and other sweeteners—notably HFCS—to nearly all processed foods, from ketchup and sandwich bread to frozen entrées and baby food. Like Elvis or sex, sugar is everywhere and in everything—our economy and politics, our language and demographic makeup, our physiology and mass psychology, and, of course, our diet. Sweeteners now make up a fifth of America's caloric intake; the average American consumes a pound of sweetener, or 117 teaspoons, every sixty hours.

All green plants create sucrose from sunlight, air, and water via photosynthesis. But the most proficient species are the sugar maple, the sugar beet, and sugarcane. And although beets are now the nation's greatest source of sucrose, it was cane, or *Saccharum*, that launched the sugar business and that has, for better or worse, provided most of the industry's visible character. A massive, bamboo-like grass that can grow twenty feet tall, *Saccharum* was discovered in southern Asia 10,000 years ago and by 300 B.C. was being processed into sweet syrups. Crusaders brought a crude crystalline sugar back to Europe, where demand soon outstripped supply. By the fifteenth century, when European explorers sailed south to the African coast and west to the New World, they were driven as much as anything by the need to find more suitable sugar-growing regions.

By the 1600s, the sugar colony had emerged as the mercantile model of imperial commerce—a massive, centralized slave plantation devoted to a single crop that was shipped back to the mother country for refining. A delicate plant, cane needed ample fertilizer, irrigation, and a workforce inured to backbreaking tedium. During

Photograph by Bruce Bennett/Palm Beach Post/Silver Im

rvest, slaves spent weeks in the ds, bent over, hacking the tough ody stalks with razor-sharp ma- tes as they marched down the bug- d snake-infested rows. The cane uld be hauled to a mill and ground ween rollers to extract the juice. e precious liquid was then reduced massive heated cauldrons, tended nd the clock in oppressively hot to-factories, and, at a precise con- ency, poured into molds. Excess uid was drained off as molasses, and hardened bricks of raw sugar were t to refineries in Antwerp, Lon- n, or Rouen for additional whiten- . Timing was critical, for cane juice ils in hours; during harvest, milling ntinued around the clock, leaving rkers so tired that the fingers and nds of those feeding the mills of- slipped in between the grinding lers. As one historian notes: "A chet was kept in readiness to sev- he arm, which in such cases was al- ys drawn in; and this no doubt ex- ins the number of maimed tchmen."

These were minor obstacles. By 00, spurred by the growing popu- ity of coffee, chocolate, and tea, ar had surpassed tobacco as the w World's most lucrative export. gar, molasses, and rum (from fer- nted molasses) gave the struggling onies their first economic impetus, tering new commercial and politi- elites—and new patterns of ex- itation. Under the infamous "tri- gle of trade," sugar from English onies in the Caribbean went to gland for refining, ships then went to Africa to exchange goods for sh slaves, who were shipped to ribbean plantations. Writes histo- n Sidney Mintz: "The first enslaved icans brought to [the New World] 1503–1505 worked on sugar plan- ons, and the last enslaved Africans ggled into Cuba in the 1860s or 0s worked on sugar plantations— epressingly enduring continuity."

As nations grew accustomed to sug- evenues, the industry gained polit- l power. Countries shielded their nter colonies with protective tar- sparking geopolitical strife. In 1733, tish planters on Barbados and Ja- ica, annoyed that New Englanders re using French Indies molasses to make rum, convinced Parliament to heavily tax any non-British sugar imported by America.[1] The resulting Molasses Act contributed as much to America's revolutionary fervor as any other British snub.

Yet for all sugar's importance to America's origins, the new country had no sugar industry of its own and had to rely on imports—a position that abetted America's growing aspirations to imperialism. In the Kingdom of Hawaii, American sugar planters, hungry for the import privileges enjoyed by U.S. planters, cynically fostered a revolt that drew American military intervention and, eventually, annexation. In Cuba, U.S. investors bought up almost half of all sugar production, which not only let them feed their American refineries with cheap raw-sugar imports but also fostered massive resentment in Cuba that, coupled with the economic instability inherent in one-crop economies, contributed to a century of rebellions, dictatorships, coups, repression, and, finally, revolution.

Even by 1920, the U.S. sugar industry still was small, centered mainly in Louisiana and Hawaii with a slowly developing sugar-beet presence in the Midwest. Florida wasn't even a bit player. Despite a subtropical climate and an early sugar heritage—*Cañaveral* means "cane field" in Spanish—cane was a garden species, grown piecemeal by settlers and Seminoles. The future capital of cane was still dismissed as a hot, buggy, underpopulated state whose swampy saw-grass interior, in one account, was "suitable only for the haunt of noxious vermin, or the resort of pestilent reptiles."



SUGAR FACTORY IN THE WEST INDIES, CIRCA 1670

At a boat ramp just off the Sugarland Highway, on the eastern edge of the Everglades, Freddy Fisikelli slides a battered aluminum airboat into the tepid waters of an irrigation canal and beckons to me. Sixty-nine years old and rail thin, tanned to the color of shoe leather, Fisikelli grew up on the swamp, hunting and fishing until the game and fish disappeared, and is said to know the Everglades better than anyone alive. I've ditched my sugar publicists for the morning to take a ride in his boat, a sixteen-foot-long flat-bottom barge with a huge rear-mounted propeller and a gargantuan 500-cubic-inch V-8 engine pulled from a Cadillac, sans muffler. Fisikelli hands me ear protectors, hits the ignition, and casts off. We motor slowly down the canal until he finds an opening into the swamp. Tugging on the rudder, he nudges the boat through a curtain of reeds and drops the throttle.

From the air, the Everglades look pretty much like what you'd expect from a huge swamp—miles and miles of soggy grasslands sprinkled here and there with trees. But down low, racing along a narrow canal at 45 mph, the effect is much more like being in a jeep on a savanna, with head-high, brownish-green grass stretching off to a flat

[1] *Molasses became intrinsic to New England culture, cooking, and even history: on January 15, 1919, a molasses holding tank operated by the Purity Distilling Co. in Boston's North End collapsed, sending a 2-million-gallon river of warm thick syrup raging down Commercial Street. The brown wave, as high as thirty feet, knocked over buildings and cars, buried horses, killed twenty-four people, and injured sixty more. Company officials at first blamed vibrations from a passing elevated train, then speculated that anarchists from the predominantly Italian neighborhood had dynamited the tank. A later inquiry cited structural defects.*

aving from Culver Pictures

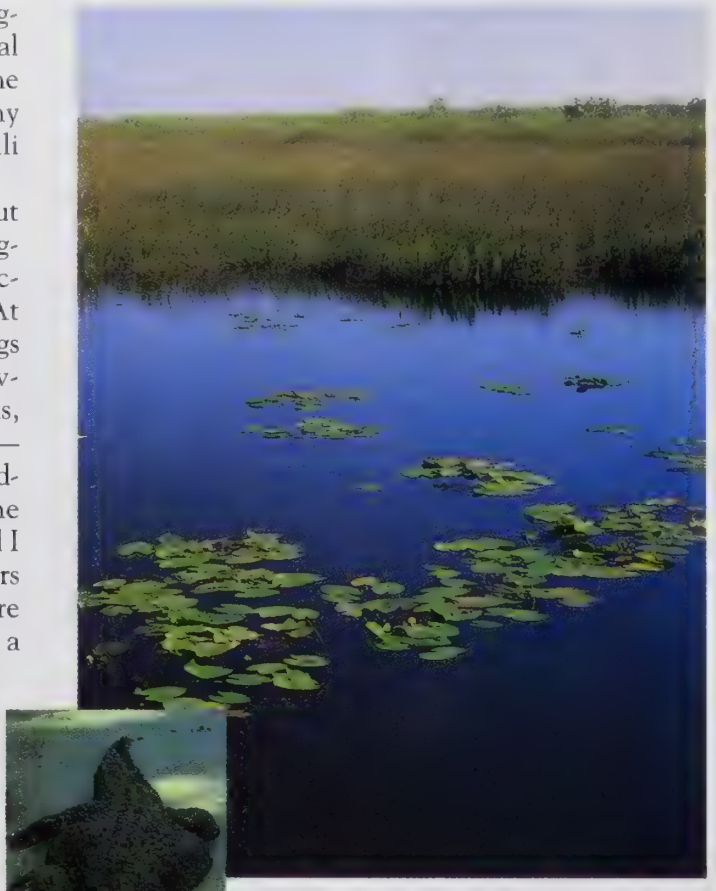
horizon and a huge, pale blue sky. For half an hour [illegible] the watery track, [illegible] sheath of spiky [illegible] and faces and [illegible] the native fauna. Blackbirds [illegible] skyward, while the larger, [illegible] varieties—blue herons and cattle egrets—heave up and flap along ahead of us for a dozen yards before veering off. Reeds whip by; a dragonfly creases my hair. The canal widens momentarily, and to one side something large and shiny rolls beneath the water. Fisikelli taps my shoulder: "alligator."

The engine's roar drowns out any real conversation, encouraging a bizarre, vibrating introspection as the landscape flies by. At irregular intervals the boat jogs from side to side as Fisikelli, navigating by invisible landmarks, turns into secluded side canals—right, right, left, right, left—winding deeper and deeper into the marsh. The place is a maze, and I begin to understand why hunters and surveyors who go astray here might spend days looking for a way out—and why drug dealers and other thugs use the place to hide problematic objects. Fisikelli himself has walked out twice after his boat broke down. Once he was just five miles from a road, but it took him six hours to slog through the knee-deep water and muck, and when he reached terra firma, his trousers had been ripped to shreds by the razor-sharp native saw grass. That time, Fisikelli was lucky: he got out before nightfall, when mosquitoes come on so thick that marooned hunters paint themselves with engine oil to ward off bites. I'm about to ask, half-jokingly, whether Fisikelli knows where we are when the track widens, the engine goes silent, and we start to drift across a pond-size space of open water dotted with lily pads and purple gallinules. I pull off my earmuffs. The humid air is surprisingly fresh, filled with the sweetish smells of hay and peat and the sound of crickets and frogs. Waves slap rhythmically against the boat's metal sides. I peer down: the water is still and clear, revealing a few tiny minnows above a copper-colored algae bottom. Looking more closely, I realize that the water is actually moving, barely, from north to south—the slowest river in the world.

The Everglades were created more than 6,000 years ago, when a receding ocean exposed the vast limestone plain of southern Florida. Inundated by heavy rainfall, invaded by subtropical plants that favored the low-nutrient limestone soil, the landscape gradually gave rise to a forty-mile-wide "river of grass" that began at the southern shore of Lake Okeechobee and flowed in a gentle curve all the way to Florida Bay, 100 miles to the south. Actually, "river" is a misleading term. Between lake and bay, the land slopes less than a quarter of an inch a mile; before 1900, water moved so slowly that a droplet leaving Okeechobee would have evaporated and returned to the marsh as rain perhaps a dozen times before reaching the bay six months to a year later. Nor did the river always flow. In the dry winters the river would drop, its waters receding into millions of shallow pools that teemed with trapped fish and wer a haven for wading birds, which nest ed on the temporarily dry ground. I the wet summers the Everglades woul again be waterlogged, soaking up tril lions of gallons of rainwater like a na ural reservoir, filtering it, and slowl discharging to Florida Bay. Oscillatin on this extreme hydrologic cycle, the Everglades offered particular environmen amenable to a narrow band plants and animals and utte ly contemptuous of nearly a other life forms.

Especially sugar. For all i association with the swamp Everglades, sugarcane is actuall a *dry* land crop requiring con stant irrigation yet intoleran of flooding, growing best whe the water table lies two feet be low the soil surface. In the Eve glades the water table is tw feet *above* the soil. Or was, b fore the mid-nineteenth cen tury. That's when Congres handed twenty million wet i land acres to Florida lawmaker who saw the Everglades as th main obstacle holding the new state back from a rightfu prosperous destiny. "Reclam tion" became the rallying cry, righteous crusade complet with glorious visions of an ev swamp giving way to vast o derly rectangles of cotton, rice, o anges, and, of course, sugarcane. "Th statesman whose exertions shall caus the millions of acres they contain, no worse than worthless, to teem with th products of agriculture industry," wa bled one booster, "will merit a hig place in public favor, not only with h own generation, but with posterity."

Slowly, expensively, crews dredg the muck, and by 1920 four massiv canals had been carved from Oke chobee to the Atlantic Ocean, drai ing the swamp just south of the la and raising in its place a fertile crescen of new farmland. The floodgates we now literally open. Between 1900 ar 1930, southeastern Florida's coast population jumped tenfold, and wit postwar sugar prices sky-high, sug wasn't far behind. Even as realtors we selling northerners swampland "by th gallon," backers of sugar ventures we



FLORIDA EVERGLADES (ABOVE); AMERICAN ALLIGATOR (LEFT)

Photographs by Jim Stemberg (top), Tom and Pat Leeson (bottom) / Photo Researchers

omoting the Everglades as a cane-owers' paradise. By one consultant's ckoning, the black saw-grass peat, "muck" soil, was so rich in nutri-ts that, properly drained, the re-on's "fertility will be established, actically *forever*"—without costly tilizers. Investors came running like ildren to sweets, among them harles Stewart Mott, the former Gen-al Motors magnate and philan-ropist.[2] Civic hopes were strato-heric. In Clewiston, city fathers laid t plans for a sprawling lakeside me-polis of 20,000 souls, complete with nassive street grid and new moniker "the Chicago of the Everglades."

They were a little ahead of them-lves. Even after drainage the only ing to grow on the unfertilized saw-ass peat turned out to be . . . more saw ass. Not only was the soil less fertile an advertised but the climate of uth Florida lacked the warmth that ne is accustomed to. By the time gar farmers solved that small prob-m—by breeding new strains of cane d, more to the point, by massive ap-ications of phosphorus and nitro-n—the inevitable oversupply of sug-, followed by the global Depression, shed prices to a few pennies a pound. any ventures, including Mott's, were iven into the muck. Even after Con-ess came to the rescue, stabilizing ices by limiting imports and con-olling domestic production—and en after Mott relaunched his venture U.S. Sugar Corporation—the Flori-sugar industry remained tiny.

Then came the 1959 Cuban revo-tion, and overnight the state's for-nes were made. Having embargoed Cuban sugar, U.S. trade officials led the gap by encouraging domestic oduction of sugar through massive centives. The results were swift and edictable. U.S. Sugar Corporation d its smaller rivals expanded as fast they could acquire land and get it anted, while engineers drained more amp. By the mid-1960s, Florida's ne acreage had jumped tenfold; the state's sugar industry now was a real player, with big money and an absolute stranglehold on Florida politics, especially in matters of water and drainage.

The post-Castro opportunities also drew outsiders, among them Alfonso Fanjul, heir to the Fanjul-Gomez-Mena sugar empire in Cuba, a sprawling enterprise that, before Castro "stole" it, included 150,000 acres of sugarcane and ten mills. Forced to flee Cuba, Fanjul had no intention of quitting sugar. Moving to Palm Beach in 1960, he and some fellow exiles raised $640,000 to buy Osceola Farms, which boasted a 4,000-acre parcel of drained farmland in the EAA. By the time of Alfonso's death, in 1980, the eldest of his four sons, Alfy and Pepe, were doing $30 million in annual sales. Five years later, in a move that confirmed Alfy's strategic touch, the company leveraged $240 million for the sugar holdings of an ailing rival, netting the Fanjuls 90,000 new sugar acres in Florida plus 110,000 acres of sugar in the Dominican Republic. By 1990, the company, now known as Florida Crystals, had not only surpassed U.S. Sugar as America's biggest cane grower

J.S. Sugar is still partly owned by the Mott undation, whose devotion to environmen-l causes has yet to reach Florida. In the 90s, the foundation spent $800,000 saving South American wetland; in 1996 alone, .S. Sugar spent $3 million to defeat efforts protect the United States' largest wetland.

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but had become the dominant force in sugar politics, pouring money into election campaigns, flying lawmakers around in company jets, even hosting a Bush Administration official at its posh Dominican resort, Casa de Campo. In nearly every way, the Gomez-Mena empire had been reborn.

But by then the thirty-year post-Castro bubble was ready to burst. Health experts were again denouncing sugar. Alternative sweeteners, such as HFCS, were eroding the sugar market while Congress was threatening the sugar program. Labor lawyers, meanwhile, claimed that Florida cane growers routinely, and profitably, abused the thousands of cane cutters brought in each year from the Caribbean—claims that resulted in multimillion-dollar lawsuits and forced the U.S. industry to convert to mechanical harvesting. But the most serious threat came from environmentalists, who argued that phosphorus runoff from cane farms was slowly poisoning the Everglades and that the government's system of canals and dikes had destroyed the swamp's crucial flooding cycle—all as state officials looked the other way. In 1988, the U.S. Attorney in Miami filed suit against Florida for failing to enforce its own water-quality standards. For the sugar industry, it was a systemic shock that would, in the parlance of B movies, either kill it or make it much, much stronger.



ALFONSO FANJUL WITH PRESIDENT CLINTON

"We're talking *phosphorus* here, not mercury or heavy metals." In the small conference room at Florida Crystals' packing plant, Jorge Dominicis, the Fanjuls' spokesman, is tutoring me on the finer points of environmental science. Through a cooperative P.R. deal with U.S. Sugar, Dominicis has joined my media tour and for the last hour has used maps, charts, and a steady stream of gee-whiz comparisons to demonstrate just how overblown the pollution issue really is. "We're talking parts per *billion*," Dominicis. "It'd be like taking ten drops and putting them into a backyard *swimming* pool." Across the room, Malcolm S. "Bubba" Wade, Dominicis's counterpart at U.S. Sugar, reminds me that phosphorus is necessary for all life; why, the bottled water you buy in the store has more phosphorus than is allowed under federal water standards in parks and refuges. Adds Dominicis: "You'd have to drink 1,400 *gallons* of the stuff to get your daily recommended allowance."

Like much else with sugar, the issue isn't so clear-cut, nor is it simply about the toxicity of a single chemical. When engineers turned the upper third of the Everglades into farms, they effectively severed Lake Okeechobee from the swamp and reversed its natural water cycle. Where the Everglades had been too dry for farming in the winter and so flood-prone in summer that hurricanes wiped out entire towns, engineers could now irrigate farms in winter and drain them in the wet season. City dwellers benefited, too. Engineers built a massive north-south levee to keep Everglades waters out of the narrow coastal strip that runs from West Palm Beach down to Miami, home today to 5 million people. And to supply those thirsty urbanites, engineers sealed off huge tracts of Everglades just south of the farms—essentially, the middle third of the swamp—as million-acre reservoirs, or Water Conservation Areas. Almost as an afterthought, in 1947 the bottom third of the swamp was reserved as a national park.

From the window of U.S. Sugar's corporate aircraft, five thousand feet up, the signs of so much alteration are unmistakable. South from Okeechobee, the Everglades Agricultural Area unfolds like an enormous emerald checkerboard, its fields perfectly rectangular, neatly scribed by dikes, roads, and rails. Just below the farms lie the water-control structures—huge floodgates and some of the world's biggest diesel-powered pumping stations, each of which can move 2 million gallons a minute from the farms into the highway-size canals that run south and southeast, toward the coast.

From this height, it's also clear why the orderly layout doesn't work. In the dry season, the EAA essentially dams up Lake Okeechobee, diverting water that once flowed into the swamp and sending it instead to sugar farmers or urban users. But in the wet season, to keep farms and suburbs dry, canals in and around the EAA carry away the rainwater as fast as it falls. Some is pumped into the Water Conservation Areas, often faster than the swamp can absorb it, drowning out bird and wildlife populations there. The rest—several hundred billion gallons a year—is simply sent down the main canals "to tide" (where this unnatural flood of fresh water is destroying Florida's delicate saltwater estuaries). Not enough water remains to filter down to the last pristine sections of swamp in Everglades National Park. In other words, while the lower glades are starved of water, the upper glades are drowning—a bizarre and ugly situation that has nonetheless allowed sugar officials to insist that the *real* Everglades problem isn't water *quality* as much as water *quantity*.

In fact, the sugar industry knows good and well that water quality and water quantity are inseparable. By draining the saw-grass muck, engineers exposed underwater soils to the air, allowing fertilizers and natural nutrients to oxidize, thus freeing them up to blow away as dust or float off in rain storms. Over time, up to six feet of phosphorus-laden topsoil has washed from the farms into the Everglades. Granted, phosphorus isn't particularly toxic, and farm runoff concentrations were relatively tiny—200 to 500 parts per billion. But keep in mind that the original Everglades vegetation developed in the nutrient-poor limestone soils, and that even a little phosphorus goes a long way. In the pristine parts of the park, water contains only a few parts per billion (ppb) of phosphorus. But research shows that as concentrations rise even slightly native plants, such as saw grass, react—first by growing to monstrous unnatural sizes, then by dying off and giving way to phosphorus-loving species, such as cattails.

Photograph by Loren Hosak/Palm Beach Post/Silver Image

Exactly how much phosphorus the wamp can tolerate before changes oc- ur is, naturally, a subject of ferocious ebate. Ron Jones, a microbiologist at lorida International University and a eteran of the Everglades controver- , claims that 5 ppb to 7 ppb is the atural level, with a maximum of 10 pb. Sugar scientists say it's higher—as uch as 50 ppb. Regardless, changes are ccurring. In the national park, for ex- mple, cattails are almost onexistent. But move north nd cattail density rises, until, the upper parts of the Wa- r Conservation Areas, where rm water discharges, cattails ave completely replaced saw rass and caused a ripple ef- ct through the Everglades' cosystem. Cattails grow so ickly that wading birds—the ood storks, white ibises, great grets, and others—have no lace to land. They also have othing to eat, since all this ew plant life sucks oxygen om the water as it dies and ecomposes, killing algae and he fish that feed on it. The rocess is known as eutrophi- ation, and the numerical im- acts are staggering. As feeding nd nesting sites have dwin- led, the annual breeding pop- lation of wood storks, for ex- mple, dropped from 20,000 n 1960 to 1,800 today. The ape Sable seaside sparrow, ubbed by ecologists an indi- ator species for the swamp, has dwin- led from the tens of thousands to oughly 3,500. Similarly severe declines re reported for American crocodiles, nail kites, and other birds and ani- als—declines that usually presage utright extinction. "Cattails are the rave marker," says Jones. "But the first gn that things are amiss is saw grass nat has had too many nutrients and is fteen feet high. Wading birds don't are if it's fifteen-foot saw grass or fif- teen-foot cattails; they can't land. It's a mess."



Nearly everyone involved in his debate agrees that saving the verglades requires two basic ac- ions: reducing phosphorus and estoring some or most of the swamp's historic water flow. Both are far easier said than done. It costs many millions of dollars to remove each additional part per billion of phosphorus, and the preferred method—building huge, artificial filtration swamps just downstream from the farms to cleanse the runoff—has had mixed results in tests. Similarly, the only feasible means of restoring water flow is to tear out all the dikes and canals, elevate the bisecting highways, and, above all, convert a sizable chunk of sugar's precious acreage back into swamp in order to reconnect Okeechobee with the Everglades. Not surprisingly, neither approach has much appeal to an industry accustomed to guaranteed profits and an ever-expanding landbase. So for the last decade, sugar makers and their political allies—including a sizable congressional contingent, dozens of Florida officials, nearly the entire state legislature, and, with depressing regularity, the Clinton Administration—have done all they could to ensure that the Everglades problem remains unsolved.

The U.S. Attorney's suit offers a dramatic case in point. After failing to get it dismissed, sugar companies and state officials, including then-governor Bob Martinez, lobbied the Justice Department to remove the U.S. Attorney, a Republican named Dexter Lehtinen, from the case. Justice refused, so sugar spent millions of dollars on private research to discredit Ron Jones, Lehtinen's star expert. (During discovery, the state's lawyers were forced to produce a folder labeled "More Dirt on Jones.") Then, after the state broke with the industry in 1991 and agreed to cut phosphorus levels by building expensive filtration marshes, sugar lawyers filed three dozen lawsuits to keep the deal from being implemented. One Justice Department attorney called it "the most aggressive and skilled stonewalling I have ever seen."

Sugar hadn't even begun to fight. Stymied in court, the industry wooed friends in higher places, pouring millions of dollars into the 1992 campaigns. The traditionally Republican Fanjuls, for example, played both sides: Pepe vice-chaired the Bush-Quayle Finance Committee, while Alfy joined the Clinton-Gore team, hosting a $120,000 fund-raiser and smoothing

lap by Jared Schneidman

Clinton's way into the staunchly Republican Cuban-American community. "Alfy Fanjul became a Democrat because he has an empire to protect," one state Democratic activist told Miami's *Daily Business Review*. "He's developing his own way to be heard."

And heard he was. In March 1993, Alfy Fanjul met privately with Bruce Babbitt, Clinton's new interior secretary, presenting him with an Everglades restoration plan drawn up by Florida Crystals' scientists. And lo! When Babbitt unveiled the administration's restoration plan at a July ceremony, it bore an uncanny resemblance to Fanjul's plan—stipulating, among other things, that state taxpayers would pick up more than half the estimated $700 million for the filtration marshes. Babbitt denied any link between Fanjul campaign dollars and the administration's plan, but Alfy Fanjul himself made no such protestations. Speaking directly after Babbitt at the ceremony, Fanjul held up the new plan as proof that "the Clinton Administration delivers."

Clinton would keep delivering. In 1994, Florida Crystals persuaded Babbitt to turn the Everglades matter back over to the state legislature, thus bypassing the federal courts in favor of a political body over which sugar had enormous sway. Exploiting the home-court advantage, sugar recruited an all-star lobbying team, including two former state house speakers and Governor Lawton Chiles's former chief of staff, then launched a media blitz to downplay the phosphorus problem. "We're talking parts per billion," and "drops in a swimming pool" became standard industry tropes, as did dark hints that development might replace sugar if regulations forced growers out of the EAA.

Victory was never in doubt. At a May 1994 ceremony in Everglades National Park, with Babbitt looking on, Chiles signed the Everglades Forever Act.[3] Written mainly by sugar lobbyists, the new state law capped industry cleanup costs at $320 million, obligated taxpayers for the remainder, and suspended state water standards until 2003, at which point state officials, not federal scientists, would determine an allowable phosphorus level. Efforts to restore water flow met a similar fate. When federal scientists suggested reconnecting Okeechobee to the remaining Everglades by buying and converting nearly a third of the EAA into a massive flow way, sugar interests went ballistic. The administration publicly denounced the scientists and their proposal, effectively signaling that the sugar farms were off-limits for any future restoration efforts. Indeed, by 1996, when administration officials began talking boldly about ripping out dikes and restoring natural water flows—a plan known as the Army Corps Restudy—it was understood that restoration would occur *south* of the sugar farms, even though most technical staff knew that such an exclusion effectively undermined genuine restoration. Editorialists and some environmentalists complained bitterly. But, as he had done with nearly all his liberal constituencies, Clinton exploited divisions within the green community, scolding critics and stroking supporters. By 1996, big groups like World Wildlife Fund and National Audubon Society were not only backing the White House plan but actively criticizing any greens who opposed it.

For many critics, sugar prevailed because it bought lawmakers. Yet the industry's main advantage was to have grasped, earlier than most, how badly Clinton needed Republican-leaning Florida for his reelection bid—and how perfectly the Everglades fit into that strategy. In a trademark Clinton move, the president's team calculated that even a weak restoration plan would still let Clinton look green to urban voters without enraging key contributors, such as sugar and real estate interests, and without undercutting state Democrats—among them U.S. Senator Bob Graham, a Clinton ally and the main architect of Clinton's Everglades policy.

Sugar's presidential aspirations almost backfired. Florida was a GOP prize as well, and by mid-1995 candidates Richard Lugar and Bob Dole had promised hefty restoration packages; Lugar went so far as to propose that they be partly funded through a mechanism sugar abhorred: a growers' tax. To sugar's horror, the White House joined the chorus, dispatching Gore to Everglades National Park to propose a "polluters' tax" and, worse, to promise to convert at least 100,000 acres of sugar farms back into swamp. When Alfy Fanjul made his infamous call to the White House on President's Day, he was apoplectic. "Alfy felt betrayed," says a lobbyist who asked not to be identified. "He'd campaigned for Clinton, delivered a lot of votes, and here was Gore paying him back with a tax. Alfy was actually bitching [Clinton] out. Just yelling." Too late. Although the White House dropped the "polluters' tax," the idea had already gained enough momentum to appear on a statewide ballot initiative in 1996. With $13 million in funds, much of it from wealthy donors, a group called Save Our Everglades (SOE) campaigned on the theme of sugar's greed: surely an industry with subsidized profits of a nickel a pound could spare a penny to fix its own mess. The Fanjuls made especially plump targets, with their sumptuous Palm Beach lifestyle, their crass campaign spending, and their foreignness. With months to go till the election, polls showed the industry twenty-five points down and headed for a slaughter.

But again, opponents had misjudged sugar's adaptive powers. In *Striptease*, when the Rojo sugar empire is threatened by a blackmailer, the brothers simply hire hit men and have the body thrown into Lake Okeechobee. In real life, sugar's hired guns were strictly political, but they attacked the environmentalists with the same single-minded intensity. Armed with $23 million in PAC money, sugar companies launched a sophisticated media campaign that painted the initiative as a radical move that would kill jobs and raise everyone's taxes. Latino newspapers and radio were filled with ads comparing one of the initiative's wealthy backers with Castro. Jesse Jackson was brought in to tell black voters that the tax was "a showdown between alligators and people." Seniors and condo dwellers were bused to the cane fields for "informational" tours and a free lunch. Voters heard how the measure would raise property taxes throughout the state, even though the sugar tax ap

[3] *Asked by one environmentalist how he could support the deal, a grim Babbitt replied, "It's my job."*

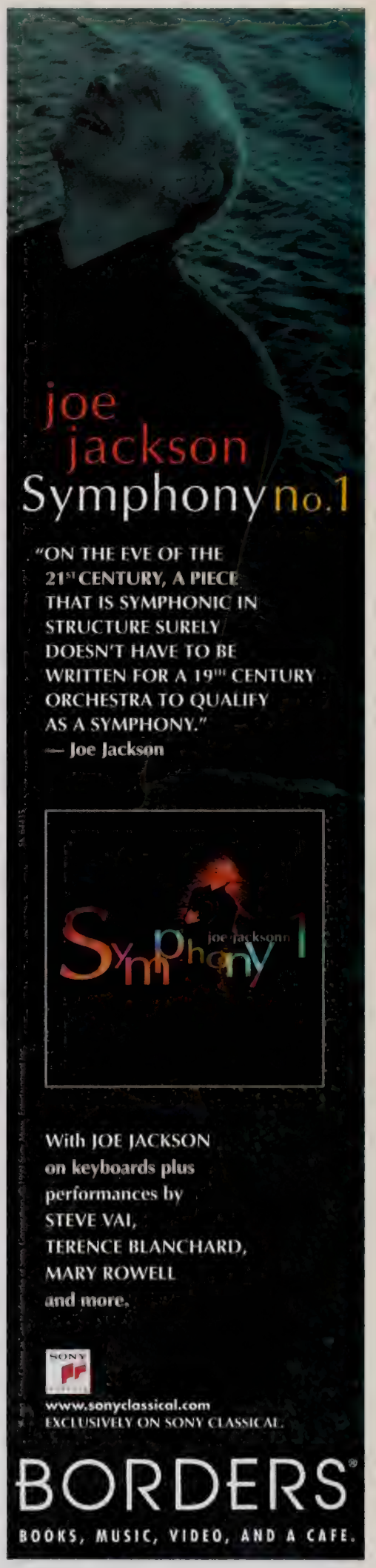
ied only to sugar farmers within the AA. But no blow was too low. When gar executives learned of a $1,000-plate SOE fund-raiser at Miami's irchild Tropical Garden, U.S. Sug- announced plans to bus in a thou- nd workers for a $1-a-plate hot-dog nner on an adjacent lot, forcing en- ronmentalists to cancel. In the final ree weeks, sugar outspent its oppo- nts seven to one with a $5.2 mil- n ad blitz. On Election Day, voters ished the initiative in what a Fort uderdale *Sun Sentinel* editorial called triumph of disinformation" and oter confusion, most of it deliber- ately created by the two largest sugar growers."

With less than twenty-four hours l the refinery opening, Clewiston's mosphere grows positively manic. ear-shaped, candy-colored rental cars m West Palm Beach and Miami fill e streets. Upstairs in a conference om of the Clewiston Inn, a white- lumned treasure where U.S. Sugar ts up visiting dignitaries, I sit down an enormous platter of sugar cook- s with a crowd of sugar-industry offi- als. Among them are Moira Saucer d Dr. Charles Baker, of the Sugar ssociation, Inc., a trade group devot- l to defending sugar's nutritional rep- ation from zealots, which, apparent- , is a full-time job. The previous week consumer group reported that Amer- an teenage boys drink twenty-eight nces of "sugary" sodas every day. ucer is affronted. "There's no sugar in ft drinks—it's all high-fructose corn rup now," she says, indignantly. "But one's bashing corn syrup," adds U.S. gar's Judy Sanchez. "Reporters skim book, write a sensational headline, en move on to the next story," con- nues Saucer. "You tell people that gar gives you an insulin spike, with- t ever telling them that that's a nor- al reaction," says Sanchez. "And it's t even a spike," interjects Dr. Baker. t's really more of a *curve*."

Over the next hour I am made to derstand that sucrose is good for u, or at least no worse than other veeteners, at least in moderation, and, any case, Americans aren't eating nywhere *near* as much of it as is aimed by the industry's critics, who lame sugar for hyperactivity, diabetes, obesity, and a host of other ailments. The truth is more complex. It's true that sucrose is no different nutritionally from other simple sugars, such as glucose or fructose, or from any of the other "healthy" sweeteners, such as honey. All are simple carbohydrates and provide four calories per gram. And although there are taste differences—fructose, for example, is considerably sweeter than sucrose—all are employed by the body to supply energy. What's more, despite years of insistence that sugar directly causes hyperactivity or diabetes, these contentions simply haven't been borne out in recent, large-scale studies.

Still, the medical community has serious reservations about sugar's nutritional impact. Unlike complex carbohydrates such as breads, simple sugars provide calories without any other nutrients. Moreover, although sugar intake has not been found to directly cause obesity, the role that sweeteners play in food preference and the ways that sweeteners combine with other high-calorie foods, especially fats, suggest that our rising consumption of sweeteners and our growing girth may not be entirely unrelated. In fact, while the USDA recommends no more than 12 teaspoons (48 grams) of sugars daily for adults, Americans consume four times that amount, an increase of 27 percent over 1970. Ironically, after decades of health fads and low- and no-sugar foods, Americans eat more sweets now than at any time in history—in part because they're easier to get but mainly because, over the past half-century, food companies have steadily raised both the level of sugar in individual products and the number of sweetened products. One fifth of the calories in a can of corn comes from sugars; two fifths in a jar of Prego; one half in Campbell's Tomato Soup; and 94 percent in a bottle of ketchup.

To be sure, food makers add sweetener not simply to entice us with taste but because sugar has miraculous powers as a food additive. It highlights other flavors and gives bulk and texture to cakes and cookies, for example, and viscosity, or "mouth feel," to beverages. Heated, sugar caramelizes, producing a pleasing odor and adding a lustrous, golden-brown color to even the palest microwavable entrees. Sug-



ar blends superbly with fat, reducing its unseemly tendency to coat the mouth.

Of course, sugar's real power is and always has been the almost automatic hold it has on human taste. The higher the sugar content in a particular food, the more we like it, and the more of it we will consume in lab tests—at least until content exceeds 12 percent, which is too sweet for most adults (though not for most children, who happily tolerate concentrations in excess of 20 percent). Craving is so systematic that researchers long suspected a physical mechanism: after observing the way recovering heroin addicts crave sweets, investigators demonstrated that sweeteners stimulate the release of endorphins, the body's painkillers, in rats, and they suspect a similar reaction in humans.[4]

Sugar, in other words, is a mild drug, a natural, relatively safe drug, to be sure, but one whose main effect on humans—causing them to want more of it and to take action to get it—is becoming ever more central to the marketing strategies of food companies. Snack makers, for example, know that products aimed at children can be considerably sweeter than those for adults; bakers know that certain cultures, like the Hispanic, prefer breads with higher levels of sweetener. More significantly, food makers know that once consumers are accustomed to the presence of sweetener in foods not traditionally sweetened, such as corn chips or meat products, the unsweetened version tastes absolutely bland. Whatever else one can predict about the emerging mass-produced, fast-food cuisine that increasingly dominates the Western diet, it will be sweeter. All of which helps explain the smiles among sugar company executives, who can, according to USDA estimates, look forward to a domestic demand that will rise 16 percent over the next ten years—or about twice the rate of population growth.

The day of the grand opening dawns clear and hot, and by 10:00 A.M., the grounds of the new refinery are sweltering. Near the plant the refrigerated circus tent is jammed with industry officials and guests. Snatches of "Sugar Sugar" blare over the PA but are mostly drowned out by the roaring crowd, which swells every few minutes as another group returns from tours of the refinery to join the sugar illuminati under the tent. There, by a table of cookies, for example, is Republican John Thrasher, new speaker-elect of the state house and one of sugar's most important allies. Hobnobbing with Thrasher is Democrat Alcee Hastings, an impeached federal judge and current south Florida congressman who has received $42,250 in sugar money since 1991 and is among its more eloquent defenders. Nearby is Republican Congressman Mark Foley, recipient of $76,470. Vainly, I scan the crowd for Senator Bob Graham ($53,450) or the Fanjuls, but I only turn up Dominicis, who gives me a faint smile. Taking a seat next to a smirking news cameraman, I resign myself to one of America's most cherished cultural forms—the factory-opening ceremony.

To a suddenly hushed crowd, the beautiful Sarah Scheffler, a former Miss Sugar, stands and belts out the National Anthem. Scheffler's voice is smooth and sweet, the perfect preface to the saccharine rhetoric to come. One after another, company executives, lobbyists, and congressmen extol the virtues of family, farming, and, above all, teamwork, whether in the cane fields or in the capitol. At one point, company lobbyist Robert Coker nearly swoons while describing sugar's part in the just concluded legislative session in Tallahassee—"the most pro-business legislature in twenty-five years." But the prize goes to Fairbanks, the company's gritty, scripture-reading CEO, who, without the least hesitation, boasts how the sugar industry has entered a new era of competition, unfettered by "government subsidies or intervention."

Even here, in this intensely partisan crowd, I'm astonished by the claim. As everyone in the big tent today surely knows, America's sugar industry is among the most subsidized on the planet, enjoying a domestic price of 22 cents a pound while producers in much of the rest of the world get about 8 cents. Each year, critics say, the federal sugar program not only adds $1.4 billion to consumers' bills but funnels some $560 million of it back to domestic producers, who then funnel some back to Congress, which ensures the program's reauthorization under the once-every-six-years Farm Bill. It's a classic political love triangle, obscenely lucrative for the big corporate farms—Florida Crystals makes an extra $64 million annually under the program, followed closely by U.S. Sugar, at $55 million—but also sweet enough to keep even smaller farmers on marginal lands in business. By one congressional estimate, one sixth of Florida's cane farms would fail without the program—a point not lost on those who think sugar should never have come to the Everglades in the first place. No surprise then that critics like Senator Charles Schumer of New York, have long targeted the subsidy as "one of the most invidious, inefficient, Byzantine, special-interest, Depression-era federal programs."

Sugar companies insist that the sugar program isn't really a subsidy per se, since it costs taxpayers nothing. They reject critics' estimates of added consumer costs, and it is true that even though the program adds $1.4 billion a year to consumer food prices, that's only about $5.19 per consumer. Sugar companies also point out, correctly, that most of the program's biggest critics are also the biggest buyers of sugar—food makers like Hershey, Kraft, Mars, Nabisco, Proctor & Gamble, and Wrigley's—companies that hate the high domestic price of sugar but would be very unlikely, in its absence, to pass along the savings to consumers. As for the program itself, we're told, sugar makers need protection from underpriced imported sugar, which is either heavily subsidized by foreign governments or simply costs less to make overseas because foreign planters face fewer environmental or labor laws. "The so-called world price of sugar," argues Dominicis, "is nothing more than a spot market for heavily subsidized dumped foreign sugars." As such, sugar companies argue, the federal program protects sugar jobs—420,000, by industry accounts—and consumer pocketbooks: both time

[4] Research indicates that the endorphin response is aided when sugar is combined with fat, which may explain the appeal of ice cream, deep-fried sweets, and, above all, chocolate.

e United States abandoned its sug- program in recent history, 1974 d 1980, world prices skyrocketed to e highest levels ever.

These are lame arguments. Yes, food kers hate the program, and yes, the gram costs consumers little, at least ectly. Yet the notion that the pro- m protects us from price spikes is dly disingenuous. In both 1974 and 30, the price spikes were caused by rldwide shortages and occurred *be-* Congress killed the sugar program, ich it did because, with prices so h, U.S. sugar makers needed no tection. When prices fell, lawmak- quickly restarted the program. Fur- rmore, although foreign sugar *is* avily subsidized, these handouts n't distort the world price nearly as ch as the industry claims. When alysts factor in all sugar programs rldwide, the adjusted world price is und 16 cents a pound—or about a kel less than American consumers forced to pay.

Granted, many foreign growers also nefit from lax regulations. But often ir biggest advantages are nothing re "unfair" than a warmer climate, e Brazil's, or a more efficient indus- , as in Australia. For when all is said d done, America, even semitropical theastern America, is simply not e best place to grow cane sugar, and hows. Whereas U.S. cane producers nd $375 producing a metric ton of v sugar, Australians, with their bet- soils and climate and greater in- stment in breeding, milling, and ship- g technologies, spend just $255 per n. "Paying lavish subsidies to pro- ce sugar in Florida makes as much se as creating a federal subsidy pro- m to grow bananas in Massachu- ts," quips James Bovard of the viru- tly anti-subsidy Cato Institute. "The ly thing that could make American garcane farmers competitive would be assive global warming."

In fact, the sugar program was cre- d to defend sugar growers not just m unscrupulous foreigners but also m their own greed and miscalcula- ns. The current program, for exam- , was created after the 1974 price ike encouraged farmers to plant too ny new acres, which ultimately oded the market and killed prices. rescue overextended U.S. growers, Texas Democrat E. "Kika" de la Garza, chair of the House Agricultural Committee, pushed through guaranteed loans for sugar farmers. Under the program, government financed each year's crop, basing the loan amount on the projected sale price. If government pegged future sugar prices at, say, 13.5 cents a pound, farmers were guaranteed that rate for their crop. If market prices fell short, the farmer could forfeit his crop to the government instead of paying off the loan, leaving the government to recoup its losses by selling the sugar when prices improved. But this sweet deal had a bonus: when forfeiting, the farmer paid the government neither interest nor the expense of marketing the crop—costs that typically add 2.5 cents a pound. Thus, if the guaranteed loan rate were 13.5 cents, the market price would need to exceed 16 cents before the farmer had any incentive to sell his own sugar. Anything under 16 cents, and a farmer made more money forfeiting.

The deal gets even sweeter. Lawmakers initially set loan prices too high, forcing the government to buy several hundred thousand tons of forfeited sugar in 1977 and 1978. But rather than reduce the loan rate—a political impossibility—the government tried instead to keep the market price above the forfeiture level via an even more brazen protectionist move: restricting sugar imports. This, too, proved disastrous. Trade officials routinely misread the sugar market. In 1985 trade officials let in too much foreign sugar, killing domestic prices and prompting the forfeiture of 430,000 tons of sugar—which the government eventually had to sell, to China, for 5 cents a pound. When Reagan then slashed imports to help American producers, he starved American refiners, who depended on raw-sugar imports, driving half of them out of business.[5]

None of this pain was felt by sugar growers. Of the 430,000 tons forfeited in 1985, for example, some 300,000

[5] *The move also crippled sugar countries that had been selling to America's overpriced market. According to a 1988 Commerce Department report, Reagan's Caribbean Basin Initiative, intended to thwart communism by promoting regional prosperity, was offset entirely by the devastation wrought by Reagan's sugar import reductions.*



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came from Florida Crystals and U.S. Sugar, for whom forfeiting sugar was simply more profitable than selling it. That same year Florida Crystals was able to buy out a rival sugar company's holdings in the Dominican Republic. The deal netted the Fanjuls half of the island's sugar lands and, significantly, half of the island's U.S. import quota, which meant that the Fanjuls could grow sugar on the cheap but sell it in the high-priced U.S. market. In other words, after complaining about how foreign producers exploited cheap labor and lax environmental laws, Florida Crystals would be doing exactly the same thing itself.[6]

The federal sugar program is, without question, liberalism at its worst: a well-intended venture that has outlived its usefulness, warped the political system, and is helping to destroy a unique environment. And yet each time reformers try to remove or even reduce the program, they're outmaneuvered by a political entity that is willing to craft alliances whenever and with whomever it needs to. Tobacco and peanut farmers support sugar because sugar always comes to their aid. Corn farmers defend sugar because a high price for sugar means fantastic profits for makers of more cheaply produced high-fructose corn syrup.[7] Unions support sugar because labor believes that without the program sugar jobs go overseas. Together, they and their congressional representatives form a voting bloc that no reformer, committee chair, or even president can afford to cross. When Reagan tried to limit the program in 1981, sugar interests, led by Louisiana Democrat Congressman John Breaux, stopped him cold by threatening to scuttle the Gipper's budget. "I can't b bought," Breaux cackled later, "but can be rented." And when Senate o ponents tried again in 1990, Florida Bob Graham, in a deft bit of env ronmental blackmail, convinced h colleagues that without the loa Florida's cane growers would not able to honor an earlier commitme to pay for half the cleanup costs the Everglades. (Six weeks after Gr ham saved the program, sugar co panies backpedaled, insisting they pay only a tenth of the cleanup cos Graham later claimed that the indu try's promises had been "informal."

All this pales in comparison to t antics during the Farm Bill of 1995 a year that, by conventional politic measures, should have seen the sug program's death. Environmental ang over the Everglades had merged wi the antigovernmental zeal of the ne ly Republican Congress, which t geted "corporate welfare" and fa subsidies as major evils. Sugar refin had also broken ranks with sugar gro ers, joining with candy makers, fr traders, and environmentalists in large, well-funded coalition to def the sugar program. By May 1995 t of sugar's biggest critics—Democ Schumer of New York (whose th congressional district contained a finery) and Republican Dan Mil (from a caneless district in Florida) had recruited forty-seven Democr and seventy-one Republicans cosponsor a five-year phaseout of t program, then persuaded Pat Robe House agriculture chair, to add th amendment to that holiest of politi holies—the Farm Bill.

Sugar didn't blink. Compan poured $2 million into congressio coffers, then launched a brilliant, holds-barred P.R. campaign. At c gressional hearings, lobbyists shan lessly trotted out charts showing t bogus link between program canc lation and the price spikes of 1974 a '80. They hired Bonner & Associat a Washington-based firm that spec izes in defending distasteful issues w phony, or "astroturf," grassroots ca paigns. Bonner bombarded lawmak with scripted calls and letters fr "voters" urging support of the su program and even claimed, in m cases falsely, that the program had s

[6] *Sugar has never supported free trade. When NAFTA negotiations in 1993 looked to open the U.S. market to cheaper Mexican sugar, twenty-five pro-sugar lawmakers threatened to kill Clinton's landmark free-trade package unless the President exempted sugar until 2008.*

[7] *HFCS costs about 10 cents a pound to produce. So until corn prices plummeted recently, the main HFCS maker, Archer Daniels Midland, earned some $924 million extra a year shadowing sugar prices—a convenience for which ADM and its notorious chairman, Dwayne Andreas, "paid" for though millions of dollars in campaign contributions.*

ort from civic groups and churches.[8] Over the fall of 1995, reform fizzled. the House Agriculture Committee, gar's farm allies threatened to sink e entire Farm Bill unless sugar was ex-npted. Such a prospect horrified Re-iblicans, who were desperate to give esidential candidate Bob Dole at least e legislative accomplishment going to the primaries. Faced with revolt on s own committee, agriculture chair oberts caved, exempting sugar from e Farm Bill and forcing a separate te. On February 28, 1996, the Miller-humer bill lost by five votes. Hu-iliatingly, six of the nays came from iller-Schumer's original cosponsors.[9]

Miller blames sugar money, but he also criticizes Clinton, who—perhaps still smarting from Fanjul's phone call ten days earlier—didn't lobby House Democrats. According to Miller, House minority leader Dick Gephardt even pressured Schumer "to stay away from the issue in order for the Democrats to pick up more seats. I don't think the White House had much interest in reforming the sugar program."

Miller was crushed. The sugar program had escaped with only minor modifications, and industry was not feeling especially magnanimous in victory. When the two-term Republican congressman returned home for his own successful reelection bid, he found his office picketed by growers, then heard rumors that the industry was offering any politician who would challenge Miller $500,000 in campaign funding. Sugar's allies, meanwhile, were shameless. "I ain't no Johnnie Cochran," crowed Republican Senator Larry Craig of Idaho, who received $59,602 from sugar that congressional session, "but I can defend the sugar program."

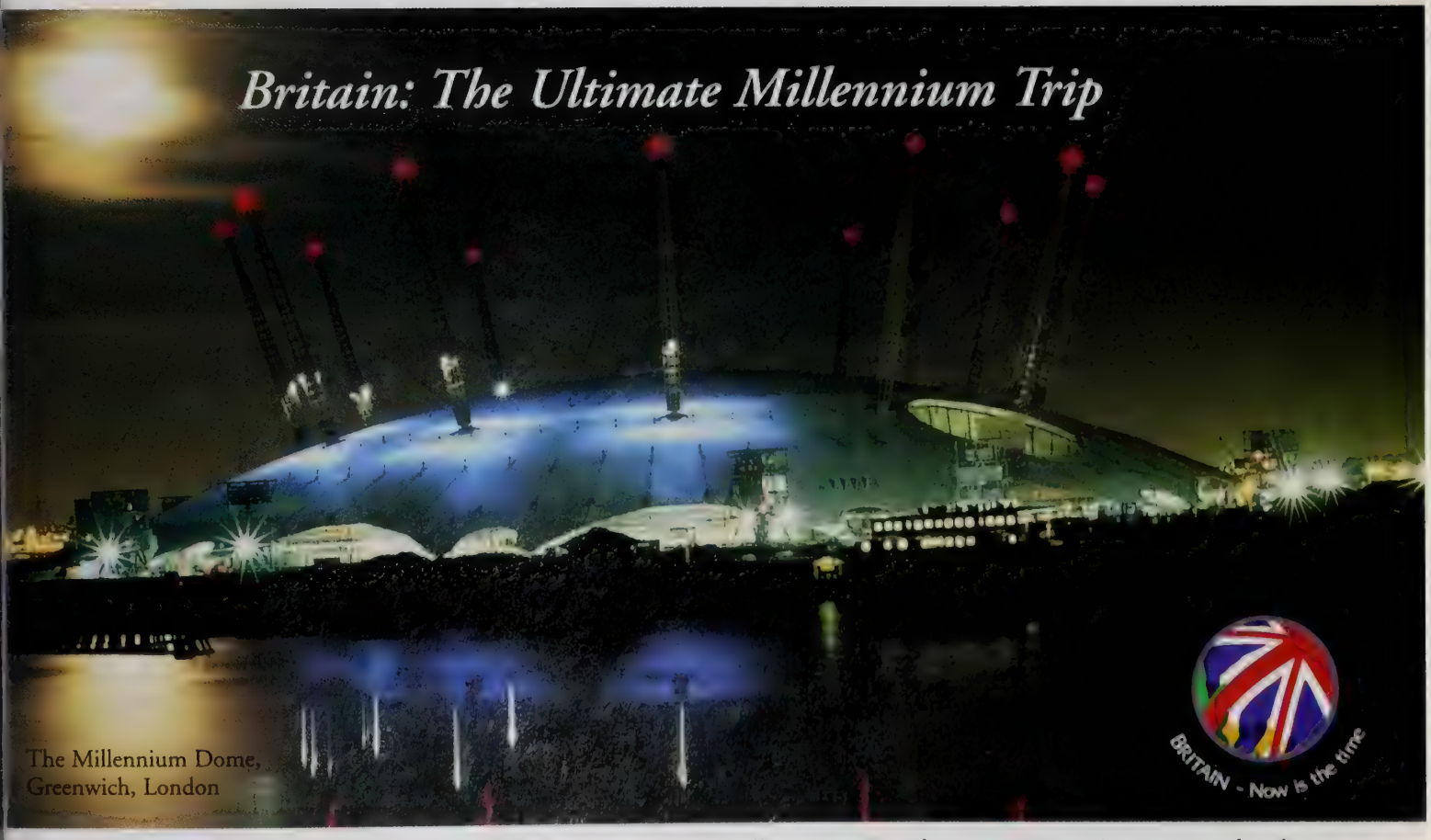
For the time being, such defense seems unnecessary. The next Farm Bill isn't reauthorized until 2002 at the earliest, and reform efforts in the meantime seem unlikely. Even after paring back their reform measure, Miller and Schumer saw bills in 1997 and 1998 defeated by even larger margins, as erstwhile allies mysteriously lost interest. "It was blatant," says one reform staffer who asks not to be identified. "We would be talking to a member and be told that, because the anti-sugar coalition hadn't been very generous with contributions this time, they were going to vote with sugar."[10]

In Florida, it's the same story. In 1998, sugar lobbyists hammered through a variety of pro-sugar bills, including one to give state lawmakers line-item control over all future restoration efforts—in essence, handing the is-

For example, Bonner claimed the support the Detroit Association of Black Organizations, which was news to its executive director, Melvin Byrd. "It's a little far-fetched r us to be involved in the sugar bsidy," Byrd told Mother Jones.

Five of the vote switchers, Representatives bby Rush, José Serrano, Albert Wynn, e Myirck, and Steve Stockman, received average of $3,000 in post-vote campaign ntributions. The sixth, Patricia Schroeder, ceived nothing, presumably because she s retiring.

[10] *Sugar's allies go well beyond Congress. After* Time *focused on the Fanjuls for a series on government subsidies last fall,* Brill's Content *attacked the newsweekly for sloppy reporting and knee-jerk anti-sugar rhetoric—a critique that, as it turned out, was not only rife with errors but had been spoon-fed to* Brill's Content *by Florida Crystals' lawyer Joseph P. Klock, who had previously served as counsel to Steven Brill.*



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sue once again to the one legislative body most in sugar's pocket. In the end, Governor Chiles vetoed the bills, but only after weathering yet another phony grass-roots call-in campaign. At the time, Chiles's office reported receiving hundreds of calls from people "who sounded confused or uncertain, and [our operators could hear] people in the background coaching them." When questioned, callers admitted that they were cane-field workers, adding that "they had been told by their employer they would lose their jobs" if the bills were vetoed.

Whether newly elected governor Jeb Bush will continue the tradition of sugar toady is yet to be seen. This summer, Bush surprised environmentalists by arguing for a phosphorus standard of 10 ppb—lower than industry had asked for. At the same time, however, Bush has fought to keep all enforcement of that standard at the state level. And as for the sugar growers themselves, although the new refinery signals that U.S. Sugar is here for a while, Florida Crystals' long-term strategy has never been as certain. The topsoil on its farms was thinner to begin with and thus far more vulnerable to subsidence. That, say critics, makes it far more likely that the family will farm until the land no longer supports sugar; then they will sell their acreage to developers and move offshore, a threat the Fanjuls have been making for years.

The swamp itself has no such escape clause. Although a federal judge is expected to rule sometime this year on a deadline for the state to issue a phosphorus standard, it's not clear how such a standard will be met. In tests small filtration marshes have cut phosphorus levels in outflow waters down to 20 ppb—still twice the recommended level—but federal and state scientists expect the effectiveness to drop sharply as the superexpensive filters saturate with phosphorus.

Even gloomier are prospects for a restoration of historic water flows. Despite all the bravado Gore displayed as he presented the administration's plan to Congress in July—"after three years of work, we now have a final plan that is terrific for the environment, terrific for communities, terrific for business, and saves a world and national treasure"—the plan gets poor marks from Everglades scientists. Researchers praise the goal of removing some 240 of the 1,800 miles of levees and canals. But because the plan would convert just 50,000 acres (rather than the recommended 150,000 to 200,000 acres) of sugar farms into rain reservoirs, scientists say it fails to reconnect Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades, or reverse the cycle of drought and flood that have pushed the swamp into a coma. As a result, the various chunks of the remaining pristine Everglades—the national park, several state preserves, and the lands owned by the Micousoukee tribe—now exist in a kind of eco-competition, fighting to get enough water in the dry season and avoid it in the wet season. In a report last year, the science staff at Everglades National Park rejected the plan because it "largely retains the fragmented management and compartmentalization characterizing today's Everglades." The staff found "insufficient evidence" to suggest that the Clinton plan would bring "recovery of a healthy, sustainable ecosystem" and, in fact, found "substantial, credible and compelling evidence to the contrary."

Still, if the plan is not exactly what doctors ordered for a sickly ecosystem, it truly is, as Gore notes, "terrific for business." In a deftly timed move to help the struggling presidential contender woo Florida's politically powerful development lobby, the Clinton plan guarantees the urban southeast coast enough water for roughly twice its current population—even while depriving the Everglades of sufficient water in the dry season. "They've turned 'restoration' into a huge water-supply project," gripes Joe Browder, Washington environmental consultant and a longtime Everglades advocate. And, of course, sugar companies just love the Clinton plan, since it won't cost them a dime, doesn't interrupt their irrigation or drainage regimens, takes only a small chunk of farmland, and, best of all, makes it considerably easier to sell the public at large on the concept that the Everglades "problem" is being taken care of. This summer, less than two weeks after Gore sent his $8 billion restoration plan to Co gress, President Clinton wrapped his inner-city tour by jetting down tony Coral Gables for a $25,000-p couple Democratic fund-raiser. T host was none other than Alfy Fanj who was probably in a cackling go mood, knowing that all the talk o substantial change in the Everglac status quo had been just that—talk and that, at least for America's su barons, it would be business as us for the foreseeable future. Durin newspaper interview, Fanjul opin that Bill Clinton had be "a great president."

Out in the swamp Freddy Fisik li points his airboat northward. V pass an old fishing camp—essential a mobile home on stilts, with two a boats tied out front and four men s ting on the deck, drinking beer a staring at us. No one is fishing. Fisik li waves and cruises by, moving slo ly, keeping the big V-8 quiet enou for conversation. He tells me how used to want to be a cowboy, back the 1930s and '40s, when cattle, n cane, was king in the Everglades. talks about hunting for duck and d and boar, and how he first began notice the changes—the dwindli numbers of birds and animals, t bizarrely huge vegetation, even t way the swamp had begun to sm Fisikelli falls silent for a moment. ahead, still out of sight, is a massi floodgate known as S-10, which l out water from the farms into the W ter Conservation Areas. Phospho around S-10 has been measured high as 500 ppb, and the closer come to the floodgate, the more t saw grass gives way to cattails, ma of them incredibly tall from the ov ly fertilized soils below. Fisikelli e es back on the throttle and lets t boat drift on the molasses-slow c rent. I peer over the edge of the a boat. The water is murkier here, a the minnows are gone. "Smell tha he asks. The once-fresh breeze is n tainted with the slightly sulfuric sc of rot, as the overabundant catt die and decompose. Fisikelli shal his head, then slowly turns the b around, and heads back south, ward cleaner water and away fr the smell of money.

ROCK IS DEAD

Sex, drugs, and raw sewage at Woodstock 99

By David Samuels



As the candlelight flickers over the hand-painted murals and the wrought-iron patio furniture, the concert promoter Michael Lang, in his fifties, with the long curly hair and dreamy good looks of a gracefully aging teen idol, is telling me about his dreams. Michael Lang is a man whose dreams have a strange way of reflecting the mood of his generation. They have included, in no particular order and to varying degrees, the Woodstock Arts and Music Festival in 1969; a traveling exhibition of treasures from the Kremlin; a head shop in Coral Gables, Florida; a concert at the Berlin Wall in 1989; the Rolling Stones concert at Altamont, where a fan was stabbed to death by Hell's Angels; and a movie based on the Mikhail Bulgakov novel *The Master and Margarita*, with a script by Roman Polanski. Tonight, Michael Lang is telling me about Woodstock 99, the latest reincarnation of the 1969 festival, which he has organized with John Scher of the Metropolitan Entertainment Group and the Irish rock-business mastermind Ossie Kilkenny, and which will open here, at Griffiss Technology Park, a decommissioned Air Force base in Rome, New York, exactly one week from today.

"The goal is to create a space where people feel safe, secure, unguarded, open," the promoter explains. "Somehow in this circumstance people seem able to do that. And to do that you need to feel vulnerable. And the result of feeling that vulnerability is that you come out of the experience feeling less alone."

As Michael Lang talks, I am lulled into an ingratiating stupor by the repetitive motion of his fingers through his curls and the steady mechanical pulse of the crickets in the empty campgrounds below. At the end of the runway, past the control tower, is the main festival stage that will present twenty-five brand-name rock bands, including the Red Hot Chili Peppers, the Dave Matthews Band, Metallica, and Alanis Morissette, to an expected audience of a quarter-million concertgoers. A skeletal assembly of prefabricated steel beams, the stage rises above the open fields to our right like a giant erector-set project whose builder has been called home to dinner early by his mom. Directly in front of us, beyond the runways, are the camping areas, paved with wooden chips and strung with yellow plastic construction lanterns, surrounded by a half-finished "Peace Wall" decorated with murals of unicorns and B-52 bombers morphing gently into doves. Twelve feet high and 16,000 feet long, the Peace Wall is only one component of a comprehensive security plan that also includes 500 state police officers and a second perimeter fence, topped by coils of razor-sharp wire.

"We were maybe a little more serious," he says, comparing the spirit of his generation with that of my own. "We were very impressed with what

David Samuels is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine. His article "Going to the Dogs" appeared in the February issue.

All photographs by Tamer El-Shakhs

we could accomplish, the freedom marches, the civil rights movement, demonstrating against the war." Through his nearly transparent blue eyes I can see the album jackets of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, *Workingman's Dead*, *Disraeli Gears*, *Goats Head Soup*, *Big Brother & the Holding Company*, and all the other long-playing albums my parents bought when they were still young. "We showed people that there was a business with the power to draw these people in far greater numbers than anyone had ever imagined," he remembers. "And rock and roll was never the same." When I ask him to describe his perfect vision of next week's event, he slouches back in his chair and clasps his hands behind his head.

"The temperature would be between seventy-five and eighty degrees," he says. "Light showers in the late afternoon . . . no bad traffic jams. I have a lot of faith in the production being together." The contrapuntal coherence of his dream reminds me of the lyrics to a really good rock song. "And people would be connected in a meaningful way," he continues, pointing out over the runway to the campgrounds beyond, where one hundred bands will play rock and roll, a couple will get married, at least four women will be raped during shows, two people will die, and some portion of the 225,000 concertgoers will finally riot after living in and around lakes of raw sewage for three days and three nights, "in a vulnerable, connected way, feeling like it's their space."

I am standing in my red, white, and blue "Kill Rock Stars" T-shirt on the Griffiss field runway with tens of thousands of kids trudging around and past me, bearing knapsacks and suitcases and black plastic garbage bags and kicking up dust like a herd of dispossessed extras in a made-for-MTV version of *The Grapes of Wrath*. Unfolding nylon sporting-goods tents in the designated camping areas and spreading out sugar- and calorie-rich stashes of Snickers bars, Pringles, and Wonder Bread on the grass, the faces of a generation look tired, having driven five, ten, fifteen, or thirty-eight hours to see band after band play live from morning to midnight on two main stages and an emerging-artists' stage that will also host late-night raves. Since I visited the site a week ago, the runways of Griffiss field have been transformed into an encampment of white canvas tents doling out pizza and burgers under the supervision of the Ogden Corporation, one of the largest event-related food-service providers in America, capable of serving an estimated 425,000 hot dogs, 2 million sodas, and 5 million packages of condiments to the hungry crowd.

Wandering through the carny landscape of empty pizza boxes and crushed plastic Sprite bottles that the Ogden Corporation has created are college kids on summer break as well as their less fortunate peers, who have taken long weekends off from their jobs reshelving videos at Blockbuster outlets and serving the $5.99 breakfast at Denny's. When asked which bands they are excited to see, most mention brand-name touring acts like the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Dave Matthews, or Korn without any greater enthusiasm than they show for the videos of these same groups, which they also like. Sullen, bare-chested guys push through the crowd with the elastic waistbands of their boxers pulled up hip-hop-gangsta-style above baggy shorts from Polo and Tommy Hilfiger. Their macho appearance is undercut by smooth-shaven chests, a style that has less to do with any deep embrace of a gay male aesthetic than with the fact that men and women no longer occupy their age-old roles as hunter and hunted in the sexual chase. Despite the reversal, or because of it, the men seem more than usually invested in the practice of absolute conformity. They walk the same and talk the same and fuck the same and eat slices of gooey pizza from cardboard boxes at the price of $12 for a small pie. Baremidriffed girls counter the dirty-girl allure of their tight shorts and white, pink, and blue baby-doll T-shirts by hunching their shoulders and staring blankly down at the melting asphalt in the ninety-degree heat, lost in a haze of sexual discomfort that makes me feel like the worst moments of my adolescence have been captured in some highly concentrated form and sprayed out over the runway like cheap perfume.

Above the crowded runway, beneath cream-colored table umbrellas, Michael Lang's porch is an oasis of shade and calm, filled with the middle-age vibe of the brave generation of lifestyle pioneers who own houses near Woodstock, drive Volvos and Saabs, and are watching their children graduate from college after more or less successfully enduring years of psychotherapy. As I sit gratefully sipping from my Evian bottle, I notice a woman walking from table to table pouring polished river rocks from a plastic bag into decorative earthenware bowls. She is in her late thirties or early forties, with a wholesome aspect to her face that reminds me of the inside of a loaf of freshly baked bread. Her name is Mary Fellows. Like most of the people here, she has a real-life job back home, which in her case consists in designing and selling bedding for Little Merry Fellows, her semi-eponymous line of organic children's bedding. Before that, she worked for rock promoter Ron Delsner designing dressing rooms, which is why Michael asked her to come here. Rock stars are interesting people, she says. Her favorite rock-star request came from Barbra Streisand, who asked that her dressing-room toilet at Madison Square Garden be filled with gardenias. When the plumbing at the Garden proved unable to accommodate whole gardenias, Fellows says, she picked rose petals off the stage and had them arranged inside the bowl so that Barbra Streisand could pee.

Framed in the plate-glass window above Mary's head, Michael Lang is responding to some new crisis on the phone while a sad-faced older man relaxes on the couch. He looks like a faculty member from the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey clown school in Florida, his face topped by a halo of thinning reddish-brown hair, his burlap-green clown suit covered in five-pointed stars. Famous as a member of the Hog Farm commune, which warned the original Woodstock crowd not to take bad acid, Wavy Gravy—the clown on the couch—now lives in Berkeley, California, where he commutes between his home, the Hog Farm, a clown camp for kids ("Camp Winnarainbow"), and college-lecture dates arranged by his manager. He is more than happy to

are a bottle of Evian and talk.

"We were trying to evacuate New rk because two of our people had en busted with one-quarter of a gram marijuana ashes," he says. "Ashes." pauses for a moment, then two, n describes the Hog Farm's block- g loft on the top floor of a building ned by a Dutch woman named Eliz- eth-something in ver Manhattan, ere a man named nley Goldstein peared one day on mission from chael Lang.

"Goldstein comes the kitchen table d he says, 'We've en watching your le,'" Wavy Gravy nembers, spread- g his fingers wide he drops into the e of his younger, re heavily publi- ed self.

"'We're in New xico now. We've some land.'

"'No problem. e'll fly you out in Astrojet.'"

Wavy Gravy's es are starting to se focus, but by is point in the nversation, I have ough experience help him maintain.

"An Astrojet," I say.

"An *As-tro-jet*," Wavy Gravy hap- y responds. He takes another sip of ter.

"So we're in New Mexico and Kesey d just arrived," he says. "It was the nmer solstice. And it had never oc- rred to us that beer could be electric. ey had just invented screw-top caps beer, you see. So we're all flying, and nley shows up again with his alu- num briefcase. He had all kinds of ff in that briefcase."

"He had *money* in the briefcase," I .

"We couldn't be paid for Wood- ck," Wavy Gravy answers. "We re so pure. We got six grand in the d for clearing some pasture. Never ain, man. Never again."

As the music from three stages booms over the runway like a B-52 bomber, it occurs to me that I really only have time to take in so many well-practiced tales from the Sixties while reporting on an event that really has nothing to do with the original Woodstock at all. Wavy Gravy senses my impatience. "There's a lot of bullshit about Woodstock being a free concert," he relates, wiping the sweat from his forehead with a star-spangled sleeve. The real story of Woodstock, he says, his voice dropping down to the conspiratorial whisper that aging hippies use when passing on certain kinds of historical tips, like the fact that George Washington got high with his slaves at Mount Vernon, is that the gates were up before the concert began, and that Michael Lang told him and fellow Hog Farmers Ken Babbs and Tom Law to clear all 50,000 early arrivals from the field if they didn't have tickets. "We looked at each other and Law asked him, 'Do you want a good movie or a bad movie?'" he says, giving me a full eyeball-to-eyeball stare for at least thirty seconds before he completes the story. "Because we knew they had signed their big movie deal with Warner Brothers, you see. And to their credit, it took them maybe ten minutes to decide."



More than 200,000 people have already made it to the site by late Friday morning. Inside the Woodstock 99 press tent, a few hours before the concert is officially set to begin, reporters and cameramen wander through the big top picking up colored information folders to guide them through the event, setting up laptops at long wooden tables, or resting digital video cameras on folding chairs for a few moments before heading back into the heat and the dust. Gray, black, and red cables snake across the floor like the elongated ganglia of some low-budget Fifties science-fiction movie brain. But the analogy is sadly out of date. Woodstock 99 is not so much a movie as a prepackaged Information-Age happening, streaming from this room and the video trailers parked out back into millions of brains in multiple formats, with pay-per-view, MTV, newspapers, magazines, local and national news,

and the Internet adding value to the Woodstock brand and making the promoters, artists, record companies, and associated vendors happy.

The hierarchy inside the tent resembles that of the average American high school, except for the fact that it is more precisely and geometrically defined. The flacks from Los Angeles are skinnier, better looking, have better clothes, and wear square all-access passes that allow them to go anywhere they want, including the stages. In jeans and black T-shirts, or flannel-patterned cotton shirts, or comfortable shorts from the Gap, the reporters and cameramen are in their late twenties and early thirties, or a good ten years older than the average age of the crowd outside. They bustle around the walkie-talkie-wielding flacks, fondling triangular backstage passes, which permit access only to a designated interview area near the main stage, and tossing out hard questions about a reported drug overdose in the campgrounds last night and the fact that the band Sugar Ray has backed out of their slot on this afternoon's bill. Then they lower their voices, shift from foot to foot, smile, and ask for interview time with Alanis Morissette.

On the runways outside, temperatures are now climbing back into the nineties, and the Ogden Corporation vendors are doing a thriving business, as evidenced by the sea of garbage that has been gathering around the food-service tents since yesterday. Dodging the blizzard of Dove Bars, Frozen Lemonades, Iced Mochas, Orange Mango Drinks, Sprites, Pepsis, Cokes, Nachos, Tenders and Poppers, Jelly Buns, Fat-Free Soft Serve Ice Creams, Gourmet Butter Salt Potatoes, Caramel Apples, Jelly Bellys, Doughnuts, and Arepas, I make my way to the center of the lawn, which has exploded in a sea of beads, T-shirts, necklaces, sarongs, and Tibetan rugs, promiscuously mixed in with more corporate and orderly tented booths for Columbia House records and the Woodstock 99 Platinum MasterCard. The crowd of a few hundred people gathered outside the Body Painting and Piercing booth is being whipped into a low-grade strip-club frenzy by an MC, who chants, "Look at her! Look at her!" while female concertgoers with painted chests and pierced nipples are paraded by on a makeshift stage.

In the middle of the crowd, a girl with silver rings through her nipples and a purple butterfly painted across her bare chest is having her picture taken with groups of smirky, camera-happy guys. She has a wonderful smile—the smile of someone who believes that a really great smile can make all the difference in someone's day and that even in the darkest midnight hours her inner light will continue to shine. Her name is Brandy Parkinson, she says as she sits down beside me on the grass. The butterfly on her chest means that she is free. She is eighteen years old, comes from Rockford, Illinois, and she drove twelve and a half hours in her Hyundai to be here, because she didn't want to regret not going. At home she works two jobs—as a cocktail waitress and in telemarketing—and lives with her boyfriend, who has two kids, and whom she met while waitressing at a Denny's. Her favorite band is Godsmack. "I crave," she explains. "They say it. It's so absolute, so desperate and needy." She also likes Alanis Morissette; inside and out, Alanis Morissette is a beautiful person. She doesn't go to the movies that often, she says, because working two jobs and taking care of her boyfriend's kids doesn't leave her much time. For breakfast this morning she had a frozen strawberry slushie. What all of this adds up to in my mind is the impression that Brandy Parkinson is a nice person who makes bad decisions, and that if her judgment doesn't improve she might wind up married to her boyfriend, or hitching a ride one night with a friendly well-spoken stranger who has been featured on *America's Most Wanted* for leaving mutilated dead bodies in isolated ravines across three states. I want to warn her against these possibilities, especially the latter, but I have no idea how or where to start.

Half a mile away, on the main stage, Woodstock 99 has officially begun. A man with a megaphone is standing on top of an RV and shouting to the crowd that has gathered to watch. "You guys are awesome partygoers!" he informs them. Standing beside him, several girls in bathing suits and T-shirts are squirted with water guns as they bare their breasts to catcalls and applause from the crowd. Looking up at the bright orange blimp hovering over my head I wonder whether its message—FRIED DOUGH—might be some kind of key to the deeper meaning of this event. I the original Woodstock was about peace, love, music, and making a good movie instead of a bad one, Woodstock 99 is about feeling the grease soak through the paper and onto your fingers. The guy in the San Diego Padres cap standing next to me screams "Show us your tits!" His face is turning red with the effort. He is screaming himself hoarse. "Show us your tits!"

On the main stage, James Brown is already halfway through the concert's opening set. Beneath Peter Max's hundred-foot-tall psychedelic mural, the hardest-working man in show business is wiping the sweat from his brow and strutting across the stage to the tune of "Sex Machine," embellished by a Vegas horn section in blue tuxedos and a trio of backup singers in sparkly showgirl dresses whose job includes nailing the words "James Brown" to the downbeat at the end of each and every line of the song. If their timing is off on even one "James Brown," the looks on their faces suggest, something bad will happen after the show. Since my view of the stage is blocked by the forty-foot-tall plywood camera tower in the center of the lawn, I watch the action on the tear-drop-shaped JumboTron screen implanted in the center of Peter Max's mural like an alien mind-control graft onto the shopworn trope of psychedelically altered reality.

"Everybody over there, put your hands in the air," James Brown instructs. I can feel the shirtless kids pressed in around me near the stage weighing the pros and cons involved in obeying his order. When the set is over only a few of the people around me are plaud. They respond with far greater enthusiasm to The Offspring, who hit the stage in outfits that look like they cost a thousand dollars apiece in the glam-rock boutiques of Los Angeles and whose punk-inflected pop songs incite the crowd to hurl empty Sprite bottles into the air, an effect that suggests that an army of translucent grasshoppers is attacking a field of unprofitable wheat. Even more impressive is the crowd's response to Korn

metal band whose songs all sound
ressively the same and are popular
ng fourteen- and fifteen-year-old
s. Korn's lead singer, Jonathan
is, wears a black-rubber restrain-
garment and a kilt, which I take to
ome inscrutably youth-specific sym-
of sexual deviance, but which he
ifies later in his set by serenading his
thful fans on the bagpipes.

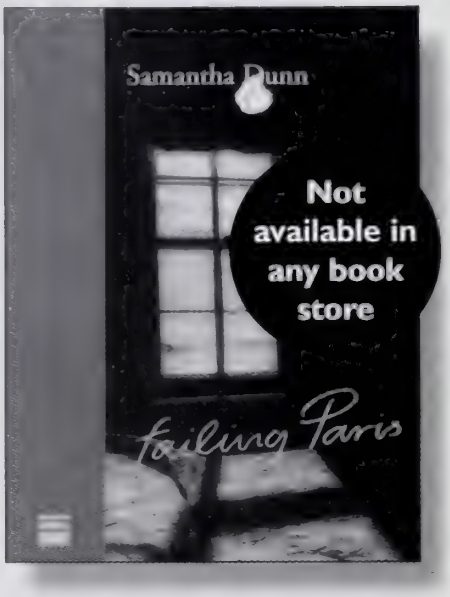
The message of Woodstock 99 goes
ething like this: rock and roll is a
ment of instant and lasting com-
nion between the generations, a
rce of half-remembered trivia like
name of John Lennon's first wife or
e Who's second drummer drifting
ough the pot-clouded haze of wall-
wall carpeted rec rooms with
hen the Levee Breaks" by Led Zep-
n or something cool by Pavement
nking through monster quadro-
nic speakers as you make it for the
nd or third time with your high
ol girlfriend on the suburban or-
e shag rug. In the heat and the dust
eath the stage, the past and the
ent are one. Onstage, beneath the
al, heroic banks of amplifiers dwarf
band members, who scurry like an-
ted cartoon ants in flouncy shirts
spandex tights while rocking out
he latest guitars from Martin, Fend-
Rickenbacker, and Gibson, shown
he pages of *Guitar Player* magazine
irbrushed beaver-shot detail next
he article on mastering diatonic
uences with Yngwie Malmsteen,
se high-speed noodlings remain a
ord for genius among generations
dolescent boys launching mastur-
ry riffs through the wood-paneled
ements of Long Island.

lashing my laminated triangle, I
through the security gates to the
ed interview area, where I wait for
y-five minutes before I find a flack
unglasses with an all-access pass
agrees to walk me through a sec-
set of gates. The artists' compound,
he artists' village, as Mary Fellows
ers to call it, consists of a gray car-
running through what is actually a
ified trailer park. Absent here are
of the signs of life, like outdoor
ecues, screaming babies, and do-
tic disputes, that might make a trail-
ark an interesting place to spend my
rnoon. The only sign of life I see is
ne musician from the group Jamiro-
quai, deep in conversation with an-
other musician about a house in Tuc-
son, Arizona, that he may or may not
rent next fall. Otherwise, the streets
are empty and silent, save for the
anonymous hum of twenty window-
unit air-conditioners going at once.

Mary Fellows is glad that I came,
and she is happy to show me around
the artists' house, a mix of earthy pas-
tels and design-studio touches that
would feel right at home in the more
upscale neighborhoods of Tucson.
Artists visiting the house can enjoy
four Sony PlayStation suites upstairs,
a large-screen color TV set, a foosball
table, a pinball table, and an air-hock-
ey set. The trailers where the rock stars
actually hang out offer little evidence
that a rock star's life is any more glam-
orous or less depressing than my own.
The trailer assigned to George Clinton,
the dreadlocked leader of Parlia-
ment/Funkadelic, is pretty much rep-
resentative of the other trailers I visit,
with wood-veneer-paneled walls,
linoleum floors, wicker chairs, a white
futon branded with the Woodstock 99
logo, and air-conditioning turned all
the way up to create the impression
that a product is being stored here at
carefully controlled temperatures. Clus-
tered on the craft-service table by the
window are food items personally re-
quested by George Clinton himself,
including tea, honey, a bag of assorted
Hershey's miniature chocolates, a jar
of Hellmann's mayo-mustard combi-
nation spread, a loaf of white bread, a
bottle of Jack Daniel's, and an even
bigger bottle of Sunsweet prune juice.
The expected rock-star touches, such
as leopard-print fabrics, mounds of co-
caine, or a powdered drink in space-age
silver pouches, are nowhere to be seen.
When I ask Mary Fellows why, she ex-
plains that profit margins in the rock
business today no longer allow for will-
ful excess. The concert business, she
says, is currently divided between two
companies that guarantee the bands a
large chunk of money up front for each
show and then squeeze expenses as
tightly as possible.

As we walk back through the trail-
er park, past the wide-bodied con-
struction-site monster currently in-
habited by the rapper DMX, I realize
that Woodstock 99 is a perfect micro-
cosm of the greater world beyond.

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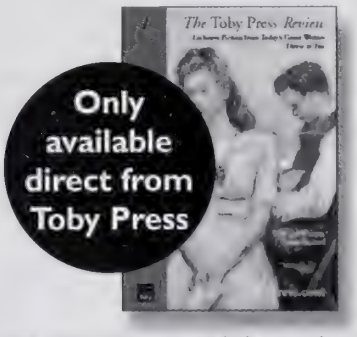


Samantha Dunn
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Rock stars are wealthy privileged people who live just like other wealthy privileged people do, in places where the streets are quiet and safe, protected by gates and uniformed security guards from the danger, filth, and darkness of a world where everyone wants to be rich and famous and loved. They have come to Woodstock 99 because it's the biggest concert event of the summer, a place where they will be loved by 200,000 people. Instead, they find themselves penned up in a gated community of people like themselves, cut off from wherever it was they came from, with a loaf of processed white bread on the table to remind them what it feels like to be alive.

By the chain-link fence at the far end of the enclosure, George Clinton and his Parliament/Funkadelic orchestra of freaks are having their picture taken by the official Woodstock 99 photographer. There is the bassist Bootsy Collins, Bernie Worrell, the rapper Humpty Hump, a guy wearing a white diaper, and a witchy violinist with curly black hair who looks to be more or less my age. Her name is Lili Haydn, she is from L.A., and she was trained as a classical musician. She likes playing with Parliament/Funkadelic, she says, because the band is made up of expert musicians. Otherwise, she listens to Brahms. Wendy Weisberg of Mammoth Records, Parliament/Funkadelic's publicist, standing by the gate to the artists' compound with a red all-access pass around her neck, is a more recognizable type. She wears her platinum-streaked hair in pigtails that stick out little-girl style from either side of her head and black-framed rock-nerd glasses, an unmistakable reference to the three years she spent as a college radio station DJ. "You went to Smith, you do fucking PR for rock bands, big fucking deal," she says, when I ask her to describe her feelings about her work. "Then I think, music gives so many people pleasure."

It is now past midnight, and Michael Lang is running his fingers through his hair while talking on the phone and I am doing my best to concentrate on whatever it is that he is saying over the heavy beat from the runway below, where 15,000 ravers are waving glow sticks and bobbing their heads in a scene that reminds me of a New Year's Eve event at Club Med. "I love having built this, seeing people blown away by it," he says. The phone rings again. A promoter named Brian Lash has issued fake credentials, which are being seized by event security. A few minutes later, the credentials turn out not to be fake. Or maybe they are. In the eye of the storm, Michael Lang will remain even-tempered in his K-Swiss sneakers and Banana Republic bush jacket whether the credentials are fake or not. This morning, he surveyed the site from the air in a helicopter. He saw James Brown but missed Korn. One thousand cases of water were delivered to first-aid stations. At seven-thirty he attended a meeting at which the concert's grand finale was discussed. He smiles like a magician whose bag is not yet empty of tricks. "I had a rotoscope of Hendrix's performance from 1969," he explains, "and we had it turned into a laser hologram projection. There's a little dialogue, and then Jimi plays 'The Star-Spangled Banner,' and then he rises up into the sky."

Why has Michael Lang spent a year organizing this event, I wonder, when he could live off his licensing profits from the Woodstock name, or start a software company, or produce movies, or pursue any of the other avenues by which ex-hippie entrepreneurs make money? "This is for a moment," he says when I ask him. "It's not an institution. It's not something permanent." Permanence is bad. "It's a mirage. It doesn't have a chance to get crusted, mundane, trivialized, a caricature of itself." But maybe there is evidence on the other side too. What if permanence is not trivial or mundane but something powerful and real in the world? Michael Lang will be getting married in October. I wonder how he squares his beliefs about institutions and permanence with the actual facts of his life.

Michael Lang invites me onto the balcony to watch the rave, and the air outside is pleasantly cool. Below us, the crowd on the runway looks nothing like the crowd that was gathered here earlier today. The kids are inside the music, and the sound seems like it is coming from somewhere inside their bodies, leaving no clear division between the music and the dancer. There is only the undivided communal experience of a beat that goes on for hours with no beginning and no end and no three-minute sections that can be excised from the moment and played on MTV. As I perch on the rail, dangling my legs over the side to the deep bass boom of the airplane hangar speakers, kids in sunglasses circulate through the crowd selling glow sticks and pills, and exhausted dancers stagger out of the crowd to pass out by the wall. Two girls sit facing each other in a circle of light beneath a trailer, a white girl in a peasant-print skirt and an Indian girl with big brown eyes. The white girl is rocking back and forth while the Indian girl touches her face over and over in a steady, rhythmic, calming motion, really feeling her skin. A few minutes later, a long-limbed boy steps out of the crowd, picks up a canteen from the ground, unscrews the top, and pours a stream of water into his mouth. Then he lies down on the ground next to the girl who was rocking back and forth, and they start rocking back and forth together. She licks his face. He runs his hands up and down her body as if he is feeling something that has nothing to do with the girl at all. He gets up and takes another drink of water and dances back into the crowd.

The next day in Michael Lang's office, Lee Blumer, a friend of Michael's, is working the phones and trying to get someone to deal with the trash. "Let's deal with the situation now, before dip-*ther*-ia breaks out," she says. Lee Blumer is a woman in her mid-fifties with curly black hair who used to work for Bill Graham at the Fillmore East and who sounds like she grew up in a large Jewish family in Brooklyn, which, as it turns out, she did. When I ask why the campgrounds are covered in trash, she shrugs, then jerks her thumb back over her shoulder to signify that dealing with the trash is the kind of thing that big-shot promoters never want to handle, which is why they keep women like Lee Blumer around.

"Have you met Lisa Law?" she asks, gesturing toward the couch. In a blue

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A Demilitarized Palestinian State

Should Israel, should the world, rely on it?

Even those most sanguine about the Oslo Accord, the understanding between Israel and the Palestinians, are agreed that the Palestinian entity to be formed will have to be demilitarized. A demilitarized Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and Gaza Strip, it is believed, would obviate any military threat to the state of Israel.

What are the facts?

Israel threatened by enemies. Israel is a very small country. Including the Golan and the "West Bank," it is only one-half the size of San Bernardino County in California. Israel has been in a "cold peace" with Egypt since 1978 and has also concluded a peace treaty with Jordan. Other Arab states are still in a declared or undeclared state of war with Israel. Iran, Moslem though not Arab, is the most determined and deadly of them all. It lurks in the background, its foremost military and political objective being the destruction of the state of Israel.

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), with which Isreal's Rabin government has signed a "peace agreement," is a terror organization that has only one purpose: to kill Jews and to destroy the state of Israel. While the latter objective is beyond its reach, it has been most successful in the former. It seems almost incomprehensible that a group as supposedly level-headed as a previous government of Israel would have entered into a "peace agreement" with such an organization. Unfortunately, though not surprisingly, events since the famous "handshake" confirm such skepticism. Despite statements to the contrary, the PLO has still not complied with Israel's main requirement, namely that it forswear the clauses in its "covenant" that call for the destruction of Israel. Arafat and his lieutenants continue to make blood-curdling speeches to the Arab public, beyond Western TV cameras, in which they re-assert their old goal of destroying Israel in "stages"—first by creating a Palestinian state to foment an allied all-out assault against the critically vulnerable Jewish state.



A Palestinian state—demilitarized?

The myth of demilitarization. The assumption that "Palestine" would be demilitarized is not tenable. The Arab nations would not allow it, even if the Palestinians themselves so desired. Also, the Palestinian entity would have thousands of trained soldiers, camouflaged as police. They could be helicoptered in minutes to positions on the border with Israel, with armored forces from Syria reaching them within the same night. But such mobilization of the "demilitarized" Palestine wouldn't be required. The weapons of preference of Arab terrorists are the Soviet-made Katyushas, highly effective missiles, truck-mounted and mobile, ideal for hit-and-run raids against Israel. Israel could not prevent them from flooding Palestine. A look at the map makes clear that these rockets, short-range though they may be, would dominate the heartland of Israel. Easily moved and hidden along Israel's new eastern borders—to be increased from less than 40 miles in length to over 200 miles—these Katyushah rockets would rain destruction over most of Israel. They would cover in their entirety Israel's narrow waist that holds 70% of the Jewish population of the country, 80% of its industrial base, its only international airport, and its most important military installations.

The Arabs living in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") danced on the roofs of their homes when Iraqi Scud missiles fell on Tel Aviv during the Gulf War. Since the signing of the "peace agreement" they have continued to engage in terror and murder against the Jews. Only incurable optimists can believe that an independent Palestine would become a peaceful neighbor of Israel. If Israel ceded the Gaza Strip—the invasion route since before biblical times—and Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") to its sworn enemies it would make the country indefensible and Israel would have laid the groundwork for its own destruction. Tanks, warplanes, and missiles would only be needed for the final mopping-up process. In the meantime, mortars and Katyushas located on the Judean ridges—Israel's proposed new borders—would suffice to paralyze life and industrial and military activity in Israel. One can only hope that ultimately Isreal's leaders will clearly understand this danger and that they will not make concessions that will endanger the security of their country.

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denim dress and a straw hat, with the weather-beaten look of someone who left home in Appalachia at age nineteen to ride with the Hell's Angels, Lisa Law is an American counterculture legend who tried to feed half a million people at the original concert on bulgur wheat cooked in five-gallon pots, served with soy sauce, and on muesli for breakfast, with rolled oats, almonds, and wheat germ. "It was cheap," she says. "And it was a way of educating people, to help them learn about healthy food." A member of the Jook Savages commune during the Sixties, she still gets stoned a few times a month and remains a fervent believer in overthrowing traditional modes of social and family life in order to create a new and better reality. She is happy to help out with the trash.

Commandeering a golf cart, we load fifty boxes of trash bags on the back, and Lisa Law puts the cart in gear. As we drive down the runway, where the temperature is now approaching 100 degrees, the sound of the bands is all but drowned out by a group of thirty or forty kids who have taken an equal number of green-painted garbage cans from the midway to form a drum circle. Beating on the cans with their hands and fists, they have found a way to open up a space within the staged event so that they can participate in the action. The sounds they make suggest a cut-rate garage where something bad is being done to a car. To the left of the circle, a bare-chested kid with a heavy black beard lifts a garbage can over his head and smashes it down on the asphalt. As the drumming continues, he lifts the can up, then smashes it down again on the runway, over and over, until the can flattens out into a sharp-edged metal pancake. Still, the shape seems too defined, too flat or too round. He picks up the metal pancake and smashes it again, lost in a private ritual of destruction that will continue until the shape of the can matches the mysterious shape in his head.

From the back seat of the golf cart, where I am attempting to hand out trash bags, the campgrounds look like a relief area crammed with sullen refugees from a distant civil war. The attempt to establish any semblance of order in the campgrounds collapsed long ago, and the streets with names like Penny Lane and Abbey Road have vanished in a claustrophobic mass of tents. Buried beneath heaps of pizza boxes, Sprite bottles, Pringles cans, and navy bags from the Gap, the areas between the tents have been turned into estuaries of trash that ebb and flow with the occasional sluggish breeze off the runways.

"Help keep your area clean!" Lisa Law encourages the kids closest to the runways. Lying in their underwear inside their tents, or sitting cross-legged and stoned in the heat by the runway, only a few of them volunteer to help out. After a few minutes of this, Lisa Law adopts a new tack: "Help keep *your* area clean!" A kid in a Korn T-shirt runs behind the golf cart, making wavy, trippy motions with his hands as he follows the trash bag I am holding out. When we stop to press the point more directly, a kid with dyed blond hair says, "I paid $150 to come here. *You* clean up my fucking trash."

To the left of the runway, a row of twenty Porta Potties is leaking raw sewage into a stream of running water that is in turn flowing into the tent areas and collecting there in a series of small pools or lakes ranging in size from ten to thirty feet across. Raw sewage is not an easy smell to ignore. As the smell gets stronger, I notice that there are still people inside the tents, apparently awake and unbothered by the smell, which is so strong that I instinctively cover my nose and mouth and breathe in and out through my sleeve. It is hard to imagine why anyone would organize a festival of peace, love, and music where kids spend three days camped out in sewage. On the other hand, it is hard to imagine why anyone who found himself camped out in sewage wouldn't ask for his money back, or at least move his tent.

While Ice Cube raps his ten-year-old hit "Fuck tha Police" from the East Stage, the first-aid stations along the runway are filling up with hundreds of kids who have passed out in the heat. Water costs $4 a bottle at the concession stands, and there simply isn't enough to go around. As I approach the campgrounds exit, I pass two concertgoers walking together, as fast as they can, each completely unaware of the other. The first is a hippyish man in his late forties or early fifties, with a long brown beard, wire-rimmed sunglasses, and a tie-dyed T-shirt with a peace sign. Above the peace sign is the word "Imagine." Next to him is a well-muscled guy in his early twenties, wearing shorts, a pair of Nike sneakers, and a navy T-shirt that reads, "I'm here about the blow job."

Ossie Kilkenny, the second of the three Woodstock promoters, is an accountant from Ireland who makes deals for a long roster of English and Irish bands, including U2, and who is supposedly the sharpest business mind in rock and roll. I have been trying to talk to Kilkenny for the last two weeks. I climb the stairs to Michael Lang's office, sit on the couch, and at least a half-dozen phone calls later, following various crises and disputes, a report of a drug-related death, and rumors of radiation poisoning on the site, Ossie Kilkenny has still not shown up. So I talk to Lee Blumer instead.

"We wanted to get out of Brooklyn," she says, when I ask her about the dreams of her youth. "We all did. We wanted to get out of the Catskills. To create our own world. It was going to be fun and funny. We would do away with racism, with classism, with all the gossipy, parental stuff that people thought was love. Everything was focused on expansion, even the drugs. It all had something to do with improvement, with improving yourself, improving the world." She leans back in her chair and sighs an imperious-old-Jewish-lady sigh. "Then somehow we gave birth to that," she says, gesturing out the window toward the trash-strewn campgrounds and the noise of the bands and the kids on the runway still beating on the trash cans. "And the thing that puzzles me is—how?"

Outside the office, fifteen or so people are sitting on couches in front of a giant color TV set and watching Alanis Morissette, who stands before the camera with her long hair in braids, her shoulders hunched, and her eyes trained on the ground, the same way any of the young women watching her would pose if they found themselves standing onstage in front of 200,000

ople. She holds tight to the micro-
one, makes spastic, grabby hand ges-
res at the camera, and lets her eyes
ll back in her head. She is entering
rancelike state that makes it okay for
r to declare her most intimate
oughts and feelings in public, a
oice that might otherwise seem un-
mpathetically selfish to her fans.
low 'bout no longer being *mas-o-*
is-tic?" she sings. "How 'bout un-
ashedly *baw-*ling your *eyes* out?"
here is something patterned and ob-
ous about her performance, I think,
t when I look at the screen again
e pose makes sense: the embarrass-
ent is real. Alanis Morissette is em-
rrassed to be looked at, I understand,
cause she is so unnaturally beautiful.
he has the deep, unselfconscious
ysical beauty that movie stars kill
r, and she is embarrassed by it, be-
use beautiful women aren't supposed
feel insecurity or self-hatred or anger
any of the other emotions that her
ns connect to in her songs—which in
rn makes her beauty okay, opening
a common space where the per-
rmer and her audience can coexist on
e same emotional plane of hunched-
ouldered embarrassment.

Ossie Kilkenny arrives an hour or
later, a white-haired man in his
ties who looks like a college pro-
ssor or an Irish newspaper editor,
spite the fact that he is wearing a
issoni T-shirt and a rumpled linen
it shot through with golden threads.
seems only fair to say that I like
m immediately. I like the fact that
e comes off as shy, and that he is in
ct smart, and that the Missoni T-
irt and the gold suit are not just
rt of a studied attempt to dress the
rt of a big-time promoter but also
ms of clothing that he truly likes to
ear. He talks about his rock-star
ients like U2 and Oasis with the
scretion that people of means would
pect from their accountant. If he
ntrolled the Woodstock name, he
lds, he would concentrate on de-
loping a presence in recorded mu-
c. He would also donate money to
cially responsible movements and
oups, "which in turn strengthens
e Woodstock brand."

Because he was two and a half hours
te, and because he is a thoughtful
nd interesting man who grew up poor in Dublin and who is now directly responsible for the very Irish brew of bad food, overflowing toilets, and lousy music in which I have been immersed for the last two days, I decide to give Ossie Kilkenny a piece of my mind. I mention the absence of any effort to reach out to the audience, and he nods and says, "We're giving the masses what they want." When he was growing up in Dublin, he loved to listen to Otis Redding and Ray Charles. He quotes a few lines from the poet John Betjeman. Then he tells me about his house in Dublin and his other house on the lakes and the two seaplanes with all the original details that fly him from one house to the other. He loves planes, he says, and he is embarrassed that he doesn't know how to fly them himself. He talks about how much it means for a kid from Dublin to be part of the biggest rock concert in the world. I ask him what the audience has learned here, if anything, and he looks down at the runway, where kids continue to beat on the cans.

"Did we get anything across to people?" he wonders. "I don't think that we did. Which is an amazing admission to make, after bringing 200,000 people together in one place and spending $38 million."

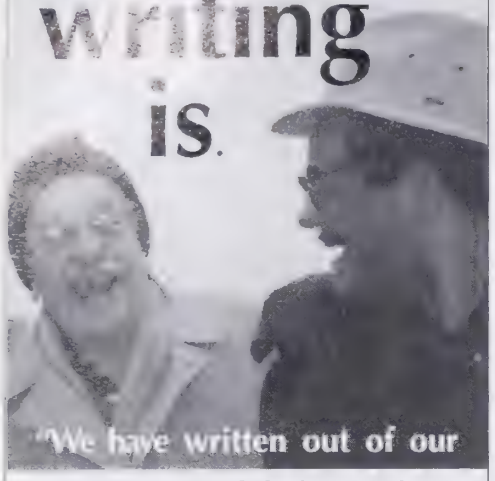
Thick clouds are moving in fast overhead, and as I push toward the main stage I can feel the disconnected energy of the last three days starting to assume some more definite form. After three days of wandering through the midway drinking bottles of water, stepping through piles of trash that are never cleaned up, sitting out the heat in clouds of cigarette and marijuana smoke, breathing in the sewage-tainted dust that hangs over the densely packed campgrounds, the crowd smells sour and stale. They have had enough. Up onstage, Fred Durst, the lead singer for the rap-metal band Limp Bizkit, is sharing this mood. He plays with the crowd's anger, proclaiming that "there are no rules" and urging them to "smash stuff" and not to mellow out, because "that's what Alanis Morissette had you do." The closer I get to the stage, the uglier the vibe becomes, with bare-chested guys raising their fists in the air and smashing into one another with a full-bodied force that is meant to cause physical damage. This is not a good place to be. As I turn and head for the exit to the left of the stage, someone plants an elbow hard in my lower back, and I go flying into the kid standing next to me. His nose is broken, and his face is sticky with blood from his nose to the bottom of his chin. To the right of the stage, bodies are being carried out of the crowd on makeshift plywood pallets torn from the camera tower and from the wall around the stage.

As the set ends, I make my way backstage and head through the crowd to the VIP bleachers to hear Rage Against the Machine. Notable for a heavy, abrasive machine-shop sound that blends metal-inflected guitars and rap-derived textures, Rage Against the Machine is also the only band at Woodstock 99 with its own reading list, an eclectic mix that includes *State and Revolution* by V. I. Lenin, *Culture of Narcissism* by Christopher Lasch, *Play It As It Lays* by Joan Didion, *What Is Communist Anarchism?* by Alexander Berkman, and *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss. They are also the only avowedly Marxist rock band to have a number-one album on the *Billboard* charts. The cultural contradictions involved in playing agitprop to a $150-a-ticket crowd are evident from the band's first song, "No Shelter," a Marcusian anthem and also the band's contribution to the soundtrack for the movie *Godzilla*. It is at once an angry grad-student rant, denouncing the cultural myth that "buyin' is rebellin'," and also proof of the near-infinite capacity of that culture to absorb any criticism as long as it features kick-ass guitars. A bare-chested guy wiggles his head of long black hair in the VIP aisles below me next to a well-muscled Woodstock 99 security guard, as Zack de la Rocha prowls the stage and declaims:

> Coca-Cola is back in the veins of Saigon
> And Rambo too, he got a dope pair of Nikes on
> Godzilla, pure muthafucking filla
> To get your eyes off the real killa.

As Rage Against the Machine socks it to the man, a woman near me pushes her blonde, curly-haired toddler daughter back and forth in a

What writing is.

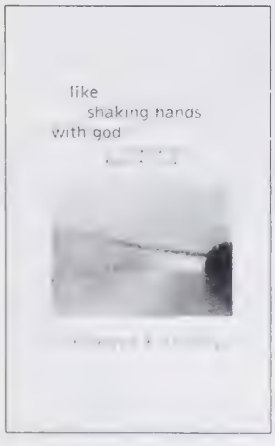


"We have written out of our own lives and being writers was easier for us because we had something to write about. Thank God I was in Dresden when it burned down!"

—KURT VONNEGUT

"We wake up every morning to an alien environment... and the struggle for me, within that, is to try and be human, to try and do human things, to try and remember what we were born with."

—LEE STRINGER



Like Shaking Hands with God

a conversation about ... and me

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stroller while complaining bitterly about the non-VIPs who are being allowed into the bleachers by the security guards and about her husband, who took her son off somewhere in the crowd and left her alone with her daughter in the bleachers. She takes out a joint and lights up, hoping the pot will calm her down. At the sight of the joint the child's eyes go wild. Twisting around in the stroller, she tries to grab it from her mother's hand. Her mother moves the joint a fraction of an inch and continues puffing angrily away. Rage Against the Machine's set is just about over. At the end of their last song, they burn an American flag onstage.

"If the rain comes, stay away from the towers. Stay away from the towers." The voice belongs to John Scher, Michael and Ossie's partner, the man who put the concert bill together. He is worried about the safety of the crowd but also really getting into the role. John Scher standing onstage and warning the crowd to stay away from the towers is a scene from the movie playing in the promoter's head. Past midnight, the band Metallica comes onstage and chants, "So what! So what! Who cares? Who cares?" while launching long, slow guitar riffs into the night.

I get up from the bleachers and walk through the VIP gate and into the parking lot behind the stage, where the raw, mind-bending power involved in bringing so many rock bands to an Air Force base is nakedly visible. Clamped to the top of mobile production trucks, or to thin metal poles, the few production lights throw dark, uneven shadows across the asphalt, making the parking lot seem bigger and emptier than it does during the day. In front of the All Mobile Video truck, ten or fifteen people are sprawled on the pavement, watching a thirteen-inch color television set wired into the pay-per-view feed from the stage. In the shadows are hundreds of empty buses, parked in double rows stretching out for at least a quarter of a mile. In the darkness behind them are the oversize tractor-trailer trucks, the kind that transport forklifts and boilers and other heavy industrial equipment on superhighways at night. Nearly thirty feet tall and a hundred feet long, they rise off the asphalt like enorm hi-tech basketball sneakers, with sle curvy lines crafted from cold impe trable steel. Standing here, I sens tiny but still recognizable element danger, the slightest fractional exp tation that two or three seconds fr now the headlights will turn on, t motor will roar to life, and the tru will accelerate forward, crushing eve thing that gets in its way. If this pectation is proof that paranoid fati has set in, it also expresses the more tional thought that there is a power this world that operates just outside t horizon of our understanding and wh motives and actions have lit if anything in comm with my own.

California
is buggy, buggy, buggy, buggy.

At 3:00 A.M., the airplane hanga still filled with kids on ecstasy drin ing water and twirling glow sticks a dancing to the music of DJ Norm Cook, a tall, balding, stoop-shoulder man who appears on the video scre above their heads in grainy, blac and-white stop-action shots that sh the DJ with his arms spread wide li a cable-access-show prophet in a di raincoat, his eyes rolling back in h head.

California
is druggy, druggy, druggy, druggy.

My energy has definitely turn manic, and dancing to the music Norman Cook seems as good a way any to come down. An hour lat when I am feeling tired and my he rate has returned to normal, I sit do on a folding chair on the tarma Within a two-minute interval I no

A shirtless guy with a Chinese dr on tattooed across his chest.

An unhappy-looking girl in tig denim shorts.

A couple having sex under a trail

A fat guy in a gray "Woodstock A letic Department XXL" T-shirt.

A bearded kid in a bright ora jumpsuit who is stripped to the wa exposing a large, unhealthy-looki gut.

T-shirts advertising Nike, Pun Adidas, the Grateful Dead, Ab crombie & Fitch, and Graffix bong

A pudgy crew-cut kid, fourteen or
teen years old, who pauses by my
air for a moment and retches a
outhful of water at my feet.
I meet Sara, twenty-two, and Tam-
y, twenty-three, from Morristown,
w Jersey. (Perhaps because of the
ugs around, or because of the simpler
ame of having paid so high a ticket
ice to wallow in garbage and feces for
ree days, some of those I speak with
use to provide last names.) They
eet me with the unapproachable
re of a pair of cheerleaders in a high
hool lunchroom. I ask them if they
ve enjoyed camping out. "It's not
ally camping," Tammy answers.
Camping, you have your own area,
d a grill."
An hour later, I see a man about
enty-five years old, with marble-
hite skin and perfectly proportioned
nbs in which every last muscle is
sible. His fellow concertgoers, re-
rning from the rave with black bal-
ons filled with nitrous oxide, give
m a wide berth, because he is stark
ked and obviously out of his mind.
anding in the middle of the run-
ay, he whirs his arms over his head
if signaling to his fleet of invisible
licopters that it is time for them to
nd. As I stand and watch from a dis-
nce of twenty feet away, he walks up
two frat boys in T-shirts and starts
lking excitedly about something.
fter less than a minute, the bigger of
e two frat boys has heard enough.
is eyes go wide, he looks down at
e boy's exposed genitals, then draws
s fist back and punches him hard in
e face. Splat! I can hear the sound
ry clearly from where I am standing
the boy's nose bursts open, and then
ear Crack! as he hits the pavement
cedown.
"Bro, he's dead," one of the con-
rtgoers says as he passes. The kid
n't moving, and his face is turning
ue. People stop to snap pictures with
sposable cameras, but no one stops
help. A medic arrives and radios for
lp, then tries mouth-to-mouth re-
scitation. By this time, a crowd has
thered to see whether or not the
d is dead. They argue with an old-
poncho-wearing hippie couple, a
usband and wife who live in the area
nd who have come to Griffiss Park to
lp out.

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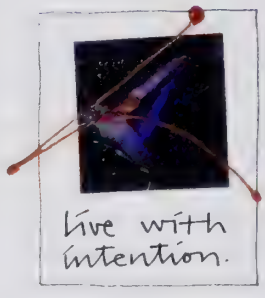
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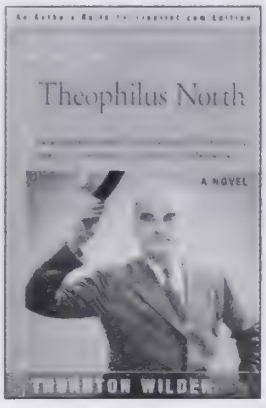
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ART CREDITS, PAGES 46–51

Page 46: *A Book of Common Prayer* by Miriam Schaer, 1996, mixed media, 9 x 4 x 1-1/2", unique. Each page is photocopied from a different religious prayer book. A religious icon shape is cut into the palm of each "hand." Each icon is deliberately mismatched to the religion of the page on which it appears.

Page 47: *Shades*, by Robert Rauschenberg, West Islip, Universal Limited Art Editions, 1964. Multiple with six lithographs on plexiglas panels: one mounted permanently (title page) and five interchangeably in a slotted aluminum frame and illuminated by an intermittent light bulb. Composition (each irregular): 14 x 14"; box: 15-1/8 x 14-1/2 x 11-3/4". The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the Celeste and Armand Bartos Foundation. Photograph © 1999 The Museum of Modern Art, New York City.

Page 48: *Fixer* 3/26/97 by Berwyn Hung, mixed media sculpture book, 15 x 9 x 4", unique. The title is a record of the liquid in which this book was immersed and the date of immersion.

Page 49: *Scarpidon* by Steven C. Daiber, 1990–98, mixed media, edition of five. The edition consists of Scarpidon butterflies from India, wrapped in paper printed on the inside with a woodcut of the butterfly, stored in a box.

Page 50: *Everything in the World* by Janet Zweig and Laura Bergman, 1996, mixed media, unique. A computer is programmed to permute every possible combination of binary code in ever-increasing places to infinity. The roll of paper feeding the printer has a landscape painted on its side. The roll grows smaller and smaller, turning the world into code.

Page 51: *Frosting* by Meg Belichick, 1991, mixed media, edition of twenty books that together form a whole cake. Each individual book has a frosted spine and contents are embossed [illegible] on the pages. The text tells [illegible] the artist's grandmother [illegible] a nursing home.

"You've got to help people like that," the woman is saying. "He's stoned out of his mind. He's not aware of what he is doing." The kids around her are unconvinced.

"Fuck him. He's crazy, man," answers one of the frat boys.

The guy standing beside me, wearing a fishing hat and a red plaid shirt, mutters something in disgust. His name is Andrew ("just Andrew"), he is twenty-three, and he is majoring in political science at Virginia Tech. "There's no brotherhood at this event at all," he says. A team of medics have arrived on the scene, and as they bend down to check the kid's pulse he stirs, turns over on his side, and releases a stream of urine onto the runway. Andrew came to Woodstock 99 as a volunteer, he says, and when he arrived he helped decorate his station with flowers and paintings and a poem he wrote about giving back to the people who came to Woodstock before. His eyes are red, he explains, because two nights ago someone offered him a bong hit while he was making his rounds of the campgrounds, which he accepted, and which was laced with PCP. Twenty-four hours later he is just beginning to come down. Which doesn't matter much, he adds, because there is nothing for the volunteers to do except watch kids freak out on bad trips or sell drugs or punch one another in the face. Ten feet in front of us, the kid on the runway has regained consciousness and is flailing away at the medics, who are trying to pin him down.

"That's not the right way to handle him," the hippie woman in the poncho is shouting. As the medics tackle the kid, and then tie him to a stretcher, other kids with cameras continue snapping pictures.

"This is the promoters' fault," Andrew says, when I ask him why he thinks tonight was so bad. Scheduling three heavy-sounding bands one after the other was wrong. "It incites people to beat the shit out of each other," he says. "They built people up to be in a frenzy. They should have calmed people down before sending them out here to be with each other."

We stand and talk by a pool of raw sewage, which appears to be twenty feet long and perhaps a foot deep, and which is flowing downhill into th closely packed tents to our left. As w talk, kids are wading through th stream to get to their tents witho appearing to notice or to care, as they have somehow been convinc that wading through raw sewage is ju a normal part of the Woodstock e perience, like the heat and the du and the drugs and the $4 bottles water and the bands. Andrew wal over to a metal gate, and together pull it out of the ground and lay it f across the stream, so that the kids c cross without stepping shit.

On my way to the backsta press area the next morning, I fi two young kids sitting cross-legg in the dirt with a disposable light burning sticks of incense and looki like they have washed up on the land from *Lord of the Flies*. The tal one is Patrick Kraus, fifteen, and t shorter one is Ben Smith, thirte They are from Shelter Island, N York, and they are wearing expe sive-looking sunglasses. Ben Smit sunglasses are the coolest, they agr "They're Oakleys," Ben says, bef he corrects himself. "Faux-kleys," says. "They aren't real." They ca here with someone's older sister, a reward for getting good grades l semester, and have been consumi pizza and buffalo wings, along w the Nutri-Grain bars, fresh peac and pears, potato chips, and the t six-packs of bottled water that th brought with them from hom People on drugs are scary, they s Naked men are scary, too. The ba breasted women are okay, they blu ingly admit. They are well-spok and obviously responsible, and s makes sense that their parents safe sending them off to a three-d long rock concert with someboc sister. One of their fathers went Woodstock in 1969, they say, a told them how a vendor was charg too much for hot dogs, and so crowd burned down his stand.

In the backstage press area, the r per Everlast, his broad knuckles c ered with tattoos, is being intervie in the Woodstock.com tent. He lo exhausted but speaks passionately a few minutes about how it is wrong

e promoters to be charging $4 for a ttle of water. A few minutes later e sky opens up and it starts to pour. un for the shelter of an empty can- s tent, where I am joined two min- es later by John Entwistle, my least- vorite member of The Who, my vorite band in junior high. The spi- r around his neck, he says, was a gift m Who drummer Keith Moon. hat John Entwistle actually says, wever, is really anyone's guess, since is impossible to piece his statements gether into sentences that reason- ly scan.

"Thirteen dogs," he says, bending rward and tipping his sunglasses wn, so that I can gaze deep into his ck-star eyes. "Gloucestershire. Thir- en dogs. New band. Deep-sea fishing.

"I draw serious ass," he adds.

"I draw seriographs," he repeats, hen I look puzzled. "I draw cartoons. f rock stars."

The secret I have learned is hardly rprising. After thirty-five years of nding next to banks of amplifiers concert stages with the loudest band the history of the world, John Ent- istle, a gentle intelligent-seeming an, is basically stone deaf, and mum- ing sentence fragments is simply his ay of answering whatever question ight have been asked. I shout my xt questions into his ear, and he iles, grateful that he no longer has mumble.

"Why is this concert so awful?" I out.

"Festivals always are," he says. here's no sound-check. You're lucky the equipment works. The first oodstock was horrible, too."

A few minutes later, we shake nds, and John Entwistle and his new ndmates pile into the back of a red rd Taurus and drive off through the eets of rain to meet with John her, perhaps the one person, out of l the thousands gathered here, who might be able to tell me ex- actly what went wrong.

John Scher is a short balding guy in sports shirt who looks and talks like average suburban New Jersey dad. t's been an awesome experience," e says. "I'd say the third time was the harm." Because my laminated re- orter's pass doesn't allow me onto the stage, he is standing on a metal walkway five feet above me and shouting down into my ear. And because John Scher is not a bad guy, he eventually steps down off the platform, takes my arm, and guides me through the crush of people with all-access passes, past the Red Hot Chili Peppers, the show's final act, to the parking lot, where we can talk face-to-face. I ask the promoter what exactly went right here.

"Nobody got in for free," he says. "I think the Wall itself set a great tone. The kids really responded to the Wall. They saw that so much love and care went into the Wall."

I ask if there is anything that he might have done better.

"Commercial opportunities were not exploited as fully as they might have been," he says. "If there was one really big corporation . . . ," he says. "The right tasty, big corporation that could help underwrite the whole event . . ." He is really flying now, his expression suggests, his eyes alight with the vision of a series of brand-name concert events occurring like clockwork every five years and lasting until the end of time. "I mean, it's a great opportunity for someone," he says. "What's page A-1 of the *New York Times* worth? A-1 of the *Daily News*? You answer me that."

I admit that the front page of tomorrow's newspaper will probably be worth a lot.

"That's editorial," he says, underlining the distinction between advertising and content that the universe of events like this one has all but erased.

The Red Hot Chili Peppers are moving smartly through their closing set, but John Scher is still standing out in the parking lot, giving generously of his time, caught up on a white-capped wave of euphoria that comes at the end of a day that has most likely made him several million dollars richer. "It's an emotional rush unlike anything else," he says, moving from the emotionally connected language of Michael Lang to far-seeing business-speak to his own more earthy and sentimental vocabulary, as a tall man in a navy shirt comes up beside him and waits until his answer is done. "In this plugged-in, technologically driven world, a world that's becoming more and more im-

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personal, well, you can't get any more personal than this. And a million people watching this on TV who know that there are real, living, breathing human beings on the other side. It's euphoric. And you can say, 'Shmuck, you don't know if you've made money yet.' But it is euphoric to know that in 1999 this can still happen."

The man in the navy shirt is growing more and more impatient, and finally he interrupts.

"John, they've turned over a Mercedes in front of the house. Ten guys turned it over." The meaning of the sentence is clear. "The house" is theatrical jargon for the crowd. John Scher looks interested for a moment, and then he turns his attention back to me.

"It's an older Mercedes," the man in the navy shirt continues. "But still, John, that's a nice car."

John Scher shrugs. That an older Mercedes has been turned over near the stage doesn't make sense to him. Why should one lousy German car ruin the enjoyment of standing at the exact center of the loudest, biggest, most powerful, marketable, attention-getting, historically resonant rock and roll event on the planet?

"Where?" he asks.

"In front of the house."

John Scher turns back to me. "You get to do something that hardly ever gets done," he explains. "And not only did no one get in for free but almost no one tried."

I thank John Scher for his time and walk out into the crowd, where the kids are now holding tens of thousands of candles in the air. Close to the stage, not so far from where the Mercedes was turned over, the fires have already started, and the crowd rips down sections of the camera tower and the Wall to feed the flames. I stand in the crowd for a little while longer, until the Red Hot Chili Peppers end their set and lead singer Anthony Kiedis appears onstage again and peers out at the fires in the crowd. "It looks like *Apocalypse Now* out there," he says.

Twenty feet away from where I am standing, the flames are licking at the camera tower. The camera teams are already gone. To my right, the crowd has broken through the barrier that divides the concert lawn from the backstage area, rendering all the many varieties of laminated passes obsolete. A thin line of policemen is moving across the field, driving the crowd away from the fires. A shirtless white kid with a beard is standing nearby, gathering debris from the ground to feed the flames. I ask him what he wants, and he looks at



me for a moment, then shrugs, as if the answer should be obvious to anyone who has spent the last three days and three nights in this place.

"I'm going to burn it down," he says, and as I think to myself that it is hard to argue with that, he catches my eye and raises his fist, before heading back to the fire.

Through the flames I can see the eyes of hundreds of concertgoers, mostly white, mostly male, with goatees and baseball caps, looking nervous, or frightened, or panicked, or alight with the simple anticipatory pleasure of throwing another piece of wood on the fire. Over by the runway a crowd is plundering food-service trailers for free cans of Sprite. The scene around me will be described in newspapers the next morning as a riot. Yet what is happening now feels oddly light. The real riot happened over the last three days, not as a single, chaotic, explosive event but as a slow-motion disintegration of the bonds that might hold 225,000 people together. What happened isn't really that hard to describe. With nothing larger to hold them together, the crowd endured the heat, and the sewage, and the trash, and the drugs until all that was left was th feeling of standing in a tired, dir crowd of people at the end of the d and knowing that you are alone. Th selfishness and irresponsibility of th promoters are obvious: that they ha created this particular scene, of bonfi burning on a darkened field benea Peter Max's gigantic mural, is real no better and no worse than what m other people here would have done their place. As the line of policem in blue uniforms pushes forward realize that it is time leave.

Speeding south on the intersta in the luxurious isolation of my b rowed Volvo S80 sedan, built like leather-lined sarcophagus with eig tiny, cunningly concealed speake blasting rock and roll, it is hard imagine a better ride. As the public ty materials in the folder messenger to my house by the Volvo Cars North America have assured me, th Volvo S80 sedan is the safest car th Volvo has ever built, equipped wi features that make reckless driving a parently risk-free. If I am sideswiped a Honda, or plow my Volvo S80 sed into the concrete median around th next curve, a sensor-activated Infla able Curtain (IC) hidden inside th roof lining of my car will deploy in maximum of twenty-five millisecon to cover the upper side of the doo side interior, and the WHIPS seat fol back at an angle of up to fifteen d grees, reducing acceleration forces as much as 50 percent.

What I am thinking now is th safety is an illusion that we use to co er up some larger absence in our liv The real causes of the Woodstock ot, if that's what it was, are larger th personal irresponsibility, or bad m sic, or poor planning, or greed. T riot is a footnote to a larger story. Th ty years ago something vital and la ing—an idea of the good life and h to live it, what marriage meant, wh to eat, what family and commun were for, and of who was supposed take care of the kids when the pare both work—broke apart, and no thirty years later, that sense of co nection, of some overarching nar tive frame for our lives, still has been repaired or replaced.

EXILE ON MAIN STREET

A Russian writer tries his hand at the Great American Novel

By *Jonathan Dee*



Discussed in this essay:

The New Sweet Style, by Vassily Aksyonov, translated by Christopher Morris. Random House. 496 pages. $27.

Exile has so often proved an ideal stance for the novelist that it's easy to romanticize . For sensibilities as diverse as Hen- James and Samuel Beckett, Joseph onrad and Salman Rushdie, expa- iation has served to level psychic nd social barriers to imaginative eedom, and has concretized, for ese writers as well as for the world, e half-painful, half-triumphant ienation from time and place that ost great artists feel. Indeed, for ny number of illustrious novelists, e story of their rise to greatness is ecisely the story of their renuncia- on of home, from James's "I take ssession of the old world—I inhale —I appropriate it!" to James yce's famous battle cry, delivered his thin disguise as Stephen edalus: "I will not serve that in hich I no longer believe whether it ll itself my home, my fatherland or y church: and I will try to express yself in some mode of life or art as eely as I can and as wholly as I can, ing for my defence the only arms I low myself to use—silence, exile, nd cunning."

But if exile is indeed a weapon, it has historically been used as much against writers as by them; for it goes without saying that not all such leave-takings are voluntary ones. And those writers whose displacement is not a matter of their own design face a particularly wrenching choice—personal, political, aesthetic—between looking forward and looking back. Consider, for instance, that the first great wave of literati expelled from the Soviet Union eventually brought to American shores Vladimir Nabokov, whose *Lolita* ironically stands—precisely by virtue of its author's game if ambivalent embrace of the popular idiom and trash culture of his new home—as one of the few works one can legitimately reach for in arguments about the proverbial Great American Novel. Whereas the similar artistic exodus of the Cold War generation sent us Alexander Solzhenitsyn, whose aloof fixation on the destiny of his homeland was only intensified by his physical remove from it.

Or take the case of Vassily Aksyonov. Son of the great Soviet historian and memoirist Evgenia Ginzburg (his childhood in the long Siberian exile to which she was sentenced is memorialized in his novel *The Burn*), Aksyonov made his own reputation with a highly colloquial novel called *A Ticket to the Stars*, published in the twilight of the relatively permissive Khrushchev years. He became the leading novelist of his generation; but it didn't please the authorities to suffer his bold skepticism for long. On a trip to California in 1981, Aksyonov was informed by a reporter that his Soviet citizenship had been revoked, and he found himself a de facto American.

He resettled in the Washington, D.C., area and kept on writing, well and prolifically, for the next fifteen years; but, not unlike Solzhenitsyn (Nabokov, too, for that matter, in the first years of his exile), Aksyonov defied the change in his circumstances by simply continuing to write Russian novels, in terms of both language and subject—novels cut off, to a large degree, from their intended Russian audience and estranged from their new American one. As a conse-

nathan Dee's most recent essay for Harp- 's Magazine, *"The Reanimators," ap- ared in the June 1999 issue.*

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quence, public attention in this country has turned away from him, even as his work has grown stronger and more ambitious. Few were looking when, five years ago, Aksyonov published a masterpiece—the brilliant *Generations of Winter*, part one of a two-volume saga spanning Soviet history from 1925 until Stalin's death in 1953, a novel of such imposing power that it very nearly makes good on its aspiration to be a *War and Peace* for the twentieth century. And an eerie, Bermuda Triangle–like silence on the part of American critics engulfed the 1996 release of the saga's equally accomplished conclusion, *The Winter's Hero*.

But Aksyonov's reluctance to let go of his identity as a Russian novelist, it now seems, has not been a matter of hubris or principled disdain so much as a kind of respect for the process of assimilation itself. Eighteen years after his arrival in America, twelve years after his admission (in an affable memoir of his years in exile titled *In Search of Melancholy Baby*) that "one of my American dreams is the American novel," this month brings the publication of *The New Sweet Style*, Aksyonov's first fiction to take on his new homeland as both setting and subject. It is a splendidly challenging comic novel—boisterous, ambitious, and consistently surprising.

The New Sweet Style opens with the arrival at Kennedy Airport of renowned Soviet theater director Alexander Zakharovich Korbach, on the first day of his forced exile in 1982. Korbach deplanes in front of an eager crowd of photographers and journalists, only to discover that they are all there to capture not his own arrival in America but that of a famous tennis player who happens to be on the same flight. A household name when he boarded that plane, Korbach lands in utter anonymity; he wanders helplessly through JFK until he is recognized by a fellow émigré—a taxi driver—who spontaneously chauffeurs the famous director to his own tiny apartment in Brighton Beach and invites him to stay indefinitely.

If after this congenial opening scene (with an undeniable whiff of autobiography in its choice of protag-

onist) we think we know what to e
pect—a classic fish-out-of-wat
comedy, perhaps, coupled with
Lolita-style travelogue of the Ame
can landscape—we're as mistaken
Aksyonov no doubt intends us to l
From its modest comic setup, *T*
New Sweet Style gradually flowers
to a novel so wonderfully origi
that in the end all our expectati
for it have been easily outrun. By t
time the book starts hitting its sur
top notes in the ingenious final ch
ters—say, the chapter in which a f
mer Soviet agent is seen attempti
in bird language, to radicalize a gro
of ostriches being raised for slaugh
in an American state called Ocl
chomia—Aksyonov's decision to l
gin his novel on a note of straightf
ward realism may retrospective
bring to mind John Cheever's obs
vation on the role of verisimilitu
in fiction: if the reader "truly belie
he is standing on a rug," Chee
said, then "you can pull it out fr
under him."

In Moscow, Korbach (or "A.Z.," Aksyonov frequently refers him) made his reputation as t director of a satirical avant-gar troupe known as the Buffoons; iro cally, though, just before bei hounded out of the country by t KGB, he had been contemplating aesthetic break from his past—spec cally, a stage adaptation of the gr love story of Dante Alighieri and Beatrice, whom the poet adored, l and later immortalized as his gu through Paradise. It is a story that hung like a polestar over Korbac life since his own youthful pilgrim to the home of an elderly pair of on eminent Soviet writers, "giants of e dition," who surprise their visitor reminiscing animatedly not about old days of Akhmatova and Khl nikov but about the Italian Ren sance. The pleasure and urgency w which these men discuss Dante's and work lastingly broaden Korbac intellectual horizons—even as he t to note evidence of the old po much more worldly experience:

> He even tried to adopt the manner the old intelligentsia from them, no ways guessing that a deep impres

had been left on these manners by exile and the camps—the men's ferocious licking of their spoons, for example.

These two men, who "talked quite turally about the literary scene of irteenth-century Florence," esteem nte not as an isolated genius but a member of the Stilnovisti, the nool of Italian poetry that left a rmanent mark on literature by reting courtly, stylized conventions favor of simplicity and sincerity in rtraying human passions. The Stilvisti sought to bring poetry into oser relation to language as it is oken, to life as it is lived; and the ect these revolutionaries strove to troduce they called the *dolce stil ovo*: "the new sweet style."

A.Z., of course, is not the only e to draw inspiration from Dante's orts to inject a stale form with w life. Aksyonov, too, is after a w sweet style, and his shotgun litary marriage of the sacred and the ofane ("Who is it, then," says a llionaire's barfly mistress, "who akes me cry out like kidnapped Eupa?") is one whose spirit, at least, nte would recognize. Nor is this irit the only source of kinship beeen the two writers; for Dante, lest forget, was at age thirty-seven nished for life from his native Flonce for his political activities.

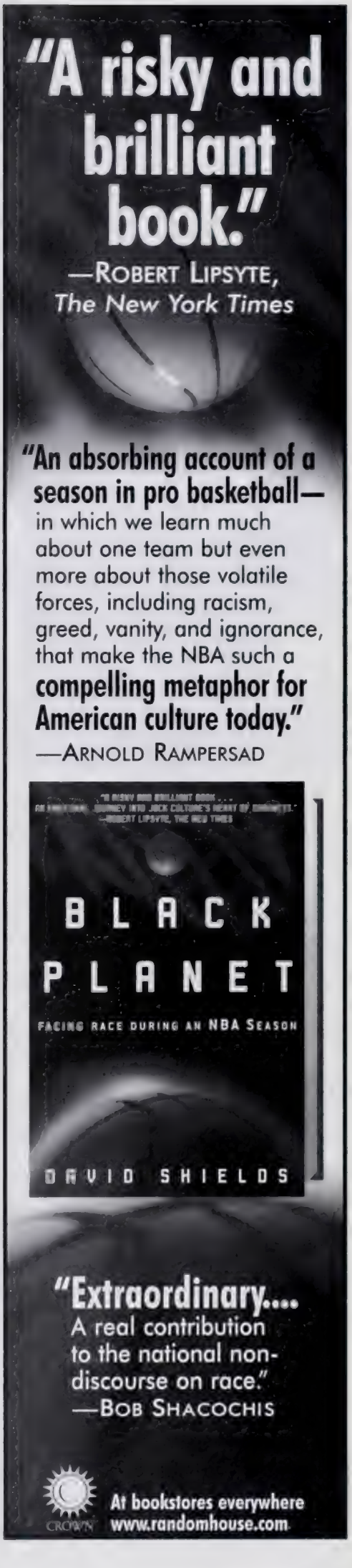
In part, the amazingly kinetic mic voice that comes into full wer over the course of *The New eet Style* is simply a return to the uberant tone that characterized st of Aksyonov's work before the re somber *Winter* novels (if one n call "somber" a historical novel at concludes with Stalin's reincartion as a stag beetle). But that exerance is infused, this time ound, with a marvelously brazen thorial self-consciousness—a kind intertwining of equally powerful stincts toward egalitarianism and lf-promotion—that transforms that ice into something recognizably merican.

The Flaubertian ideal of the invisible author—remote from the lives of his characters, just God is remote from the universe—uld not be more foreign to Aksyonov's temperament. He prefers to make his presence felt on nearly every page, and not in a coy metafictional way but rather in a spirit of unpretentious total candor. In no other novel, for instance, can I recall coming across a sentence like this one: "How imprudent, thought Mirelle Salamanca—it was she (the first mention of her is in Part 4, Chapter 3 . . .)." Aksyonov inserts himself directly into the narrative as a third-person character on several occasions, and at one point he interrupts the action mid-scene to describe for us the view from the window beside his writing desk. Sometimes his delight in the writing is such that he just can't seem to stay out of it: "Nineteen ninety," one chapter begins. "The end of April. Summer heat. *Crépuscule*. Early sunsets. Telegraphic style."

The New Sweet Style is a highly allusive novel, and one of its most endearing aspects is the way it wears these allusions on its sleeve, conscientiously calling attention to them, lest communication between writer and reader be clouded by archness. The notion, for instance, that there might be a parallel between Dante's travels through other worlds and Korbach's journey through this one is saved from excessive loftiness by the fact that the unlikeliest characters are forever "remembering" and spontaneously reciting whole stanzas of *The Divine Comedy*. Nor are the allusions always literary ones; here, for instance, is Aksyonov's description of the entrance of a minor character—a Haitian aristocrat named Baron Chapeaumange:

> He seemed to be an anachoresis of a well-known twentieth-century bit of wisdom: "You can never be too thin or too rich." An even stranger phenomenon was the decadent mono-chromaticism of his face, from the dark violet shades beneath his eyes and in his sunken cheeks to the gentlest of lilac pastels of his suit. The way his head gathered to a sharp point made the baron look like a steel No. 86 nib, which even today is used in calligraphy.

The flourish of those last seven words says a lot about the spirit of Aksyonov's writing. As blithely as



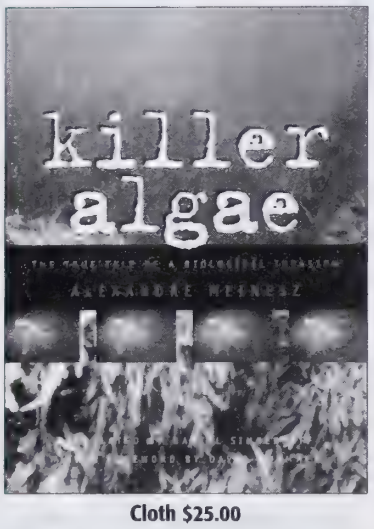
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the sentence reads, it takes courage for an author to throw in—or not so much to throw in, really, as to resist the urge to edit out—such a strange, encyclopedic aside. It's not as though calligraphy is part of any sort of symbolic pattern in the novel; it's simply a visual detail of which the author was somehow reminded as he sat at his desk inventing Baron Chapeaumange. The novel is full of moments like this, when undifferentiated allusiveness runs so wild that it begins to seem less like a way of writing novels than a way of looking at the world.

Korbach's American adventure begins badly enough: the KGB sends his ex-wife to spy on him, and resentment boils over in the already cramped apartment of his taxi-driver friend. Then one evening, staggering through Times Square in the kind of hallucinatory existential despair that's a mainstay of Russian novels ("Suddenly the feeling struck him that he might not even be among the living"), he looks up and sees "in huge, burning letters standing out against a dark sky" a sign, and the sign says: ALEXANDER KORBACH. It's no summons from God; rather, it's the neon sign outside a famous American department store, whose founder happens to have the same name as our hero.

What's more, they turn out to be distant relatives, a fact brought to light via current multibillionaire CEO Stanley Korbach's newest leisure-time obsession, researching his own family tree. Just like that, A.Z. finds himself with a huge new American family, and a rich one at that, in spite of his own bemusement at the ersatz gravity of this whole American fetish for genealogy:

> "I should tell you that Soviet people have completely gone off the habit of digging for their families' histories. People wanted to keep their genealogy in the dark, not reveal it—no telling when some 'enemy of the people' might jump out: a priest, a czarist officer, a kulak, a small businessman. Hardly any of my friends could trace his descent past his grandfather. The revolution created a sort of colossal wall in Russian history, a border in time. Everything on the other side of it is like the days of Ne[b]uchadnezzar."

(This comic aside is lent a special p[i]quancy by the fact that Alex—lik[e] Aksyonov himself—is a Soviet Je[w] a dangerous fact that his parents su[c]cessfully kept secret from him unt[il] he was fourteen years old.)

A.Z. makes his way to Los Angele[s] working as a roofer and a parkin[g] garage attendant. Although he fr[e]quently visits the Korbach compou[nd] in Maryland, he won't accept finan[-]cial help—a decision that becom[es] more consequential when he falls i[n] love with Stanley's daughter, Nor[a] Mansour. Nora, in addition to bein[g] Alex's fourth cousin, is married; b[ut] neither of these things presents a[s] great an impediment to the courtship as does his lack of mone[y] and before long Alex is supplemen[t]ing his meager earnings by dealin[g] drugs out of the parking garage.

But Nora coaxes Alex back to th[e] world of the theater by landing hi[m] a director-in-residence gig at Pinke[r]ton University in Virginia, whe[re] she teaches archaeology; in tru[e] American fashion, the human-inte[r]est news of his modest return to th[e] theater combined with the clout [of] his famous relative eventually pr[o]duce a buzz sexy enough to brin[g] him big-budget directing offers fro[m] Hollywood. His long-dreamed-[of] Dante biopic is green-lighted at las[t] before he can get to that, though A.Z. must return to glasnost-er[a] Moscow to stand on the barricade[s] outside the Russian White House i[n] the days of the abortive Soviet cou[p] against Gorbachev.

The progress of fantasy, over th[e] course of these events, is incremen[-]tal; until, without one's quite know[-]ing when it happened, *The Ne[w] Sweet Style* has worked its way loos[e] entirely from the bonds of realism[.] Nora departs from the novel for [a] while to ride on the space shuttle. A boardroom dispute at Korbach Reta[il] escalates into a *Godfather*-style gu[n] battle outside a restaurant on th[e] Lower East Side of Manhattan, i[n] the course of which, we are told[,] 18,493 American citizens are kille[d]. By the time we reach the last fe[w] scenes, Aksyonov has upped the ant[e]

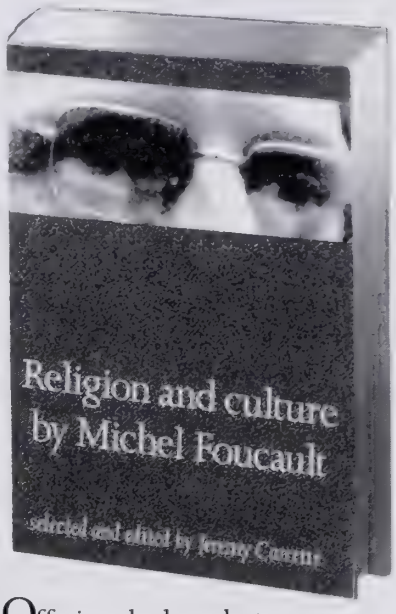
the point where Nora, desperate talk to Alex but with no idea here on the planet he is, picks up a y phone and dials a random thir- en digits; Alex answers on the oth- end. And the dialogue, never ex- tly Hemingwayesque to begin with, comes exuberantly stylized: "'I'm l up to the back teeth with your id-Atlantic English and its re- aint. I reserve the right to brandish clamation points by the barrelful the land of my ancestors!'"

That "land of my ancestors" is Is- l. In its final chapters, the novel is ocked off its Russian-American ax- by the unexpected news that Nora, an archaeological dig in Israel, has mbled upon the tomb of the very st Korbach. Virtually every single aracter, Jew and Gentile alike, ows up somehow in the Holy Land r the unveiling that concludes the vel. It is entirely in keeping with e spirit of *The New Sweet Style* that en this ancient tomb, sealed for nturies, doesn't contain quite what eryone expects it to contain.

Those final pages mark the climax a convergence that Aksyonov has en building toward throughout the vel—a union of the seemingly ill- atched elements of absurdity and rnest mysticism. Moments before at slapstick Lower East Side gun- ht, for instance, Stanley Korbach es from his spot at the table to ad- ess his assembled family and ends on the subject of the origin d destiny of the Jews:

> You will begin a new race, the Lord said to Abraham, and the Covenant was established. . . . That means that our people came into existence not as the result of an ages-long ethnic process but as the result of a mystic revelation. An unorthodox thought begs to be voiced here: Maybe even now the concept of Judaism is more a matter of spirituality than of ethnicity? Abraham was an apostate who left his home and his people in order to find a new home and begin a new people? Maybe in four thousand years the process has yet to be completed? Why is it that we're always leaving for somewhere: for Palestine, then Egypt, then Babylon, then Rome, Africa, Spain, Europe, Russia, America, and then Palestine again?

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Our program, one of the oldest and most prestigious in the nation, is small (no more than a dozen students admitted in any genre, with all workshops limited to twelve members); very intensive (the Master's degree is ordinarily awarded after the academic year of eight courses); and highly competitive (normally sixteen students apply for each spot in fiction and poetry). We are best known for the quality of our graduate workshops. All of these are held in the same small room, which allows through its dusty windows a glimpse of the Charles River. Perhaps the most remarkable such workshop occurred when Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, and George Starbuck gathered for instruction by Robert Lowell--gathered, by the way, less often in that little room than at the Ritz Bar. These days, the poetry workshops are run by our permanent faculty of Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky and Nobel Laureate Derek Walcott, who also conducts the playwriting workshops, and those in fiction are led by Leslie Epstein, Ralph Lombreglia, and Susanna Kaysen. Of course our students have about them the resources of a great university. That means they often take courses with a superb faculty in literature that includes, besides the poets Geoffrey Hill and Rosanna Warren, the scholar Christopher Ricks and Boston University's two other Nobel Prize winners, Saul Bellow and Elie Wiesel. It is difficult to know how best to measure a student's success, or the worth of a program to a writer; we can say that our graduates in each genre have accomplished a good deal. Over the last few years our playwrights have been awarded the ABC National Playwriting Prize, the Charles MacArthur Award for Comedy, the Heideman Award, first prize in both the 21st Century Playwrights' Festival and the Baltimore Playwrights' Festival, and productions with Naked Angels and the Manhattan Class Co. Quite recently our graduates in poetry have won the $30,000 Whiting Award, the Barnard New Women Poets Series, a grant from the NEA, and the Norma Farber First Book Award from the Poetry Society of America; there have been three winners in three years of the Discovery/*The Nation* Award, and two winners of the National Poetry Series. In fiction, our students have also won the Whiting Award, along with an inordinate share of the nationwide Henfield Awards. In 1996 Ha Jin won the PEN/Hemingway and Flannery O'Connor Awards for stories written in our workshops; two recipients of our M.A. appeared on *Granta*'s list of outstanding young writers, and another, Jhumpa Lahiri, on a similar list from *The New Yorker*. Not a year goes by without a graduate of our program bringing out a book with a major publisher, and some, like Sue Miller and Arthur Golden, spend a good deal of time on best-seller lists. Over the last decade we have placed more than a dozen of our graduates in tenure-track positions at major American universities. We make, of course, no such assurances. Our only promise, to those who join us, is of a fair amount of time in that river-view room, time shared with other writers in a common, most difficult pursuit: the perfection of one's craft. For more information about the program, visiting writers, and financial aid (our teaching fellows conduct undergraduate creative writing classes), write to Director, Creative Writing Program, Boston University, 236 Bay State Road, Boston, MA 02215.

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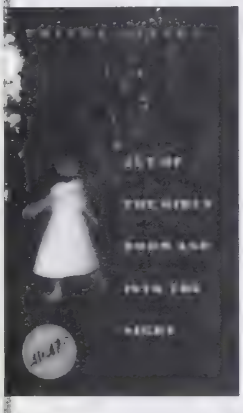
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When it comes to the question of forced emigration, in other words, Aksyonov takes the long view—the longest possible view, really. To him, the expulsion from Russia of a Jew like Alex Korbach—or like Vassily Aksyonov—is not a matter of political pawn-moving or even artistic martyrdom but a single moment in the endless ramifying of that original "mystic revelation." He solves the artistic, and seemingly the personal, dilemma of his exile not just by embracing Americanness but by locating his own American journey in the larger context of human history, specifically Jewish history—which is, much more so than even the history of literature, a chronicle of the pain and triumph of exile. Not for nothing is that nickname A.Z. a form of authorial address both intimate and all-encompassing.

And Aksyonov's "new sweet style" finds the perfect expression for this simultaneously ambitious and humble view; for in its conspicuous borrowings it, too, constitutes a kind of ancestor worship. As perfectly suited as it is to its globe-trotting, millennial setting, there's also very little about it—as Aksyonov himself would be the first to point out—that's genuinely unprecedented. The brazen authorial entrances into the text are as old as Diderot; the dizzying escalation of surreality through violence in the closing chapters may remind one of *Infinite Jest*, but its real debt is to *Don Quixote* or *Candide*. In fact, the novel's whole surrealist strategy is noteworthy not just because it allows Aksyonov to widen the playing field of his own inventiveness but because, at bottom, it is a way of honoring the past. The realistic novel is, after all, a relatively recent convention; for Diderot, Cervantes, Voltaire, the novel was not a dogged re-creation of life but a realm of intellectual play, a laboratory of possibility. And here, too, is an irony Dante would recognize, for even *his* "new sweet style" was in part a plea to return to an old one—that of the eleventh-century troubadours of Provence, "all those outpourings," those "wandering courtiers girded with swords," who dared to write in a dialect descended from Vulgar Latin.

In the light of this very para dox—that a design for one's fi ture depends upon a constan rereading of the past—Aksyonov prose style itself begins to seem lik a strategy for reconciling the drea of starting over as an America writer with the compulsion to loo homeward. His search for "Amer can" paradigms leads him back Dante via Bely, Gogol, Rabelai just as his characters' increasing headlong rush through recent hist ry culminates unexpectedly in sense of the awesomeness of th past.

At one point in their love affai "in the breathing spaces betwee screwing sessions," Alex and Nor get into a discussion, unexpectedl enough, of the work of the Russia philosopher Nikolai Fyodorov. Ale tries to sum it up for her:

> "Almighty God expects every gener tion of the living—that is, the 'chi dren of the air'—to work for the resu rection of all the dead, that is, for th return of cosmic and esoteric objec to life by means of science an technology. This is the principal ide overcoming the enmity of natur through the resurrection of th fathers."

From his own self-imposed exil Henry James once wrote that th novelist should aspire to a sense of "sacred office." Aksyonov, his lif divided between a country wher the past was a malleable instrumer of power and a country so callo that (as he writes of Manhattan "until quite recently it was still ju a badly cleared forest," finds his fait in an appropriately awestruck sens of the vastness of human history. I transforming the story of banishe artist Alex Korbach from a specifi Cold War vignette into a parable exile and the human condition Aksyonov has performed an artisti act of defiance at once perfectl humble and as self-affirming Stephen Dedalus's *non serviam*. I its symbolic resurrection of its lite ary fathers—even as its characte literally exhume their own—*Th New Sweet Style* displays a sense the sacred that few other America novels can approach.

THE LADY IN THE LOOKING-GLASS

A REFLECTION

By Virginia Woolf

People should not leave looking-glasses hanging in their rooms any more than they should leave open check books or letters confessing some hideous ne. One could not help looking, t summer afternoon, in the long s that hung outside in the hall. ance had so arranged it. From the ths of the sofa in the drawing- m one could see reflected in the ian glass not only the marble- ped table opposite, but a stretch he garden beyond. One could see ng grass path leading between ks of tall flowers until, slicing off ngle, the gold rim cut it off.

The house was empty, and one felt, e one was the only person in the ving-room, like one of those natu- sts who, covered with grass and es, lie watching the shyest ani- s—badgers, otters, kingfishers— ving about freely, themselves un- n. The room that afternoon was of such shy creatures, lights and dows, curtains blowing, petals ng—things that never happen, so eems, if someone is looking. The quiet old country room with its rugs and stone chimney pieces, its sunken book-cases and red and gold lacquer cabinets, was full of such nocturnal creatures. They came pirouetting across the floor, stepping delicately with high-lifted feet and spread tails and pecking allusive beaks as if they had been cranes or flocks of elegant flamingoes whose pink was faded, or peacocks whose trains were veiled with silver. And there were obscure flushes and darkenings too, as if a cuttlefish had suddenly suffused the air with purple; and the room had its passions and rages and envies and sorrows coming over it and clouding it, like a human being. Nothing stayed the same for two seconds together.

But, outside, the looking-glass reflected the hall table, the sunflowers, the garden path so accurately and so fixedly that they seemed held there in their reality unescapably. It was a strange contrast—all changing here, all stillness there. One could not help looking from one to the other. Meanwhile, since all the doors and windows were open in the heat, there was a perpetual sighing and ceasing sound, the voice of the transient and the perishing, it seemed, coming and going like human breath, while in the looking-glass things had ceased to breathe and lay still in the trance of immortality.

Half an hour ago the mistress of the house, Isabella Tyson, had gone down the grass path in her thin summer dress, carrying a basket, and had vanished, sliced off by the gilt rim of the looking-glass. She had gone presumably into the lower garden to pick flowers; or as it seemed more natural to suppose, to pick something light and fantastic and leafy and trailing, travelers' joy, or one of those elegant sprays of convolvulus that twine round ugly walls and burst here and there into white and violet blossoms. She suggested the fantastic and the tremulous convolvulus rather than the upright aster, the starched zinnia, or her own burning roses alight like lamps on the straight posts of their rose trees. The comparison showed how very little, after all these years, one knew about her; for it is impossible that any woman of flesh and blood of fifty-five or sixty should

vo years after To the Lighthouse *and two years before* The Waves, *Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) wrote this story, which rejects the narrative tyle of her day in favor of experimenting with the continuous flow of lived experience and the nterior emotional life. The story appeared in the December 1929 issue of* Harper's Magazine. *It is from* A Haunted House and Other Short Stories, *copyright 1944 and renewed 1972 by Harcourt, Inc. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.*

be really a wreath or a tendril. Such comparisons are worse than idle and superficial—they are cruel even, for they come like the convolvulus itself trembling between one's eyes and the truth. There must be truth; there must be a wall. Yet it was strange that after knowing her all these years one could not say what the truth about Isabella was; one still made up phrases like this about convolvulus and travelers' joy. As for facts, it was a fact that she was a spinster; that she was rich; that she had bought this house and collected with her own hands—often in the most obscure corners of the world and at great risk from poisonous stings and Oriental diseases—the rugs, the chairs, the cabinets which now lived their nocturnal life before one's eyes. Sometimes it seemed as if they knew more about her than we, who sat on them, wrote at them, and trod on them so carefully were allowed to know. In each of these cabinets were many little drawers, and each almost certainly held letters, tied with bows of ribbon, sprinkled with sticks of lavender or rose leaves. For it was another fact—if facts were what one wanted—that Isabella had known many people, had had many friends; and thus if one had the audacity to open a drawer and read her letters, one would find the traces of many agitations, of appointments to meet, of upbraidings for not having met, long letters of intimacy and affection, violent letters of jealousy and reproach, terrible final words of parting—for all those interviews and assignations had led to nothing—that is, she had never married, and yet, judging from the mask-like indifference of her face, she had gone through twenty times more of passion and experience than those whose loves are trumpeted forth for all the world to hear. Under the stress of thinking about Isabella, her room became more shadowy and symbolic; the corners seemed darker, the legs of chairs and tables more spindly and hieroglyphic.

Suddenly these reflections were ended violently and yet without a sound. A large black form loomed into the looking-glass; blotted out everything, strewed the table with a packet of marble tablets veined with pink and gray, and was gone. But the picture was entirely altered. For the moment it was unrecognizable and irrational and entirely out of focus. One could not relate these tablets to any human purpose. And then by degrees some logical process set to work on them and began ordering and arranging them and bringing them into the fold of common experience. One realized at last that they were merely letters. The man had brought the post.

There they lay on the marble-topped table, all dripping with light and color at first and crude and unabsorbed. And then it was strange to see how they were drawn in and arranged and composed and made part of the picture and granted that stillness and immortality which the looking-glass conferred. They lay there invested with a new reality and significance and with a greater heaviness too, as if it would have needed a chisel to dislodge them from the table. And, whether it was fancy or not, they seemed to have become not merely a handful of casual letters but to be tablets graven with eternal truth—if one could read them, one would know everything there was to be known about Isabella, yes, and about life too. The pages inside those marble-looking envelopes must be cut deep and scored thick with meaning. Isabella would come in, and take them, one by one, very slowly, and open them, and read them carefully word by word, and then with a profound sigh of comprehension, as if she had seen to the bottom of everything, she would tear the envelopes to little bits and tie the letters together and lock the cabinet drawer in her determination to conceal what she did not wish to be known.

The thought served as a challenge. Isabella did not wish to be known—but she should no longer escape. It was absurd, it was monstrous. If she concealed so much and knew so much one must prize her open with the first tool that came to hand—the imagination. One must fix one's mind upon her at that very moment. One must fasten her down there. One must refuse to be put off any longer with sayings and doings such as the moment brought forth—with dinners and visits and polite co versations. One must put oneself her shoes. If one took the phrase lit ally, it was easy to see the shoes which she stood, down in the lo garden, at this moment. They w very narrow and long and fashi able—they were made of the soft and most flexible leather. Like eve thing she wore, they were exquis And she would be standing under high hedge in the lower part of the g den, raising the scissors that were t to her waist to cut some dead flow some overgrown branch. The s would beat down on her face, into eyes; but no, at the critical momer veil of cloud covered the sun, mak the expression of her eyes doubtfu was it mocking or tender, brilliant dull? One could only see the indet minate outline of her rather faded, f face looking at the sky. She was thi ing, perhaps, that she must order a n net for the strawberries; that she m send flowers to Johnson's widow; t it was time she drove over to see t Hippesleys in their new house. Th were the things she talked about dinner certainly. But one was tired the things that she talked about at d ner. It was her profounder state of ing that one wanted to catch and t to words, the state that is to the mi what breathing is to the body, wh one calls happiness or unhappiness. the mention of those words it beca obvious, surely, that she must be h py. She was rich; she was distinguish she had many friends; she traveled she bought rugs in Turkey and b pots in Persia. Avenues of pleasure diated this way and that from wh she stood with her scissors raised to the trembling branches while the l clouds veiled her face.

Here with a quick movement of scissors she snipped the spray of tr elers' joy and it fell to the ground. it fell, surely some light came in t surely one could penetrate a little f ther into her being. Her mind th was filled with tenderness a regret. . . . To cut an overgrown bran saddened her because it had on lived, and life was dear to her. Y and at the same time the fall of t branch would suggest to her how s



ıst die herself and all the futility
l evanescence of things. And then
ıin quickly catching this thought
with her instant good sense, she
ought life had treated her well; even
all she must, it was to lie on the
th and molder sweetly into the
ts of violets. So she stood thinking.
ithout making any thought pre-
e—for she was one of those reticent
ople whose minds hold their thoughts enmeshed in clouds of silence—she was filled with thoughts. Her mind was like her room, in which lights advanced and retreated, came pirouetting and stepping delicately, spread their tails, pecked their way; and then her whole being was suffused, like the room again, with a cloud of some profound knowledge, some unspoken regret, and then she was full of locked drawers, stuffed with letters, like her cabinets. To talk of "prizing her open" as if she were an oyster, to use any but the finest and subtlest and most pliable tools upon her was impious and absurd. One must imagine—here was she in the looking-glass. It made one start.

She was so far off at first that one could not see her clearly. She came lingering and pausing, here straightening a rose, there lifting a pink to smell it, but she never stopped; and all the time she became larger and larger in the looking-glass, more and more completely the person into whose mind one had been trying to penetrate. One verified her by degrees—fitted the qualities one had discovered into this visible body. There were her gray-green dress, and her long shoes, her basket, and something sparkling at her throat. She came so gradually that she did not seem to derange the pattern in the glass, but only to bring in some new element which gently moved and altered the other objects as if asking them, courteously, to make room for her. And the letters and the table and the grass walk and the sunflowers which had been waiting in the looking-glass separated and opened out so that she might be received among them. At last there she was, in the hall. She stopped dead. She stood by the table. She stood perfectly still. At once the looking-glass began to pour over her a light that seemed to fix her; that seemed like some acid to bite off the unessential and superficial and to leave only the truth. It was an enthralling spectacle. Everything dropped from her—clouds, dress, basket, diamond—all that one had called the creeper and convolvulus. Here was the hard wall beneath. Here was the woman herself. She stood naked in that pitiless light. And there was nothing. Isabella was perfectly empty. She had no thoughts. She had no friends. She cared for nobody. As for her letters, they were all bills. Look, as she stood there, old and angular, veined and lined, with her high nose and her wrinkled neck, she did not even trouble to open them.

People should not leave looking-glasses hanging in their rooms. ■

Little White Girl, by James McNeill Whistler / Tate Gallery, London / Art Resource, New York

BROWNIES

By ZZ Packer

By the end of our first day at Camp Crescendo, the girls in my Brownie troop had decided to kick the asses of each and every girl in Brownie Troop 909. Troop 909 was doomed from the first day of camp; they were white girls, their complexions like a blend of ice cream: strawberry, vanilla. They turtled out from their bus in pairs, their rolled-up sleeping bags chromatized with Disney characters—Sleeping Beauty, Snow White, Mickey Mouse—or the generic ones cheap parents bought—washed-out rainbows, unicorns, curly-eyelashed frogs. Some clutched Igloo coolers and still others held on to stuffed toys like pacifiers, looking all around them like tourists determined to be dazzled.

Our troop wended its way past their bus, past the ranger station, past the colorful trail guide drawn like a treasure map, locked behind glass.

"Man, did you smell them?" Arnetta said, giving the girls a slow once-over. "They smell like Chihuahuas. *Wet* Chihuahuas." Although we had passed their troop by yards, Arnetta raised her nose in the air and grimaced.

Arnetta said this from the very rear of the line, far away from Mrs. Margolin, who strung our troop behind her like a brood of obedient ducklings. Mrs. Margolin even looked like a mother duck—she had hair cropped close to a small ball of a head, almost no neck, and huge, miraculous breasts. She wore enormous belts that looked like the kind weight lifters wear, except hers were cheap metallic gold or rabbit fur or covered with gigantic fake sunflowers. Often these belts would become nature lessons in and of themselves. "See," Mrs. Margolin once said to us, pointing to her belt. "This one's made entirely from the feathers of baby pigeons."

The belt layered with feathers was uncanny enough, but I was more disturbed by the realization that I had never actually *seen* a baby pigeon. I searched for weeks for one, in vain—scampering after pigeons whenever I was downtown with my father.

But nature lessons were not Mrs. Margolin's top priority. She saw the position of troop leader as an evangelical post. Back at the A.M.E. church where our Brownie meetings were held, she was especially fond of imparting religious aphorisms by means of acrostics—Satan was the "Serpent Always Tempting And Noisome"; she'd refer to the Bible as "Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth." Whenever she occasionally quizzed us on these at the beginning of the Brownie meeting, expecting to hear the acrostics parroted back to her, only Arnetta's correct replies soared over our vague mumblings. "Jesus?" Mrs. Margolin might ask expectantly, and Arnetta alone would dutifully answer, "Jehovah's Example, Saving Us Sinners."

Arnetta made a point of listening to Mrs. Margolin's religious talk and giving her what she wanted to hear. Because of this, Arnetta could have blared through a megaphone that the white girls of Troop 909 were "wet Chihuahuas" without arousing so much as a blink from Mrs. Margolin. Once Arnetta killed the troop goldfish by feeding it a french fry covered in ketch and when Mrs. Margolin demande explanation, Arnetta claimed that goldfish had been eyeing her meal *hours*, until—giving in to temptatio it had leapt up and snatched the wh golden fry from her fingertips.

"*Serious* Chihuahua," Octa added—though neither Arnetta Octavia could *spell* "Chihuahua' had ever *seen* a Chihuahua. Trisyll ic words had gained a sort of ex cism within our fourth-grade se Woodrow Wilson Elementary. Ar ta and Octavia, compelled to ou each other, would flip through the tionary, determined to work the vul sounding ones like "Djibouti" and nine" into conversation.

"*Caucasian* Chihuahuas," Arn said.

That did it. Drema and Elise d bled up on each other like inextric entwined kites; Octavia slapped skim of her belly; Janice jum straight up in the air, then did it ag just as hard, as if to slam-dunk her c head. No one had laughed so h since a boy named Martez had stuck pencil in the electric socket and sp the whole day with a strange grin his face.

"Girls, girls," said our parent hel Mrs. Hedy. Mrs. Hedy was Octav mother. She wagged her index fin perfunctorily, like a windshield wi "Stop it now. Be good." She said loudly enough to be heard, but la nasally, bereft of any feeling or i cation that she meant to be obeyed though she would say these words ag at the exact same pitch if a but somewhere on her were pressed.

ZZ Packer is a Stegner Fellow at Stanford University.

ut the girls didn't stop laughing; only laughed louder. It was the d "Caucasian" that had got them all ng. One day at school, about a ith before the Brownie camping Arnetta had turned to a boy wear- impossibly high-ankled floodwa- eans and said, "What are *you? Cau- n?*" The word took rom there, and soon rything was Cau- an. If you ate too fast, ate like a Caucasian; ou ate too slow, you ike a Caucasian. The gest feat anyone at odrow Wilson could was to jump off the ng in midair, at the nest point in its arc, if you fell (like I had, e than once) instead anding on your feet, ees bent Olympic- nast-style, Arnetta Octavia were pre- ed to comment. ey'd look at each oth- with the silence of pas- gers who'd narrowly aped an accident, n nod their heads and isper with solemn ror and haughtiness, *ucasian.*"

Even the only white in our school, Den- got in on the Cau- ian act. That time when Martez k the pencil in the socket, Dennis had pointed and yelled, "That was *so* Caucasian!"



Living in the south suburbs of lanta, it was easy to forget about ites. Whites were like those baby eons: real and existing, but rarely ught about. Everyone had been to h's to go clothes shopping, every- e had seen white girls and their thers coo-cooing over dresses; eryone had gone to the downtown rary and seen white businessmen sh by importantly, wrists flexed in nt of them to check the time on ir watches as though they would nge from Clark Kent into Super- n any second. But those images re as fleeting as cards shuffled in a k, whereas the ten white girls be- hind us—*invaders*, Arnetta would later call them—were instantly real and memorable, with their long shampoo-commercial hair, straight as spaghetti from the box. This alone was reason for envy and hatred. The only black girl most of us had ever seen with hair that long was Octavia, whose hair hung past her butt like a Hawaiian hula dancer's. The sight of Octavia's mane prompted other girls to listen to her reverentially, as though whatever she had to say would somehow activate their own follicles. For example, when, on the first day of camp, Octavia made as if to speak, a silence began. "Nobody," Octavia said, "calls us niggers."

At the end of that first day, when half of our troop made its way back to the cabin after tag-team rest-room visits, Arnetta said she'd heard one of the girls in Troop 909 call Daphne a nigger. The other half of the girls and I were helping Mrs. Margolin clean up the pots and pans from the ravioli dinner. When we made our way to the rest rooms to wash up and brush our teeth, we met up with Arnetta midway.

"Man, I completely heard the girl," Arnetta reported. "Right, Daphne?"

Daphne hardly ever spoke, but when she did her voice was petite and tinkly, the voice one might expect from a shiny new earring. She'd written a poem once, for Langston Hughes Day, a poem brimming with all the teacher-winning ingredients—trees and oceans, sunsets and moons—but what cinched the poem for the grown-ups, snatching the win from Octavia's musical ode to Grandmaster Flash and The Furious Five, were Daphne's last lines:

> You are my father, the veteran
> When you cry in the dark
> It rains and rains and rains in my heart

She'd worn clean, though faded, jumpers and dresses when Chic jeans were the fashion, but when she went up to the dais to receive her prize journal, pages trimmed in gold, she wore a new dress with a velveteen bodice and a taffeta skirt as wide as an umbrella. All the kids clapped, though none of them understood the poem. I'd read encyclopedias the way others read comics, and I didn't get it. But those last lines pricked me, they were so eerie, and as my father and I ate cereal, I'd whisper over my Froot Loops, like a mantra, "*You are my father, the veteran. You are my father, the veteran, the veteran, the veteran,*" until my father, who acted in plays as Caliban and Othello and was not a veteran, marched me up to my teacher one morning and said, "Can you tell me what the hell's wrong with this kid?"

I had thought Daphne and I might become friends, but she seemed to grow spooked by me whispering those lines to her, begging her to tell me what they meant, and I had soon understood that two quiet people like us were better off quiet alone.

"Daphne? Didn't you hear them call you a nigger?" Arnetta asked, giving Daphne a nudge.

stration by Russell O. Jones

The sun was setting through the trees, and their leafy tops formed a canopy of black lace for the flame of the sun to pass through. Daphne shrugged her shoulders at first, then slowly nodded her head when Arnetta gave her a hard look.

Twenty minutes later, when my rest-room group returned to the cabin, Arnetta was still talking about Troop 909. My rest-room group had passed by some of the 909 girls. For the most part, they had deferred to us, waving us into the rest rooms, letting us go even though they'd gotten there first.

We'd seen them, but from afar, never within their orbit enough to see whether their faces were the way all white girls appeared on TV—ponytailed and full of energy, bubbling over with love and money. All I could see was that some rapidly fanned their faces with their hands, though the heat of the day had long passed. A few seemed to be lolling their heads in slow circles, half-purposefully, as if exercising the muscles of their necks, half-ecstatically, rolling their heads about like Stevie Wonder.

"We can't let them get away with that," Arnetta said, dropping her voice to a laryngitic whisper. "We can't let them get away with calling us niggers. I say we teach them a lesson." She sat down cross-legged on a sleeping bag, an embittered Buddha, eyes glimmering acrylic-black. "We can't go telling Mrs. Margolin, either. Mrs. Margolin'll say something about doing unto others and the path of righteousness and all. Forget that shit." She let her eyes flutter irreverently till they half closed, as though ignoring an insult not worth returning. We could all hear Mrs. Margolin outside, gathering the last of the metal camp-ware.

Nobody said anything for a while. Arnetta's tone had an upholstered confidence that was somehow both regal and vulgar at once. It demanded a few moments of silence in its wake, like the ringing of a church bell or the playing of taps. Sometimes Octavia would ditto or dissent whatever Arnetta had said, and this was the signal that others could speak. But this time Octavia just swirled a long cord of hair into pretzel shapes.

"*Well?*" Arnetta said. She looked as if she had discerned the hidden severity of the situation and was waiting for the rest of us to catch up. Everyone looked from Arnetta to Daphne. It was, after all, Daphne who had supposedly been called the name, but Daphne sat on the bare cabin floor, flipping through the pages of the Girl Scout handbook, eyebrows arched in mock wonder, as if the handbook were a catalogue full of bright and startling foreign costumes. Janice broke the silence. She clapped her hands to broach her idea of a plan.

"They gone be sleeping," she whispered conspiratorially, "then we gone sneak into they cabin, then we gone put daddy longlegs in they sleeping bags. Then they'll wake up. Then we gone beat 'em up till they flat as frying pans!" She jammed her fist into the palm of her hand, then made a sizzling sound.

Janice's country accent was laughable, her looks homely, her jumpy acrobatics embarrassing to behold. Arnetta and Octavia volleyed amused, arrogant smiles whenever Janice opened her mouth, but Janice never caught the hint, spoke whenever she wanted, fluttered around Arnetta and Octavia futilely offering her opinions to their departing backs. Whenever Arnetta and Octavia shooed her away, Janice loitered until the two would finally sigh, "What *is* it, Miss Caucasoid? What do you want?"

"Oh shut up, Janice," Octavia said, letting a fingered loop of hair fall to her waist as though just the sound of Janice's voice had ruined the fun of her hair twisting.

"All right," Arnetta said, standing up. "We're going to have a secret meeting and talk about what we're going to do."

The word "secret" had a built-in importance. Everyone gravely nodded her head. The modifier form of the word had more clout than the noun. A secret meant nothing; it was like gossip: just a bit of unpleasant knowledge about someone who happened to be someone other than yourself. A secret *meeting*, or a secret *club*, was entirely different.

That was when Arnetta turned to me, as though she knew doing so was both a compliment and a charity.

"Snot, you're not going to be a bitch and tell Mrs. Margolin, are you?"

I had been called "Snot" ever s
first grade, when I'd sneezed in
and two long ropes of mucus had s
tered a nearby girl.

"Hey," I said. "Maybe you di
hear them right—I mean—"

"Are you gonna tell on us or
was all Arnetta wanted to know,
by the time the question was as
the rest of our Brownie troop look
me as though they'd already dec
their course of action, me being
only impediment. As the
it were all a simple m
of patriotism.

Camp Crescendo used to do
as a high school band and field h
ey camp until an arching field h
ey ball landed on the clasp of a
metal barrette, knifing a skull ne
paralyzing the right side of her b
The camp closed down for a few y
and the girl's teammates built a me
rial, filling the spot on which the
fell with hockey balls, upon wh
they had painted—all in nail polis
get-well tidings, flowers, and he
The balls were still stacked there,
a shrine of ostrich eggs embedde
the ground.

On the second day of camp, T
909 was dancing around the mo
of nail polish–decorated hockey b
their limbs jangling awkwardly, t
cries like the constant summer sq
of an amusement park. There w
stream that bordered the field ho
lawn, and the girls from my troop
tled next to it, scarfing down the
of lunch: sandwiches made from
mi and slices of tomato that had
ten waterlogged from the meltin
in the cooler. From the stream b
Arnetta eyed the Troop 909 girls,
tinizing their movements to glea
spiration for battle.

"Man," Arnetta said, "we c
bum-rush them right now if that d
lady would *leave*."

The 909 troop leader was a w
woman with the severe pageboy
do of an ancient Egyptian. She
sprawled on a picnic blanket, Sph
like, eating a banana, sometimes h
ing it out in front of her like a m
phone. Beside her sat a girl sl
flapping one hand like a bird wi
broken wing. Occasionally, the le
would call out the names of girls w

empted leapfrogs and flips, or of girls o yelled too loudly or strayed far m the circle.

'I'm just glad Big Fat Mama's not owing us here," Octavia said. "At st we don't have to worry about ." Mrs. Margolin, Octavia assured was having her Afternoon Devonal, shrouded in mosquito netting, a clearing she'd found. Mrs. Hedy s cleaning mud from her espadrilles the cabin.

'I handled them." Arnetta sucked her teeth and proudly grinned. "I d her we was going to gather leaves."

'Gather leaves," Octavia said, nodg respectfully. "That's a good one. ey're so mad-crazy about this camp- thing." She looked from ground sky, sky to ground. Her hair hung wn her back in two braids like a aw's. "I mean, I really don't know y it's even called *camping*—all we r do with Nature is find some twigs d say something like, 'Wow, this fell m a tree.'" She then studied her dwich. With two disdainful fingers, picked out a slice of dripping toma- the sections congealed with red ne. She pitched it into the stream browned with dead leaves and the rky effigies of other dead things, t in the opaque water a group of all silver-brown fish appeared. They rounded the tomato and nibbled.

"Look!" Janice cried. "Fishes! Fish- " As she scrambled to the edge of e stream to watch, a covey of insects ew up tantrums from the wheatss and nettle, a throng of tiny elecc machines, all going at once. Ocia snuck up behind Janice as if to sh her in. Daphne and I exchanged rified looks. It seemed as though on- we knew that Octavia was close ough—and bold enough—to actuy push Janice into the stream. Jan- turned around quickly, but Octavia s already staring serenely into the l water as though she were gather- some sort of courage from it.

'What's so funny?" Janice said, eyeg them all suspiciously.

Elise began humming the tune to arma Chameleon," all the girls join- in, their hums light and facile. Jan- began to hum, against everyone e, the high-octane opening chords "Beat It."

"I love me some Michael Jackson,"



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NOTES FOR "CHANGE FOR A QUARTER":

Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).

1 Across: a. b(rogue); b. p(s)alms; c. as(cot)s; d. rectus*

2 Across: a. Ber-ber; b. bi(car)b; c. t(urn)ip; d. as-thma*

3 Across: a. con(tinuo*)U.S.; b. term-in-(a)-tor; c. literature*; d. highchairs (pun)

4 Across: a. high-toned (two mngs.); b. attr*-actor; c. B-(utter)-f(l)at; d. not(Act IV)e

5 Across: a. trig (rev.); b. shoo(t); c. stet*; d. fail (hidden)

6 Across: a. shoetrees (pun); b. eaves-drop (homophone); c. in-a-m(or)at-a; d. U(neve[ne]S)t

7 Across: a. bi(fo)rm*; b. (contr)actual; c. bribed*; d. tinsel*

8 Across: a. DO(rm)S; b. riche*; c. notes*; d. riots*

Janice said when she'd finished humming, smacking her lips as though Michael Jackson were a favorite meal. "I will marry Michael Jackson."

Before anyone had a chance to impress upon Janice the impossibility of this, Arnetta suddenly rose, made a sun visor of her hand, and watched Troop 909 leave the field hockey lawn.

"Dammit!" she said. "We've got to get them *alone*."

"They won't ever be alone," I said. All the rest of the girls looked at me. If I spoke even a word, I could count on someone calling me Snot, but everyone seemed to think that we could beat up these girls; no one entertained the thought that they might fight *back*. "The only time they'll be unsupervised is in the bathroom."

"Oh shut up, Snot," Octavia said.

But Arnetta slowly nodded her head. "The bathroom," she said. "The bathroom," she said, again and again. "The bathroom! The bathroom!" She cheered so blissfully that I thought for a moment she was joking.

According to Octavia's watch, it took us five minutes to hike to the rest rooms, which were midway between our cabin and Troop 909's. Inside, the mirrors above the sinks returned only the vaguest of reflections, as though someone had taken a scouring pad to their surfaces to obscure the shine. Pine needles, leaves, and dirty flattened wads of chewing gum covered the floor like a mosaic. Webs of hair matted the drain in the middle of the floor. Above the sinks and below the mirrors, stacks of folded white paper towels lay on a long metal counter. Shaggy white balls of paper towels sat on the sink tops in a line like corsages on display. A thread of floss snaked from a wad of tissues dotted with the faint red-pink of blood. One of those white girls, I thought, had just lost a tooth.

The rest room looked almost the same as it had the night before, but it somehow seemed stranger now. We had never noticed the wooden rafters before, coming together in great Vs. We were, it seemed, inside a whale, viewing the ribs of the roof of its mouth.

"Wow. It's a moon," Elise said.

"You can say that moon."

Arnetta leaned against the doorjamb of a rest-room stall. "This is where they'll be again," she said. Just seeing the place, just having a plan, seemed to satisfy her. "We'll go in and talk to them. You know, 'How you doing? How long will you be here?' that sort of thing. Then Octavia and I are gonna tell them what happens when they call any one of us a nigger."

"I'm going to say something, too," Janice said.

Arnetta considered this. "Sure," she said. "Of course. Whatever you want."

Janice pointed her finger like a gun at Octavia and rehearsed the line she'd thought up, "'We're gonna teach you a *lesson*.' That's what I'm going to say." She narrowed her eyes like a TV mobster. "'We're gonna teach you little girls a lesson!'"

With the back of her hand, Octavia brushed Janice's finger away. "You couldn't teach me to shit in a toilet."

"But," I said, "what if they say, 'We didn't say that. We didn't call anyone a N-I-G-G-E-R'?"

"Snot," Arnetta sighed. "Don't think. Just fight. If you even know how."

Everyone laughed while Daphne stood there. Arnetta gently laid her hand on Daphne's shoulder. "Daphne. You don't have to fight. We're doing this for you."

Daphne walked to the counter, took a clean paper towel, and carefully unfolded it like a map. With this, she began to pick up the trash all around. Everyone watched.

"C'mon," Arnetta said to everyone. "Let's beat it." We all ambled toward the rest-room doorway, where the sunshine made one large white rectangle of light. We were immediately blinded and shielded our eyes with our hands, our forearms.

"Daphne?" Arnetta asked. "Are you coming?"

We all looked back at the girl, who was bending, the thin of her back hunched like a maid caught in stage limelight. Stray strands of her hair were lit nearly transparent, thin fiber-optic threads. She did not nod yes to the question, nor did she shake her head no. She abided, bent. Then she began again, picking up leaves, wads of paper, the cotton fluff innards from a torn stuffed toy. She did it so methodically, so exquisitely, so humbly, she m
have been trained. I thought of th
dresses she wore, faded and old, ye
pressed and clean; I then saw
poverty in them, I then could imag
her mother, cleaning the houses
others, returning home, weary.

"I guess she's not coming."

We left her, heading back to
cabin, over pine needles and leav
taking the path full of shade.

"What about our secret meetin
Elise asked.

Arnetta enunciated in a way t
defied contradiction: "We just had

Just as we caught sight of our cab
Arnetta violently swerved away fr
Octavia. "You farted," she said.

Octavia began to sashay, as if o
catwalk, then proclaimed, in a H
lywood-starlet voice, "
farts smell like perfume."

It was nearing our bedtime, but
the lengthening days of spring, the s
had not yet set.

"Hey, your mama's coming," A
netta said to Octavia when she s
Mrs. Hedy walk toward the cabin, sn
fling. When Octavia's mother was
giving bored, parochial orders, she sn
fled continuously, mourning an imm
nent divorce from her husband. S
might begin a sentence, "I don't kn
what Robert will do when Octavia a
I are gone. Who'll buy him cigarette
and Octavia would hotly whisper "M
ma" in a way that meant: Please do
talk about our problems in front
everyone. Please shut up.

But when Mrs. Hedy began talki
about her husband, thinking abo
her husband, seeing clouds shaped li
the head of her husband, she couldn
be quiet, and no one could ever d
lodge her from the comfort of her ov
woe. Only one thing could perk h
up—Brownie songs. If the rest of t
girls were quiet, and Mrs. Hedy was
her dopey sorrowful mood, she wou
say, "Y'all know I like those song
girls. Why don't you sing one?" Ever
one would groan except me a
Daphne. I, for one, liked some of t
songs.

"C'mon everybody," Octavia sa
drearily. "She likes 'The Brownie So
best."

We sang, loud enough to reach M
Hedy:

ve something in my pocket;
belongs across my face.
nd I keep it very close at hand in a
most convenient place.
m sure you couldn't guess it
you guessed a long, long while.
I'll take it out and put it on—
's a great big Brownie Smile!

The Brownie Song" was supposed
e sung as though we were elves in
rkshop, singing as we merrily cob-
shoes, but everyone except me
ed the song and sang it like a
idlin record, played at the most
gish of rpms.

That was good," Mrs. Hedy said,
ing the cabin door behind her.
asn't that nice, Linda?"

Praise God," Mrs. Margolin an-
red without raising her head from
chore of counting out popsicle
ks for the next day's session of
ts.

Sing another one," Mrs. Hedy said,
a sort of joyful aggression, like a
nk I'd once seen who'd refused to
e a Korean grocery.

God, Mama, get over it," Octavia
spered in a voice meant only for
netta, but Mrs. Hedy heard it and
ted to leave the cabin.

Don't go," Arnetta said. She ran
r Mrs. Hedy and held her by the
. "We haven't finished singing."
nudged us with a single look. "Let's
g 'The Friends Song.' For Mrs.
dy."

Although I liked some of the songs,
ated this one:

Make new friends
But keep the o-old,
One is silver
And the other gold

f most of the girls in my troop could
any type of metal, they'd be
ched-up wads of tinfoil maybe, or
y iron nails you had to get tetanus
ts for.

No, no, no," Mrs. Margolin said
ore anyone could start in on "The
nds Song." "An uplifting song.
nething to lift her up and take her
d off all these earthly burdens."

Arnetta and Octavia rolled their
s. Everyone knew what song Mrs.
rgolin was talking about, and no
, no one, wanted to sing it.

Please, no," a voice called out. "Not
e Doughnut Song.'"

"Please not 'The Doughnut Song,'" Octavia pleaded.

"I'll brush my teeth twice if I don't have to sing 'The Doughnut—'"

"Sing!" Mrs. Margolin demanded.

We sang:

Life without Jesus is like a do-ough-nut!
Like a do-ooough-nut!
Like a do-ooough-nut!
Life without Jesus is like a do-ough-nut!
There's a hole in the middle of my soul!

There were other verses, involving other pastries, but we stopped after the first one and cast glances toward Mrs. Margolin to see if we could gain a reprieve. Mrs. Margolin's eyes fluttered blissfully, half-asleep.

"Awww," Mrs Hedy said, as though giant Mrs. Margolin were a cute baby. "Mrs. Margolin's had a long day."

"Yes indeed," Mrs. Margolin answered. "If you don't mind, I might just go to the lodge where the beds are. I haven't been the same since the operation."

I had not heard of this operation, nor when it had occurred, since Mrs. Margolin had never missed the once-a-week Brownie meetings, but I could see from Daphne's face that she was concerned, and I could see that the other girls had decided that Mrs. Margolin's operation must have happened long ago in some remote time unconnected to our own. Nevertheless, they put on sad faces. We had all been taught that adulthood was full of sorrow and pain, taxes and bills, dreaded work and dealings with whites, sickness, and death.

"Go right ahead, Linda," Mrs. Hedy said. "I'll watch the girls." Mrs. Hedy seemed to forget about divorce for a moment; she looked at us with dewy eyes, as if we were mysterious, furry creatures. Meanwhile, Mrs. Margolin walked through the maze of sleeping bags until she found her own. She gathered a neat stack of clothes and pajamas slowly, as though doing so were almost painful. She took her toothbrush, her toothpaste, her pillow. "All right!" Mrs. Margolin said, addressing us all from the threshold of the cabin. "Be in bed by nine." She said it with a twinkle in her voice, as though she were letting us know she was allowing us to be naughty and stay up till 9:15.

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"C'mon everybody," Arnetta said after Mrs. Margolin left. "Time for us to wash up."

Everyone watched Mrs. Hedy closely, wondering whether she would insist on coming with us since it was night, making a fight with Troop 909 nearly impossible. Troop 909 would soon be in the bathroom, washing their faces, brushing their teeth—completely unsuspecting of our ambush.

"We won't be long," Arnetta said. "We're old enough to go to the rest rooms by ourselves."

Mrs. Hedy pursed her lips at this dilemma. "Well, I guess you Brownies are almost Girl Scouts, right?"

"Right!"

"Just one more badge," Drema said.

"And about," Octavia droned, "a million more cookies to sell." Octavia looked at all of us. *Now's our chance*, her face seemed to say, but our chance to do *what* I didn't exactly know.

Finally, Mrs. Hedy walked to the doorway where Octavia stood, dutifully waiting to say goodbye and looking bored doing it. Mrs. Hedy held Octavia's chin. "You'll be good?"

"Yes, Mama."

"And remember to pray for me and your father? If I'm asleep when you get back?"

"Yes, Mama."

When the other girls had finished getting their toothbrushes and washcloths and flashlights for the group rest-room trip, I was drawing pictures of tiny birds with too many feathers. Daphne was sitting on her sleeping bag, reading.

"You're not going to come?" Octavia asked.

Daphne shook her head.

"I'm also gonna stay, too," I said. "I'll go to the rest room when Daphne and Mrs. Hedy go."

Arnetta leaned down toward me and whispered so that Mrs. Hedy, who had taken over Mrs. Margolin's task of counting popsicle sticks, couldn't hear. "No, Snot. If we get in trouble, you're going to get in trouble with the rest of us."

We made our way through the darkness by flashlight. The tree branches that had shaded us just hours earlier, along the same path, now looked like arms sprouting menacing hands. The stars sprinkled the sky like spilled salt. They seemed fastened to the darkness, high up and holy, their places fixed and definite as we stirred beneath them.

Some, like me, were quiet because we were afraid of the dark; others were talking like crazy for the same reason.

"Wow," Drema said, looking up. "Why are all the stars out here? I never see stars back on Oneida Street."

"It's a camping trip, that's why," Octavia said. "You're supposed to see stars on camping trips."

Janice said, "This place smells like the air freshener my mother uses."

"These woods are *pine*," Elise said. "Your mother probably uses pine air freshener."

Janice mouthed an exaggerated "Oh," nodding her head as though she just then understood one of the world's great secrets.

No one talked about fighting. Everyone was afraid enough just walking through the infinite deep of the woods. Even without seeing anyone's face, I could tell this wasn't about Daphne being called a nigger. The word that had started it all seemed melted now into some deeper, unnameable feeling. Even though I didn't want to fight, was afraid of fighting, I felt as though I were part of the rest of the troop, as though I were defending something. We trudged against the slight incline of the path, Arnetta leading the way. I wondered, looking at her back, what she could be thinking.

"You know," I said, "their leader will be there. Or they won't even be there. It's dark already. Last night the sun was still in the sky. I'm sure they're already finished."

"Whose flashlight is this?" Arnetta said, shaking the weakening beam of the light she was holding. "It's out of batteries."

Octavia handed Arnetta her flashlight. And that's when I saw it. The bathroom was just ahead.

But the girls were there. We could hear them before we could see them.

"Octavia and I will go in first so they'll think there's just two of us. Then wait till I say, 'We're gonna teach you a lesson,'" Arnetta said. "Th bust in. That'll surprise them."

"That's what I was supposed to s Janice said.

Arnetta went inside, Octavia n to her. Janice followed, and the of us waited outside.

They were in there for what seer like whole minutes, but something wrong. Arnetta hadn't given the nal yet. I was with the girls outside w I heard one of the Troop 909 girls "NO. That did NOT happen!"

That was to be expected, that th deny the whole thing. What I ha expected was *the voice* in which the nial was said. The girl sounde though her tongue were caught in mouth. "That's a BAD word!" the continued. "We don't say BAD wor

"Let's go in," Elise said.

"No," Drema said. "I don't wan What if we get beat up?"

"Snot?" Elise turned to me, her fl light blinding. It was the first time one had asked my opinion, thou knew they were just asking bec they were afraid.

"I say we go inside, just to see wh going on."

"But Arnetta didn't give us the nal," Drema said. "She's suppose say, 'We're going to teach you a less and I didn't hear her say it."

"C'mon," I said. "Let's just go i

We went inside. There we fo the white girls, but about five girls huddled up next to one big girl. I stantly knew she was the owner o voice we'd heard. Arnetta and tavia inched toward us as soon a entered.

"Where's Janice?" Elise asked, t we heard a flush. "Oh."

"I think," Octavia said, whispe to Elise, "they're retarded."

"We ARE NOT retarded!" the girl said, though it was obvious she was. That they all were. The around her began to whimper.

"They're just pretending," Arn said, trying to convince hersel know they are."

Octavia turned to Arnetta. netta. Let's just leave."

Janice came out of a stall, h and relieved, then she suddenl membered her line, pointed to th girl, and said, "We're gonna teach a lesson."

Shut up, Janice," Octavia said, but heart was not in it. Arnetta's face set in a lost, deep scowl. Octavia ed to the big girl and said loudly, rly, as if they were all deaf, "We're g to leave. It was nice meeting okay? You don't have to tell anyone that we were here. Okay?"

Why not?" said the big girl, like a t. When she spoke, her lips did meet, her mouth did not close. tongue grazed the roof of her th, like a little pink fish. "You'll get ouble. I know. I know."

rnetta got back her old cunning. ou said anything, then you'd be a etale."

he girl looked sad for a moment, n perked up quickly. A flash of genius crossed her face: "I *like* tattletale."

It's all right, girls. It's gonna be ight!" the 909 troop leader said. It as though someone had instructll of Troop 909 to cry at once. The p leader had girls under her arm, all the rest of the girls crowded it her. It reminded me of a hog I'd on a field trip, where all the little s would gather about the mother at ing time, latching on to her teats. 909 troop leader had come into bathroom shortly after the big girl atened to tell. Then the ranger e, then, once the ranger had rad the station, Mrs. Margolin ard with Daphne in tow.

he ranger had left the rest room , but everyone else was huddled outside, swatting mosquitoes.

Oh. They *will* apologize," Mrs. Marn said to the 909 troop leader, but . Margolin said this so angrily, I w she was speaking more to us than ne other troop leader. "When their nts find out, every one a them will n punishment."

t's all right. It's all right," the 909 p leader reassured Mrs. Margolin. voice lilted in the same way it had n addressing the girls. She smiled whole time she talked. She was one of those TV cooking show nen who talk and dice onions and e all at the same time.

See. It could have happened. I'm calling your girls fibbers or anyg." She shook her head ferociousom side to side, her Egyptian-style pageboy flapping against her cheeks like heavy drapes. "It *could* have happened, see. Our girls are *not* retarded. They are *delayed* learners." She said this in a syrupy instructional voice, as though our troop might be delayed learners as well. "We're from the Decatur Children's Academy. Many of them just have special needs."

"Now we won't be able to walk to the bathroom by ourselves!" the big girl said.

"Yes you will," the troop leader said, "but maybe we'll wait till we get back to Decatur—"

"I don't want to wait!" the girl said. "I want my Independence patch!"

The girls in my troop were entirely speechless. Arnetta looked as though she were soon to be tortured but was determined not to appear weak. Mrs. Margolin pursed her lips solemnly and said, "Bless them, Lord. Bless them."

In contrast, the Troop 909 leader was full of words and energy. "Some of our girls are echolalic—" She smiled and happily presented one of the girls hanging on to her, but the girl widened her eyes in horror and violently withdrew herself from the center of attention, as though she sensed she were being sacrificed for the village sins. "Echolalic," the troop leader continued. "That means they will say whatever they hear, like an echo—that's where the word comes from. It comes from 'echo.'" She ducked her head apologetically. "I mean, not all of them have the most *progressive* of parents, so if they heard a bad word they might have repeated it. But I guarantee it would not have been *intentional*."

Arnetta spoke. "I saw her say the word. I heard her." She pointed to a small girl, smaller than any of us, wearing an oversized T-shirt that read: "Eat Bertha's Mussels."

The troop leader shook her head and smiled. "That's impossible. She doesn't speak. She can, but she doesn't."

Arnetta furrowed her brow. "No. It wasn't her. That's right. It was *her*."

The girl Arnetta pointed to grinned as though she'd been paid a compliment. She was the only one from either troop actually wearing a full uniform: the mocha-colored A-line shift, the orange ascot, the sash covered with patches, though all the same one—the Try-It patch. She took a few steps toward Arnetta and made a grand sweeping gesture toward the sash. "See," she said, full of self-importance, "I'm a Brownie." I had a hard time imagining this girl calling anyone a "nigger"; the girl looked perpetually delighted, as though she would have cuddled up with a grizzly if someone had let her.

On the fourth morning, we boarded the bus to go home.

The previous day had been spent building miniature churches from popsicle sticks. We hardly left the cabin. Mrs. Margolin and Mrs. Hedy guarded us so closely, almost no one talked for the entire day.

Even on the day of departure from Camp Crescendo, all was serious and silent. The bus ride began quietly enough. Arnetta had to sit beside Mrs. Margolin, Octavia had to sit beside her mother. I sat beside Daphne, who gave me her prize journal without a word of explanation.

"You don't want it?"

She shook her head no. It was empty.

Then Mrs. Hedy began to weep. "Octavia," Mrs. Hedy said to her daughter without looking at her, "I'm going to sit with Mrs. Margolin. All right?"

Arnetta exchanged seats with Mrs. Hedy. With the two women up front, Elise felt it safe to speak. "Hey," she said, then she set her face into a placid vacant stare, trying to imitate that of a Troop 909 girl. Emboldened, Arnetta made a gesture of mock pride toward an imaginary sash, the way the girl in full uniform had done. Then they all made a game of it, trying to do the most exaggerated imitations of the Troop 909 girls, all without speaking, all without laughing loud enough to catch the women's attention.

Daphne looked at her shoes, white with sneaker polish. I opened the journal she'd given me. I looked out the window, trying to decide what to write, searching for lines, but nothing could compare with the lines Daphne had written, "My *father, the veteran*," my favorite line of all time. The line replayed itself in my head, and I gave up trying to write.

By then, it seemed as though the

[illegible] had given up making fun of the 99% girls. They were now quietly gossiping about who had passed notes to whom in school. For a moment the gossping fell off, and all I could hear was the hum of the bus as we sped down the road and the muffled sounds of Mrs. Hedy and Mrs. Margolin talking about serious things.

"You know," Octavia whispered, "why did *we* have to be stuck at a camp with retarded girls? You know?"

"*You* know why," Arnetta answered. She narrowed her eyes like a cat. "My mama and I were in the mall in Buckhead, and this white lady just kept looking at us. I mean, like we were foreign or something. Like we were from China."

"What did the woman say?" Elise asked.

"Nothing," Arnetta said. "She didn't say nothing."

A few girls quietly nodded their heads.

"There was this time," I said, "when my father and I were in the mall and—"

"Oh shut up, Snot," Octavia said.

I stared at Octavia, then rolled my eyes from her to the window. As I watched the trees blur, I wanted nothing more than to be through with it all: the bus ride, the troop, school—all of it. But we were going home. I'd see the same girls in school the next day. We were on a bus, and there was nowhere else to go.

"Go on, Laurel," Daphne said to me. It was the first time she'd spoken the whole trip, and she'd said my name. I turned to her and smiled weakly so as not to cry, hoping she'd remember when I'd tried to be her friend, thinking maybe that her gift of the journal was an invitation of friendship. But she didn't smile back. All she said was, "What happened?"

I studied the girls, waiting for Octavia to tell me to "shut up" again before I even had a chance to utter another word, but everyone was amazed that Daphne had spoken. I gathered my voice. "Well," I said. "My father and I were in this mall, but *I* was the one doing the staring." I stopped and glanced from face to face. I continued. "There were these white people dressed like Puritans or something, but they weren't Puritans. They were Mennonites. They're these people who, if you ask them to do a favor, like paint your porch or something, they have to do it. It's in their rules."

"That sucks," someone said.

"C'mon," Arnetta said. "You're lying."

"I am not."

"How do you know that's not just some story someone made up?" Elise asked, her head cocked full of daring. "I mean, who's gonna do whatever you ask?"

"It's not made up. I know because when I was looking at them, my father said, 'See those people. If you ask them to do something, they'll do it. Anything you want.'"

No one would call anyone's father a liar. Then they'd have to fight the person, but Drema parsed her words carefully. "How does your *father* know that's not just some story? Huh?"

"Because," I said, "he went up to the man and asked him would he paint our porch, and the man said, 'Yes.' It's their religion."

"Man, I'm glad I'm a Baptist," Elise said, shaking her head in sympathy for the Mennonites.

"So did the guy do it?" Drema asked, scooting closer to hear if the story got juicy.

"Yeah," I said. "His whole family was with him. My dad drove them to our house. They all painted our porch. The woman and girl were in bonnets and long, long skirts with buttons up to their necks. The guy wore this weird hat and these huge suspenders."

"Why," Arnetta asked archly, as though she didn't believe a word, "would someone pick a *porch?* If they'll do anything, why not make them paint the whole *house?* Why not ask for a hundred bucks?"

I thought about it, and I remembered the words my father had said about them painting our porch, though I had never seemed to think about his words after he'd said them.

"He said," I began, only then understanding the words as they uncoiled from my mouth, "it was the only time he'd have a white man on his knees doing something for a black man for free."

I remembered the Mennonites bending like Daphne had bent, cleaning the rest room. I remembered the dark blue of their bonnets, the black of their shoes. They painted the por as though scrubbing a floor. I was ready trembling before Daphne ask quietly, "Did he thank them?"

I looked out the window. I could tell which were the thoughts and wh were the trees. "No," I said, and s denly knew there was something me in the world that I could not stop.

Arnetta laughed. "If I asked them take off their long skirts and bonn and put on some jeans, they would it?"

And Daphne's voice—qui steady: "Maybe they would. Just to nice."

November Index Sources

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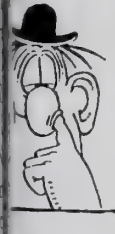
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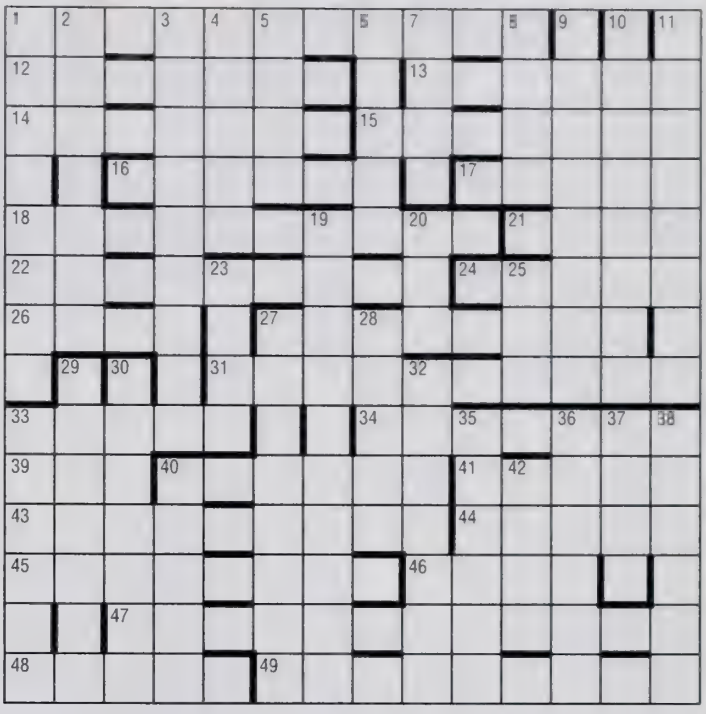
Stuff 'n' Nonsense

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.

Eight Across entries are unclued. Entries 1 and 13, 18 and 24, 33 and 34 are to be read together, and these three along with 47 and 48 make up a group of five. Since most solvers will not recognize this group (it includes some uncommon words), a definition has been inserted into the puzzle. Each column has been stuffed with one extra letter; these letters, reading from left to right, spell out what the five have in common.

Word lengths are given for the Across answers but not for the Down answers (since not all of the Down answers have a letter added). A stuffed-in letter in a Down answer is always checked by a normal letter in an Across entry. The unchecked letters in the unclued entries may be rearranged to form the otherwise irrelevant phrase TV GREW ROLLERS.

Clued answers include six proper names and one simple foreign word. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 95.



ACROSS

12. He's spotted after having once been paroled (7)
14. With nothing on, nun goes head over heels about bad deal (7)
15. Scuttle about, skirt someone on the verge of manhood! (7)
16. I'd gotten into the fight for a fast period (6)
17. Places for people with soft butts? (5)
21. Creature of lust? (4)
22. Lip's shade: Hell-Fire (9)
26. Irish dancers employed at wedding (4)
27. When quiet, contained Brad is not at all quick (8)
31. Sincere? I'm not impressed (10)
39. Sincere? I'm not even starting to feel bad (3)
40. It's sweet when the character just before the end becomes a nothing (6)
41. Pusher—Big Mac, perhaps—no leader (5)
43. Hotel, before installing jacuzzi as a result of inflation? (5,4)
44. Have truck with "People Will Say . . ." girl! (5)
45. What hooters! They make you go, um, um, in four directions (8)
46. Work, thanks to $1,000 (4)
49. Small rose worn for gate-crashers sometimes? (9)

DOWN

1. Make tears in spare tire, perhaps
2. Clarify bringing radius closer
3. Losing a division no trump leaves me flat
4. "Stand," doctor said
5. Produced something that rises in intonation
6. Musical comedy star in the audience—what a gas!
7. Mostly about Arab name in literature
8. Work never ends for you in Paris
9. Listen to your psychiatrist—he's a past master!
10. Zut! Ha! I'm excited to be part of a great circle
11. From bad debts, each deadhead gets the sack
19. Beginning in summertime, range through Russia
20. Necklace, rings, in set
23. A twist ending changes in 21A
25. Sound from someone drunk from fruit drink
27. Fixes damaged tureens
28. Sea captain in a bulkhead—there's a laugh
29. Nothing left out of luncheon—curiously, that's one way to train in Europe
30. Capital for touring *Annie V*
32. Living till recently at back of a development
33. Joints and a bit of sex located in Bibles
35. Going back over everything makes it plain
36. Eager to move, get along
37. Somewhat less than the compleat dinner date?
38. Darns dress opening before star turns
40. Clean without water
42. Person famous for flagging down this scum

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Stuff 'n' Nonsense," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by November 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the January 2000 issue. Winners of the September puzzle, "Printer's Devilry," are Virginia Bell, Sudbury, Massachusetts; David Roth, San Francisco, California; and George White, Waban, Massachusetts.

5 RMS, LOVE CANAL VU

Within the year, New York State's Love Canal Area Revitalization Agency (LCARA) will likely close, marking a new cl for the nation's oldest Superfund site. LCARA was created in 1980 after the community was contaminated by a submerged at its center. Amid concern over potential health dangers, at least 1,000 families were evacuated. A government-mandated cl included containment of the dump, dredging dioxin-tainted sites, and installation of monitoring systems—efforts that decry as guesswork. LCARA has bought vacated properties, reselling more than 200 renovated houses at an average price of $51,000 end of LCARA will signal that the area has been stabilized, though the EPA has no immediate plans to remove it from its Superfund



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By Guy Lawson

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Is America's Military Training Warriors or Humanitarians?

By Bob Shacochis

THIS IS YOUR BILL OF RIGHTS, ON DRUGS

How We the People Became the Enemy

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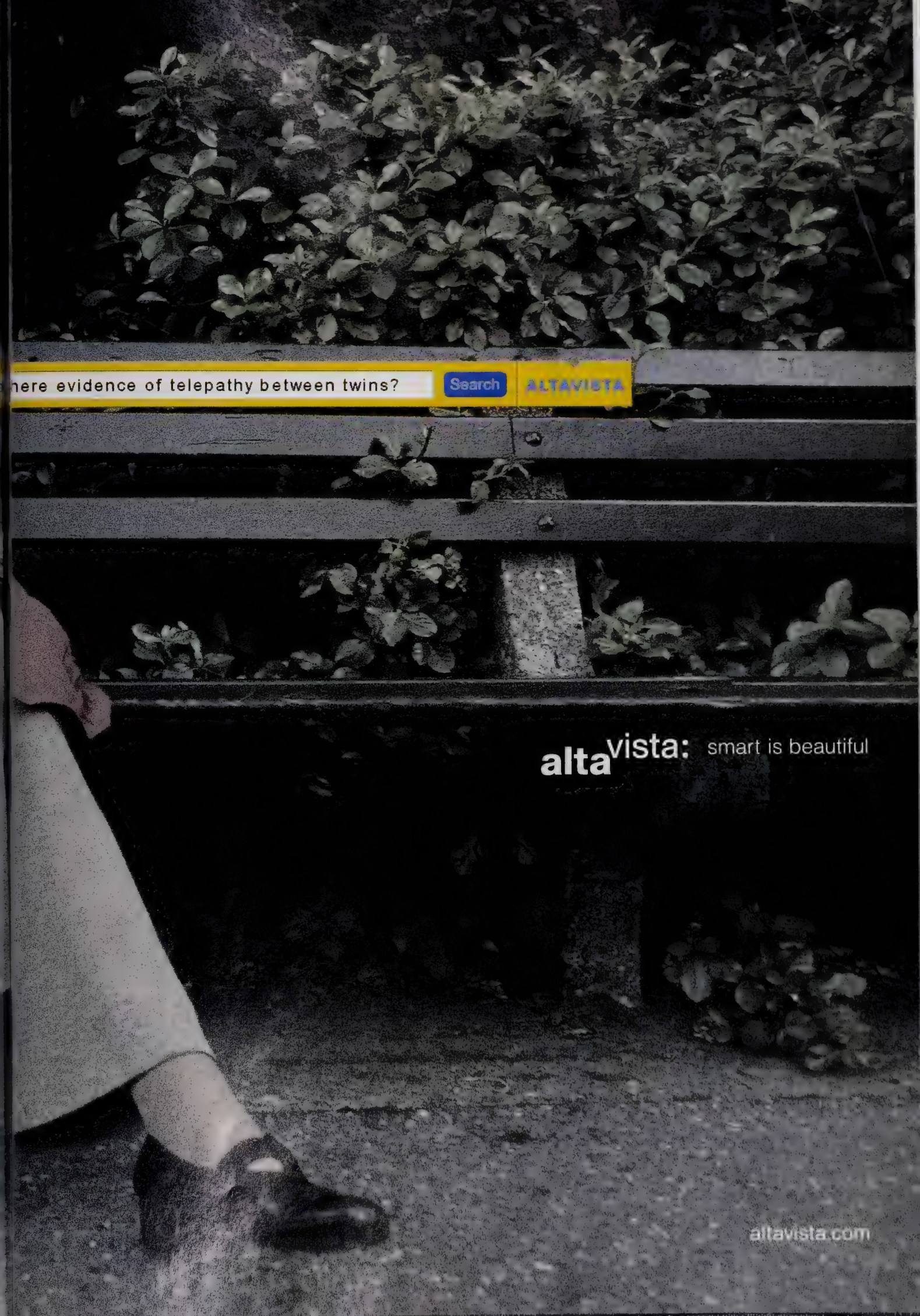
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SPACE, THE CLUTTERED FRONTIER

r featured archive writer this month is Pearl S. Buck, 1892–1973.
JSTRATION BY TULLIO PERICOLI

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LETTERS

Education I: Reading Prose

Although it's diverting to see such a hoary sacred cow as *To Kill a Mockingbird* sent off to the meatpacking plant, Francine Prose's review of high school English literature curricula ["I Know Why the Caged Bird Cannot Read," September] fails to convince. Prose falls into the same trap as the educators she criticizes: the Arnoldian nostrum that literature, if it is the "right" literature and read "correctly," can fix what ails us.

Living in Russia has given me a different perspective. At the high school where I work, the curriculum is one that Prose would likely approve of: a whole-grain diet of unassailable classics, including the works of Pushkin, Turgenev, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, and Gogol. And the students consistently touch upon many of Prose's cardinal values when describing their reading of the Russian classics: beauty of language, depth of feeling, profundity of thought, originality of style.

The upshot? The Russians have a charming veneration for their literary giants (this year's 200th anniversary of Pushkin's birth was celebrated with a hoopla that would be inconceivable for a literary figure in America), but only the most blin
ered would imagine that appreci
tion of beautiful poetry has do
much to make Russia a more ci
society. Nor does a classical educ
tion necessarily lead to highbr
taste. The books that fly off t
bookstalls are translations
Stephen King and Judith McNaugh
while Solzhenitsyn is extremely di
cult to find.

There are more creative ways
American educators to challen
language-oriented students besi
banishing the allegedly middlebr
which, after all, has enshrined its
in high school curricula through
broad appeal and not, as Prose su
gests, through the machinations
lazy teachers.

John Appling
Nizhny Novgorod, Russia

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I was eager to sit back with t
new issue of *Harper's Magazine* wh
I saw the subtitle of Francine Pro
review: "How American Hi
School Students Learn to Loat
Literature." After thirty-two years
teaching literature in public scho
self-flagellation has become an i
portant part of my days. We've b
hammered by the best this nat
has to offer, from presidents and s
retaries of education to farme
housewives, and elementary sch
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flogged by a real professional write

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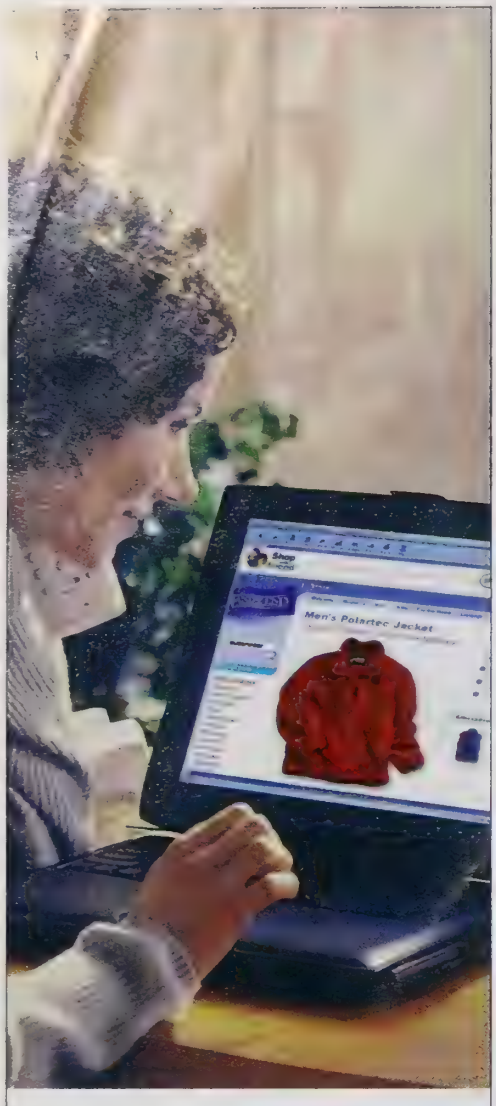
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Imagine being able to shop with a friend 3,000 miles away.

the easiest of targets—the bull's-eye is many miles wide—yet Prose still managed to miss. Her arguments boil down to: Stop teaching contemporary works like *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, because their messages are too easily grasped; stop using methodology designed to connect with the real world of our students; instead, promote line-by-line reading of difficult works so that students will appreciate the "aesthetic beauty" therein.

Is that all Prose has to say? Reading her review was like confronting a grizzly bear in the woods, only to discover he's incredibly old, and then having him try to gum you to death.

Kirk G. Daddow
Ames, Iowa

These days, you can't swing a dead cat without hitting some academic lamenting American youths' inability to appreciate literature. As one such youth, I can assure Francine Prose that there is no way of presenting literature that will captivate my peers or me, since there are so many other exciting activities that require much less effort to enjoy—my Nintendo 64, for example. Video games are only getting better, while aged books remain the same.

Andrew Lechner
St. Louis, Mo.

Francine Prose subscribes to the museum conception of literature: important, slow, careful, and mummified. To her, literature is something that humans must strain to adapt to, instead of something that adapts to us. It is a god residing far above. All honor the high holy most unknowable Great Literature!

This approach may serve the top fifth percentile of overeducated liberals in the leisure class who can afford to dawdle over every word, but the rest of us want more. We expect literature to reflect a world that often is made up of good guys and bad guys, right and wrong, good and evil. Great writers like Charles Dickens, Frank Norris, and, at his best, John Steinbeck, understood this, which is why they are still popular, still rel vant, still cherished, and still read.

Karl Wenclas
Detroit

As a student in a public hi school, I found Francine Prose's say to be an inaccurate represent tion of public high school Engli classrooms. Prose chose three tea ing guides, all by the same publish and implies that they are being u all across the country. I've had f different English teachers since t seventh grade. Each one of them l insightful discussions of the bo we read.

Prose suggests analyzing works li by line, but I can only imagine t this would drive my fellow stude and me to hate literature. In the ture, Prose should spend some ti in the classroom rather than blasti all English teachers just because o few bad experiences.

Matthew Chingos
Southold, N.Y.

I found Francine Prose's analysis high school English classes as simp minded as her reductive characteri tions of how teachers present lite ture to their students: "The narra of *Caged Bird* is good, her rapist bad; Scout and Atticus Finch good, their bigoted neighbors bad," she writes. Yet her argument unimaginative teaching is bad, co plex literature is good—is har more nuanced.

While pining for a nonexiste Golden Age of reading, Prose sim echoes the right-wing fear of any erary criticism that is as interested content as it is in form. What forgets is that the nineteenth-cen ry novel she holds in such este was once ephemeral contempor writing, engaging current social sues well beneath the notice of academic elite. The very writers argues we should be reading inst of Maya Angelou and Harper were at the time radically nonc formist, yet somehow our culture vived their addition to the canon

The accessible works that Pr deplores can, when taught well,

ınd to be much more complex
ın they first seem. A house full of
oks has much more influence on
y child than the four or five hours
veek she might spend in a high
ıool English class.

lliam J. Savage Jr.
ınston, Ill.

After hammering us with her hell-a-handbasket school of cultural icism, Francine Prose never gets ound to answering the critical estion her essay raises: did stu-nts stop loving "classic" literature cause teachers stooped so low, or teachers give up trying to fill ir reading lists exclusively with phocles, the Brontës, and Kafka cause students just weren't having It's unclear in what middle-class, p-school setting Prose imagines model literature class, but her scriptions ignore the realities of ay's students—their various read-abilities, their increasingly dis-rate class and cultural back-unds, and, yes, their uncanny lity to ferret out and reject snob-n intellectualism.

t is certainly true that teachers l school boards could be more in-ed in their approach, but playing unabashed elitist, clinging mul-y to a belief in Literature, isn't ping either.

ndell Ricketts
ouquerque, N.Mex.

ucation II: Why Johnny n't Teach

erry Jesness's essay ["Why Johnny n't Fail," Readings, September] ught a groan of recognition. Dur-my thirty years as a college cher in Britain and America, I e Ds and Fs fairly liberally, and irely on the basis of merit. I was used of racism, sexism, and hos-y toward the handicapped. Law-s hung like a toxic cloud over my d. Like Jesness, I chose to aban-even the most minimal intellec-l standards to work within the em—until I left for more satisfy-work outside of what is ironically ed "higher education."

ooking back, I do feel sorry for the students, who wasted their time, learned nothing, and whose contempt for their teachers must be as boundless as their contempt for themselves.

David Bouchier
Wading River, N.Y.

Jerry Jesness, who blames schools for his own failures as a teacher, is repugnant in his Eichmannesque unwillingness to accept responsibility for his appalling lack of integrity and personal standards. The only appropriate response is contempt and a fervent hope that he leaves teaching.

Mike Bollhorst
San Jose, Calif.

Ill-Versed

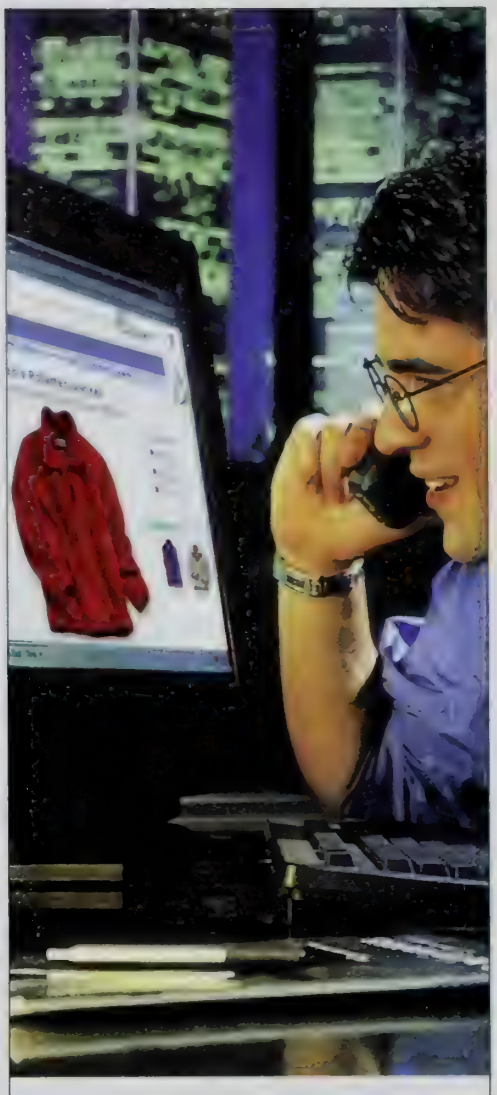
I thought the poems and dialogue served up in "How to Peel a Poem" [September] to be a fine meal, but I also found myself wanting the company a little less inclined to blow their professional trumpets from the ramparts of academia and more inclined to order another bottle of wine and talk to me plainly, a bit of soup on the chin, about beauty and life and death and Poetry.

Paul Muldoon, Donald Hall, and Heather McHugh could barely contain their distaste for William Stafford's poem "Traveling Through the Dark." The poem's plainspoken tone seems to have stranded them at a rest stop in Middle America, far from campus, gingerly handling the greasy menu and looking around uneasily. They lament the poem's clichés, missing the larger colloquial picture entirely. Anyone who has spent time in rural communities, where people may go for long stretches without trading bon mots, will recognize the familiar cadence and sawmill conviction behind the poet's voice.

Next time, I suggest more poetry, less Algonquin and bombast.

Robert B. Wait
San Francisco

Whether they are overanalyzing a piece of bland reportage like William Stafford's "Traveling Through the



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rk," inflating fluff like Louis MacNeice's "The Taxis," or missing entirely the lovely surrealism of Frank O'Hara's "Music," Charles Simic and Donald Hall prove themselves a pair of pedantic asses. Simic, who hates lyric poets and Romantics (which proves his qualifications as a writer of that bastard form known as the prose poem), somehow reads a poem with lines like "I shall see my daydreams walking by with dogs in blankets" as hard-core realism. And Hall, with his endless quotes and theories ("The 'tra-la' is a musical, nonsensical interjection that confirms the poetry of poetry"), is the preternaturally clever teacher one dreads in school. I suspect he puns in dead languages, to his own great amusement.

I strongly urge you to bill them each for their share of the meal.

R. T. Castleberry
Houston

With the exception of the always graceful Charles Simic, how did *Harper's* manage to gather so many poetry experts in one room who don't know how to analyze a poem for what it is instead of what they think it should have been? Discussion of poetry beyond that which is laid in front of you (e.g., Paul Muldoon's assertion that a rough anagram of MacNeice's name producing the word "canis" is somehow related to the poem) only takes you further from the meaning. If this is how the game is played, then an anagram of the article's title—"Hoe, Plow Me a Poet!"—reveals a deep truth.

Chris Smith
New York City

"How to Peel a Poem" reminds me of why the educated and sophisticated middle-class rarely read poems today: the compulsion to analyze and explain away the meaning. I would have been deeply impressed if, after reading Thomas Hardy's "During Wind and Rain," your panel had fallen into stunned silence. We seem long past the point where it can be said of even the best of today's poems that one is lucid, concise, beautifully phrased, rich in drama, relentless in its penetration of reality, and also never ceases to be entertaining.

James Scofield
Olmypia, Wash.

War of the Words

Was it hip 1990s irony or 1890s chauvinism that prompted you to republish H. L. Mencken's reactionary and inaccurate essay "The Future of English" [September]? As both a lover of the English language and a dedicated scholar of Scandinavian languages, I object to categorizing Swedish orthography as "irrational," particularly when it is being compared with English orthography. And was I supposed to be impressed by the fact that, when the Gospel of Mark was translated into forty languages, English was found to be "the most economical, for it took but 29,000 syllables to do the job"?

English has spread throughout the world and proven itself useful in all sorts of contexts. But so what? Billions of people continue to use other languages—whispering to children and lovers, shouting at enemies, and crying for justice—using sounds and structures most of us will never know. That thought alone is far more interesting to me than Mencken's bragging about a language that has done just fine on its own, irrespective of his petty tirades.

Ellen Rees
Phoenix

Mouths Wide Open

Thank you for publishing Lee Siegel's thoughtful essay on the critical reception to Stanley Kubrick's great last movie ["Eyes Wide Shut," October]. By turns I've been incensed and demoralized by the very reviews he cites, and frustrated by my own voicelessness. Here in print is what I've been saying to anyone who will listen: that this is a great film, thematically rich, layered and profound, and stunningly realized, and that reviewers seem to have willfully, defiantly shut their eyes to it as though Kubrick's death were some sort of publicity stunt that offends them.

When critics fail to watch the fi that's on the screen they should shamed into accounting for it. Sie has done filmgoers and the late Sta ley Kubrick a very great service.

M. Kellner
Los Angeles

I would like to compliment L Siegel on his delicious satire of Sta ley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*. Sp limitations may have imped Siegel's full analysis of the filn many "double entendres" ("I's Wi Shut") and veiled allusions. All me to offer a few additions:

The strong resemblance of t costume-shop owner to Frank Zap clearly reminds us of the Freudi sexual obsession with our Mothe and leads to a later ill-fated attem at Invention by Bill, the film's pr tagonist.

Bill's encounter with street toug takes place on an east-west tho oughfare. When charted on t common Mercator projection, ea west equates with horizontal, ech ing the doctor's fervently sought p sition.

The acres of well-formed fema breasts are always displayed in s of two, representing, as Sieg would have it, "the banal duality our desires."

I could go on and on; but Sieg already does.

John Burghardt
Toronto, Ontario

Lee Siegel made some good and ne essary points about the critical rece tion to *Eyes Wide Shut*, but he left o one. In assuming, as so many criti seemed to, that the "genius" Stanl Kubrick was going to have the l word about sex (or at least tell us som thing new and "daring" about it), neglected the fact that when Kubri made the film he was nearing the a of seventy-one. *Eyes Wide Shut* shou be considered alongside the troubli late works of other geniuses: Je Renoir's *Picnic on the Grass*, Bil Wilder's *Buddy Buddy*, and Saul B low's *The Actual*. Each of them is old man's meditation on the most co

Continued on page 1



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NOTEBOOK

Performance art

By Lewis H. Lapham

Nothing is so poor and melancholy as an art that is interested in itself and not in its subject.

—George Santayana

It is never easy to ride a dead horse, but New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani managed to do so in late September when he ordered the Brooklyn Museum of Art to withdraw an exhibition scheduled to open on October 2 or say goodbye to the city's annual subsidy of $7.2 million. The mayor delivered the ultimatum at a routine briefing for the City Hall press corps on an otherwise dull Wednesday morning, and his tone was that of a man surprised by yet another tax-exempt proof of human depravity. Surprised and mortally offended as a Catholic and a gentleman. No, he hadn't seen the exhibit assembled under the title "Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection," but the illustrations in the museum catalogue suggested that it was composed of some pretty "sick stuff"—a dead shark suspended in a tank of formaldehyde, a sculpture carved in eight pints of the sculptor's frozen blood, a biogenetic merger of fiberglass schoolgirls tricked up with a penis where one would expect to find a nose, the artificial head of a cow decorated with a swarm of live maggots giving birth to flies. Even worse and most appallingly, the mayor had come across an image of the Madonna in which her right breast was indicated by a tiny clump of dried elephant dung.

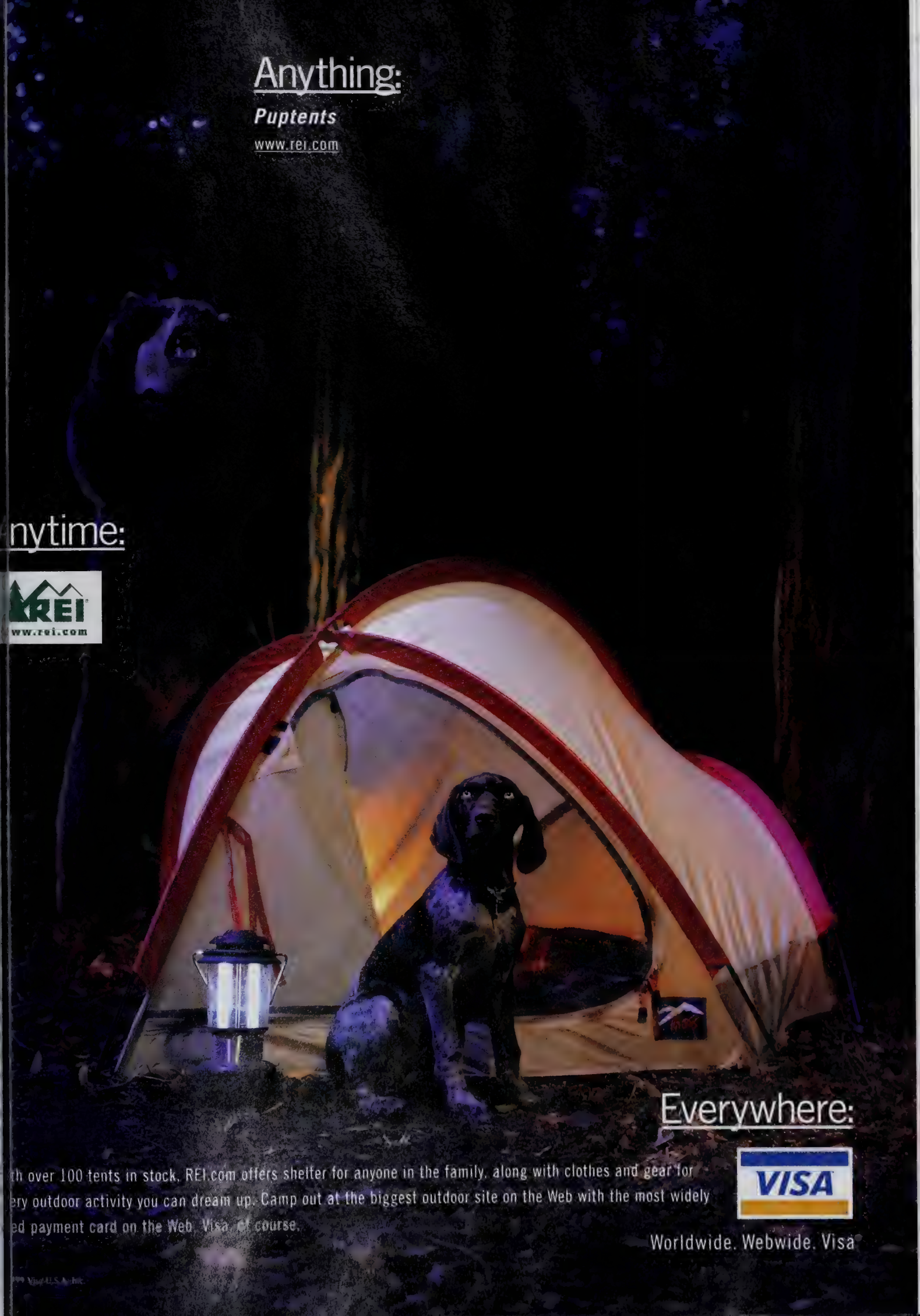
"People are throwing elephant dung at a picture of the Virgin Mary," he said. "We will do everything that we can to remove funding from the Brooklyn Museum until the director comes to his senses."

The announcement set in motion another round of skirmishing in what have come to be known as "the culture wars," and over the course of the next three weeks the forces of light and darkness loosed a barrage of heavy rhetoric into the trenches of the news media. The museum filed a lawsuit under the flag of the First Amendment, the action undertaken "in the interests of all public institutions—museums, universities and libraries—that are dedicated to the free exchange of ideas and information." Cadres of alarmed citizens associated the mayor with Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany, rearming themselves with the catchphrases they had stockpiled during previous campaigns against government attempts to withhold public money from Robert Mapplethorpe's sexually explicit photographs, Andres Serrano's crucifix in a glass of his own urine, Karen Finley's smearing herself with chocolate. Notable literary figures, among them Norman Mailer, signed a full-page statement in the *New York Times* endorsing the principle of artistic freedom; eminent critics certified the virtues of elephant dung, its warmth, fertility, and earthbound symbolism; an ailing John Cardinal O'Connor appeared in St. Patrick's Cathedral to say, in his Sunday homily, that he was saddened by the attack on "our blessed Mother."

I didn't read all the stories or follow all the turns of event, but by the time the exhibition opened to record crowds in Brooklyn, the several parties to the dispute had pr sented—collectively and unintet tionally—a persuasive case for r structuring the governme subsidies for the arts. No matter ho rich or high-minded, a middle-cla democracy fails in its efforts to b stow the gift of artistic patronag and we might do ourselves a favor we gave up the attempt pretend otherwise.

The making of art in any of i more substantial forms (i.e., in for likely to retain their energy and for over long periods of time) is an und mocratic occupation. The enterpri presupposes an individual actir without the advice or consent of committee, also an audience, almo always small, that can afford to tru its own taste, prejudice, and jud ment. Frederick the Great w enough of a musician to compo concerti for the flute and set old Ba a theme for a ricercar in three part the Elizabethan noblemen who fun ed Shakespeare could themselv write sonnets; the wives and daug ters of the Hapsburg Court in eig teenth-century Vienna could play t music of Haydn and Mozart.

In a democratic republic the di bursement of government money the arts devolves upon a body earnest citizens (congressional co mittees, boards of well-meani trustees, wealthy corporate sponso who construe their obligation philanthropic, more fun to talk abo than cancer or heart disease, as u lifting in its purpose as the ASPC Apt to be the kind of people w conceive of art as something made children and sold to women throu


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the medium of homosexuals, th find themselves in the business of ing good works, arranging courses sensitivity training, building conc halls in vacant lots, throwing co to beggars. Even assuming that t possessed an aesthetic of their ov they could not afford the luxury indulging it. They bear a responsib ty to the taxpayers or the stockh ers, to the appearance of racial h mony, to the preferences of t chairman's wife and the claims destitute school districts. The nati al genius for money and tables of ganization domesticates the son times sinister waywardness of art i sunny moral lessons, and when c fronted with an object about wh somebody might have doubts, t pillars of the community (i.e., "t people who count," who sit on t committees and the boards trustees) ask themselves whet they would let their eight-year- daughters see it.

The elected or appointed Mae nas learns to think not of art but line of goods known as "The Ar Art remains too much within t province of unreliable individu not easily transposed into bure cratic acronym. "The Arts" comp any and all activity believed to "creative." So defined and und stood, they lend themselves to most as many uses as religion—a specific against crime, boredom, a drug addiction; as a palliative send to slums, hospitals, and pressed coal-mining towns; as a hobby, craft, or innocent amusem that keeps people off the streets.

Mayor Giuliani pressed them i service as political statement, pi ing a quarrel with a museum to vertise his Senate election campa and curry favor with those vot who might wish to see him a champion of the old moral orde defender of the Catholic faith friend of family values, the hope innocence regained. His seeming have been surprised by the discov of foul and outrageous blasphemy Brooklyn was as contrived as his p sentation of himself as the Repu can analogue of the shark floatin formaldehyde. His cultural advis had known about the contents of

ooklyn exhibition for at least nine nths (had seen the slides, looked ough the catalogue, reviewed the ding); familiar with the exhibi-n's promise to "investigate our ture's most pressing problems and sistent obsessions: class, race, and der; normalcy and eccentricity; lence, disease, and death," they derstood that what passes for dern art these days (a.k.a. "the ting edge") often entails the ding of angry messages in blood-ined rope and broken glass, and y knew that Giuliani constructed role as mayor on more or less the ne set of artistic guidelines. At eral meetings in which the mayor o had been present, nobody had sed any objections to the Brook-exhibition, and on the morning September 22 the mayor's staff set his tirade with a prepared ques-n handed to an obliging reporter.

'Anything that I can do isn't art," mayor said. "If I can do it, it's t art, because I'm not much of an ist. And I could figure out how to t this together. You know, if you nt to throw dung at something, I ld figure out how to do that."

The mayor was being far too mod-. As accomplished a thrower of ng as the late Jackson Pollock was hrower of paint, the mayor has dis-guished himself over the last six rs by throwing it at jaywalkers and t-dog vendors, at the audience at listens to his weekly radio pro-m, at anybody who doubts his tue or questions his wisdom, at unken drivers, gay activists, and e owners of striptease clubs, at the ay and overly ambitious squeegee n. When Hillary Clinton ven-ed to say that "our feelings of be-g offended should not lead to the nalizing and shutting down of an tire museum," Mayor Giuliani, as ick as ever with his move to the ng, smeared her with a malicious el: "She agrees with using public funds to attack and bash the Catholic religion."

Like the mayor of New York, nold Lehman, the director of the ooklyn Museum, also had a reason misrepresent the nature of the art the exhibition. What Lehman had on hand was a collection of stale avant-garde aesthetic theory, much of it dating from the 1950s, re-worked in formaldehyde, updated with live maggots, annotated in elephant dung—i.e., the late-twentieth-century equivalent of nineteenth-century academic salon painting. Assembled by an advertising tycoon and billed as a tourist attraction, the exhibition had drawn gratifying numbers of people to the Royal Academy of Arts in London in the fall of 1997, and Lehman had acquired it as a ready-made success, in much the same way (and for most of the same reasons) that a theater manager in Detroit might have acquired the rights for a road-show production of a musical by Andrew Lloyd Webber. But the Americans were accustomed to the provocations of Howard Stern and Jerry Springer, and so Lehman thought it prudent to amplify the sound of the advance publicity. The museum commissioned David Bowie to narrate the audio tour and printed posters in the style of the "Health Warnings" on tobacco products—"The contents of this exhibition may cause shock, vomiting, confusion, panic, euphoria and anxiety. If you suffer from high blood pressure, nervous disorder or palpitations, you should consult your doctor."

So little was at risk, the art in question so safe and irrelevant, that the museum, like the mayor, turned it into advertising copy. The gift shop offered shark throw pillows, also souvenir clumps of elephant dung coated with hard gypsum to give them "a smooth, handsome appearance and an earthy appeal."

Lehman's dedication to the principles of commerce proved his worth as a loyal agent of the public-arts subsidy, somebody who could be trusted to do nothing dangerous, nothing that hadn't been done before (not once but many, many times), nothing likely to get anybody in trouble with a reckless display of an unfunded imagination—exactly the sort of man to whom a board of museum trustees could look for the best professional advice that money can buy and who could be relied upon to match this year's revolutionary



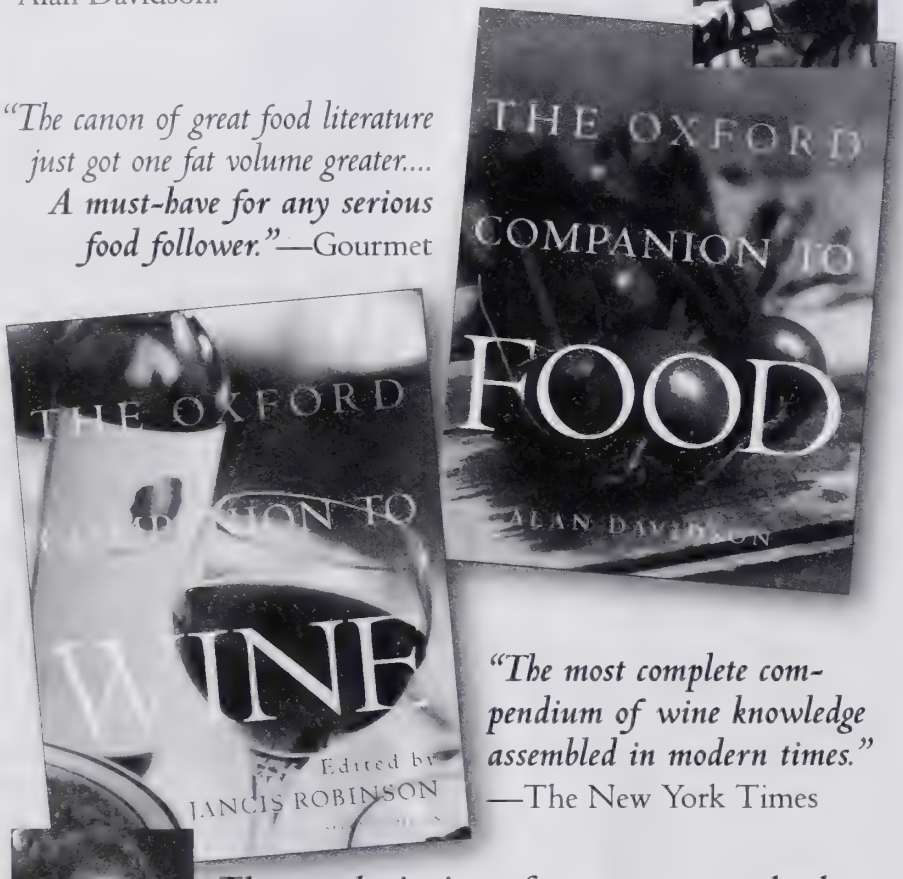
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sensation with last year's receive wisdom, to polish the old Gree marble, or, as was required in Brook lyn, to restock an artificial cow head with a weekly supplement c 20,000 fresh maggots.

Despite the proclamations of arti tic freedom distributed to the new papers, the prominent cultural inst tutions in New York were slow t protest the mayor's abridgment the inalienable right to public mo ey. Five days passed before anybo said anything, and when the expec ed letter finally arrived (deplorin the "dangerous precedent" an "chilling effect" implicit in the ma or's vindictiveness) ten of the thirt three members of the city's Cultur Institutions Group, among the Carnegie Hall and the New Yor State Theater, chose not to sign document that might be interprete as a waiver of their claim on ne year's budget appropriation. Th Metropolitan Museum of Art sul scribed to the sentiment expressed i the letter, and its director, Philipp de Montebello, took the trouble t publish a clarification on the op-e page of the *New York Times*. Yes, h had seen the Brooklyn exhibitio and it was, sad to say, very, very ba He didn't disagree with the mayo critical assessment, only with h perhaps too hasty impulse to cens and suppress. As a museum direct himself, Montebello defended to th death a museum director's right exhibit junk. Museum directo sometimes made mistakes, but eve tually their crimes against co science and taste came to judgme at the bar of eternity. "The suffra of public opinion will ultimate have its say, but not before too ma unwary visitors come to pay obe sance to art they feel they should t to understand and, Heaven forbi even like."

The aesthetic response to the e hibition was the least of anybod concerns. What was at issue were t political and commercial readings the texts, and by the third week October all the parties to the dispu were reporting tactical victories their own sectors of the Culture W The mayor had been proclaimed hero by the kind of people who a

ibute the ruin of the country's
ioral principles to the pretentious
lew York art critics ("barbarians,"
he mayor said, who "put excrement
n walls"); among people who be-
eve that the United States is fast
ecoming a police state, the museum
ood revealed as a stronghold of
eedom, comforted in its distress by
he friends of liberty and conscience
hile at the same time extracting
mpaign contributions (in the form
f admission fees and gift-shop re-
ipts) from the crowds showing up
record numbers to see the cow's
ead, the defiled Virgin, and the
ark. If the museum for the time be-
g had suffered the loss of its month-
allowance—the check for
497,554 failing to arrive on October
—the odds favored its eventual re-
rn at the instruction of the City
ouncil or a judge. The mayor's
hows of outrage, coated with
ypocrisy to give them "a smooth,
andsome appearance and an earthy
peal," seldom lead to anything oth-
than a headline. On no fewer than
venty-one occasions during his term
office he has moved to cancel the
irst Amendment rights of people
hom he deems unsightly (jaywalk-
rs, striptease dancers, gay and black
ctivists, squeegee men, etc.), but he
rely wins the case in court. Playing
the television cameras, he stages
ffects as violent as those on exhibit
Brooklyn, safe in the knowledge
hat they will have been forgotten by
he time they have been proved un-
nstitutional or worthless.

But in the meantime we have a
uccessful work of postmodern per-
rmance art charged to the public
xpense, and if we can interpret the
ayor's salary and maintenance
osts as a cultural subsidy—similar to
grant given by the NEA to a music
stival or an experimental-theater
roup—maybe we could settle the
rgument about the campaign fi-
ance laws. Never again would a
olitician be forced to depend upon
he wickedness of corporate bribes.
et the candidates stand before the
ublic as pictures in an exhibition,
uspended in formaldehyde or giving
irth to flies, and the voting public
ight pay to hear their stories told
y David Bowie. ■

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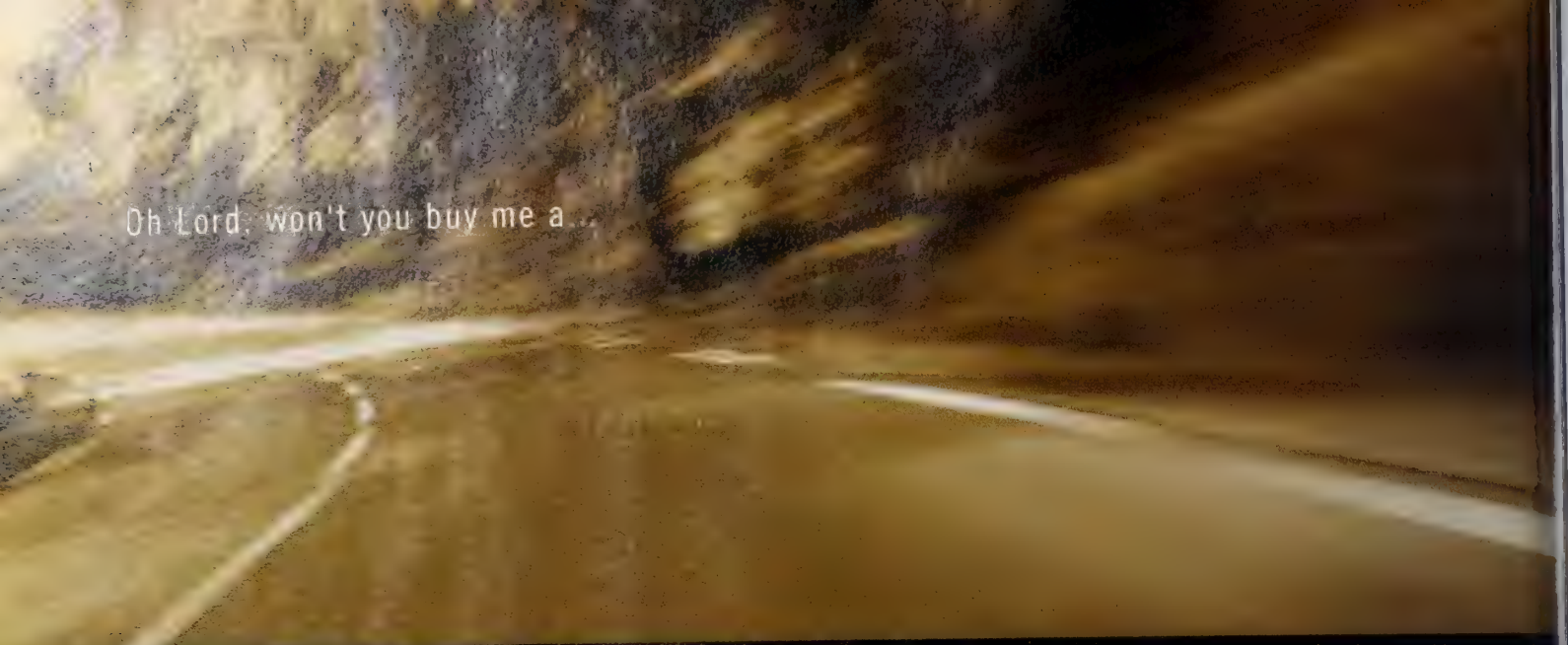
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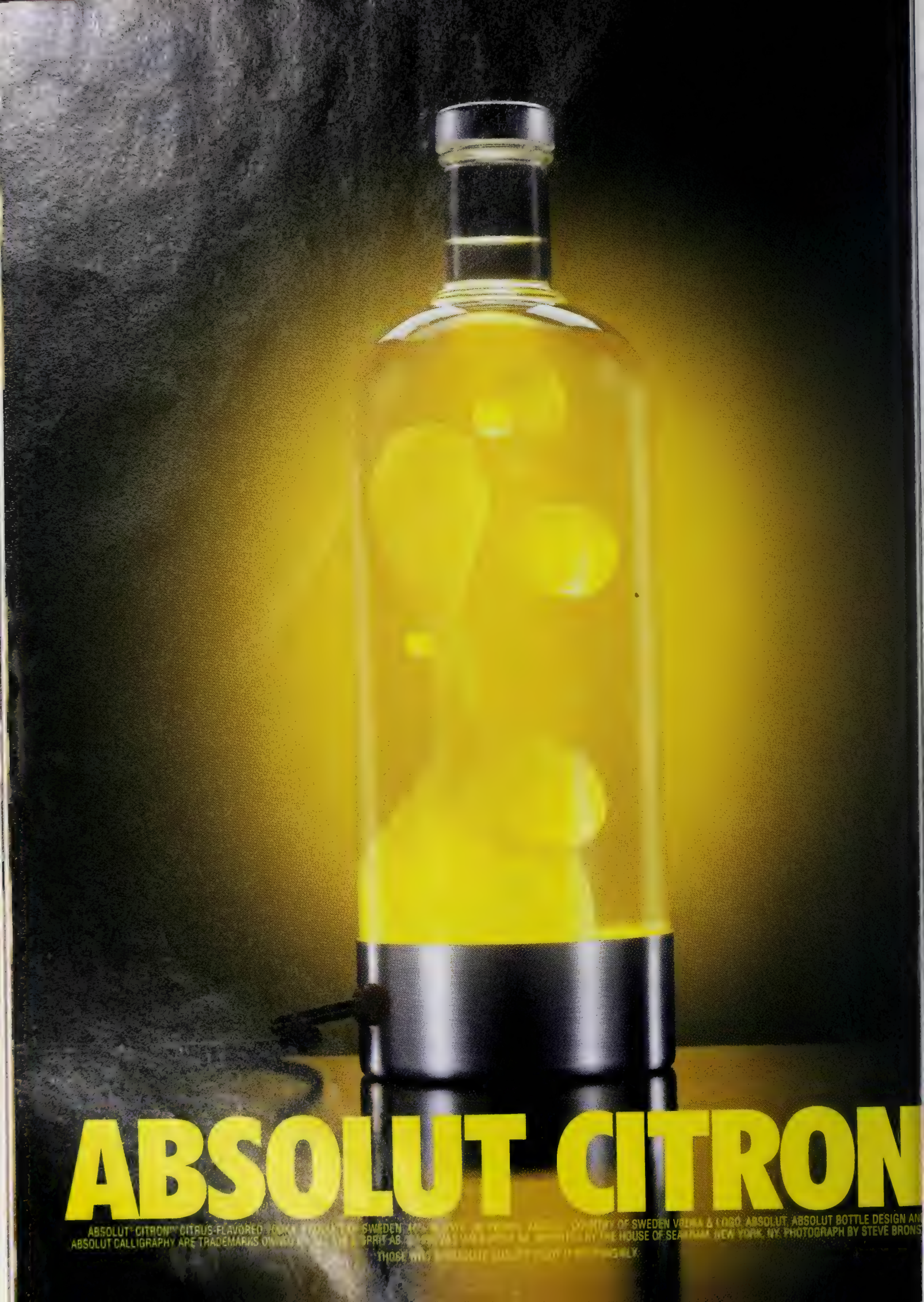
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Chance that an American favors the resumption of any form of nuclear-weapons testing : 1 in 10
Total number of nuclear weapons worldwide when the first nuclear test ban negotiations began in 1958 : 10,713
Percentage by which the number had changed by the time the Limited Test Ban Treaty was signed in 1963 : +220
Percentage by which it has changed since then : –7
Number of U.S. nuclear reactors that have reported safety violations since 1996 : 102
Percentage of federal nuclear-safety inspectors that the Senate proposed laying off last year : 37
Number of countries that have not made public their assessment of the Y2K readiness of their computer systems : 91
Number of countries besides Australia that have ever formally recognized Indonesia's sovereignty over East Timor : 0
Year in which Congress banned the State Department's military training program for Indonesian troops : 1992
Year in which the Pentagon's military training program for Indonesian troops ended : 1998 (see page 34)
Average number of U.S. cruise missiles launched per month during the Clinton Administration : 11 (see page 48)
mated number of the 222,200 "armor-piercing bomblets" dropped on Kosovo last spring that remain unexploded : 11,110
Chance that a Serb has left Kosovo since NATO troops took it over last June : 1 in 2
Chance that an ethnic Albanian left Kosovo while Serbian troops controlled the region last spring : 1 in 2
rcentage change in the number of Israelis living on the West Bank since the signing of 1993's Oslo peace accords : +50
Number of dogs and whores of whom Yasir Arafat is the son, according to Syria's defense minister : 120,000
Average number of death threats received each week this year by New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani : 2
Number of objects in the Brooklyn Museum's permanent collection that are made with human dung : 4
Number of toxic spills reported within one mile of the Clintons' new house in Chappaqua, New York : 43
Square miles of errant Antarctic icebergs being tracked by the National Ice Center in Washington, D.C. : 10,000
Number of coffins unearthed by floods in North Carolina last September : 110
Chance that an American without health insurance earns at least $50,000 per year : 1 in 4
Percentage of U.S. children who say their greatest wish for their parents is that they make more money : 23
Percentage who say their greatest wish for their parents is that they "spend more time with me" : 11
Percentage of parents who predicted that their children would prefer more time with them : 56
Chance that a U.S. juvenile offender on death row is in Texas : 1 in 3
Chance that a black man living in Alabama cannot vote because of a felony conviction : 1 in 3 (see page 57)
Billions in new federal poverty spending that the President proposed during his poverty tour last July : $1
Billions cut from the five-year federal food stamp budget in 1996 : $24
Amount by which the U.N.'s estimate of what the U.S. owes it exceeds the Senate's estimate : $774,000,000
Estimated revenue that the U.N. generates each year for New York City : $3,300,000,000
Percentage change in the number of joint ventures signed between Cuba and foreign companies since 1992 : +886
ys before Time Warner's Fortune Global Forum opened in China last fall that China banned *Time*'s special China issue : 6
Percentage of Americans who believe that the media "hurt democracy" : 38
Percentage who say they would vote for Donald Trump for president over Al Gore or George W. Bush : 5
Percentage who say they would vote for Heather Locklear : 6
Year in which New York's Marriott Marquis hotel began taking reservations for New Year's Eve 1999 : 1983
Year in which the hotel opened : 1985
Price of a bottle of Czar Nicholas II's champagne salvaged last year from a ship sunk in 1916 : $4,922
Number of titles for "horseless carriages" issued to new car owners in Maine last spring due to a Y2K error : 2,000

Figures cited have been adjusted for inflation and are the latest available as of October 1999. Sources are listed on page 116.
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READINGS

[Essay]

SATANIC BEAUTY

From "Technology and the Future of Beauty," by Crispin Sartwell, which was presented as a lecture last September at Utah State University in Logan, Utah. Sartwell teaches humanities at Pennsylvania State University in Harrisburg. His most recent book is Act Like You Know: African-American Autobiography and White Identity.

Most people, when asked to think about "beauty," probably picture natural objects—trees, butterflies, flowers, the human figure—and thus express what we might call a Romantic aesthetic, which (though mightily challenged by certain strands of modernism) has been the standard understanding of beauty since at least the beginning of the nineteenth century, especially in America. This Romantic aesthetic reaches one of its purest expressions in Claude Monet. Consider Monet's *Water Lilies*, for instance, and if you can recover the image from the walls of countless McDonald's and Holiday Inns, you will recall that it is ravishing in its own way, though it has been trivialized by mechanical reproduction, mutating into little more than wallpaper. Dedicated to capturing and providing the pleasure of mere seeing, it makes a lovely illustration of the Romantic ideal of beauty. The pleasure of the simple apprehension of natural beauty is what governs the selection of motif and the technique by which that motif is presented. Visual pleasure, much more than lilies, is Monet's theme, which accounts for its ubiquitous presence in college dorm rooms and food courts, and even now, after countless viewings, it still yields a slight but simple delight. If Monet is despised by folks like me and maybe you, it is not only that we have come to mistrust purely visual effects, or the fuzzy, sentimental, Laura Ashley brand of pleasure he provides; it also has something to do with the banality of pleasure itself. Perhaps we're too suspicious now for Monet's sensibility to seem plausible.

Contemplate by way of contrast an image by the American painter and photographer Charles Sheeler. The painting, called *Steam Turbine*, depicts an enormous steam turbine housed inside a power plant. Where Monet is profligate with color, Sheeler seems satisfied with the grays, from burnished silver to blue-black. But then that's all he needs, given that there is almost nothing in the picture except unpainted metal. The gears, pistons, and ducts are handled with a photographic precision and a completely flat affect. Sheeler's own process itself seems mechanical. This painting (which hangs, appropriately enough, in The Butler Institute of American Art in Youngstown, Ohio) displays great clarity, both of vision and of mind, though I have no doubt that most people get more pleasure from the Monet. In some ways the Sheeler is weird, disturbing, or even inhuman—much like his subject matter. If I were to walk into the plant where Sheeler's turbine was located, it is unlikely that I would experience it as particularly beautiful. It might even strike me as hideous. But Sheeler's paint-

ing redeems the turbine—or at any rate its structure, its configuration, its visual aspect—just as Sheeler redeemed giant propellers, power lines, the railroad, and industrial parks by painting them. Sheeler was enraptured by the "classical" machine: the mechanical/industrial colossus of the first three quarters of the twentieth century, which he systematically reduced to an almost abstract form (as did Monet with water lilies, through an entirely different process and for an entirely different reason). And of course the simple fact that he painted them is the ultimate abstraction—from danger, noise, fumes, and all the other noxious attributes of heavy industry, none of which trouble the viewer as he contemplates them in an art museum.

What is seductive about the machine is precisely its simplicity of form. If you spend some time with Sheeler's work you might notice that he rarely depicts "natural" things; his works are almost devoid of plants, animals, clouds. Even people are rare. All of those things, in comparison to the machine, are messy, complicated, arbitrary. But the machine can, with some limitations, be encompassed all at once in a single visual act: it is made by human beings for our own purposes and has a degree of complexity apportioned to our understanding. Yet it is precisely that quality that can make the machine landscape seem monstrous or bleak; the machine landscape is a landscape broken by human will, a will that is simplistic, paltry, and morally confused.

I work in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, which is just a couple of miles from Three Mile Island. The first time I rolled to work up Route 441 and passed it, I was intimidated. The gigantic concrete stacks suggest an engineering project in the old Soviet bloc, a relic of some two-bit American Stalin's five-year plan. And it feels radically dislocated from its setting. An island rendered into concrete on a particularly lovely stretch of the Susquehanna, rising over small farms and small towns to transform the horizon, it seems to have been built on the wrong scale. But I've begun, under Sheeler's tutelage, to see that it has a certain beauty; the stacks are gigantic hourglasses that embody a bizarre sensuality, and the steam that rises from them is an odd sort of weather. Three Mile Island is a monochrome, modernist beauty: a reduction of form to function so ruthless that the form itself is perfectly stark, absolutely purified, utterly abstract. Three Mile Island is a manifestation of an almost satanic beauty, a monstrous expression of pride and desire for power that is beautiful for its hatred of natural beauty, in its rejection of sweetness, in its insane scale. It is in its inhuman conception a completely human thing, an attempt to transform a whole region into an artifact.

The sort of aesthetic put forward by Sheeler in his art and by me just now with regard to Three Mile Island dissociates beauty from nature, or perhaps even declares that the further something departs from nature the more beautiful it is. One might see such an aesthetic operating even in the world of human beauty, where makeup, clothing, and plastic surgery can be conceived as ways of transmuting the body into an artifact, making over the flesh into a machine landscape, simplifying the complexity, the wrinkles, the arbitrary protuberances to make a comprehensible object of desire. We thus humanize the body in the way that all things are humanized—by concealing, polluting, and breaking. Furthermore, Sheeler and his aesthetic pollute the notion of beauty with use, even as the machines he depicts pollute the beautiful natural landscape. Indeed, there is the fearsome hint in Sheeler that what we think of as pollution might itself be a kind of monstrously beautiful humanization of the natural world.

Perhaps the nuclear power plant in its aesthetic is the final moment of the classical machine. But at the heart of the nuclear power plant there is a mystery that is incompatible with its machine nature: the nuclear reaction itself is not "mechanical" in the sense that a steam turbine is mechanical. It is something that people set in motion, but not exactly something they make or accomplish. It has the interesting "natural" property of potentially running out of control and destroying everything, like a typhoon or an earthquake. So Three Mile Island gives us a hybrid aesthetic or is a pivot in the relation of technology and beauty: it is a classical machine with something astonishing and incomprehensible at its heart. Three Mile Island displays a sort of beauty that is past, but perhaps it also points to something about beauty's future.

Charles Sheeler was born in 1883. So he came of age at the turn of the nineteenth century. He was born only twenty-one years after the death of Henry David Thoreau, but the world into which he matured was not Thoreau's world. Thoreau felt the onset of industry and sought to escape it, to hold on to a preindustrial aesthetic even as industry enlivened him. He always found beauty where there were no people and regarded people themselves as a kind of pollution. Sheeler, on the other hand, moving with a satanic American optimism, tried to make an aesthetic for the twentieth century. He tried to make us



5th Street, *a painting by Stephen Dolmatch. Dolmatch's work will appear in* Painting the Town: Cityscapes of New York, *to be published s spring by Yale University Press.*

feel free in the machine landscape in which many of us seemed trapped; he tried to make a beauty for industrial workers rather than farmers. Thoreau dignified the idea of a natural humanity. Sheeler began to conceive and paint our future as cyborgs.

The age of the classical machine is over: those huge industrial landscapes that Sheeler painted are mostly gone now, or are lapsing slowly back toward something we might again call nature, in junkyards or dumps, or just standing there rusting. Our machines, if "machine" is still the right word, are both much smaller and much larger. Incomprehensible amounts of energy have been expended in miniaturizing the machine, so that the model device of the turn of this century is not the steam turbine but the Pentium processor. That our machines have at once grown so much smaller and so much larger has utterly transformed our relation to the artifactual world, the world of human creation. Technology becomes at once infinitely more personal (compare a PC to a steel mill) and also completely out of anyone's control. The incomprehensibility of the Internet, however, is due not only to its size but also to its operation. The Internet is so widely dispersed, so amorphous and elusive, that a comprehensive grasp of its configuration is probably impossible. It is a system or environment with a life of its own, constantly in the process of transformation and growth. Individual human beings like us are more or less bacteria in the body of this thing. In both these ways, technology has transcended and is transcending the classical machine. Systems will in some sense be set in motion by people, but they will grow on their own. The collapse of the virtual and actual will above all occur not as a result of perfect simulation but as a result of ever huger accidents and bizarre turns of events no one expected, which is also the origin of what we now call nature. But it may be that in the next one hundred years we will have so radically reconceived the relation of humans to the rest of the world, annihilating the distinction between the natural and the artificial, between art and life, that we will utterly lose the concept of the natural. That should not surprise anyone; "nature" was invented by the Romantics as they stared into the barrel of the classical machine.

[Poem]

THE SWARM

By Jorie Graham, in Swarm, *a collection of poems to be published next month by The Ecco Press/HarperCollins. Graham's previous collection was* The Errancy. *Her selected poems,* The Dream of the Unified Field, *won the Pulitzer Prize in 1996.*

I wanted you to listen to the bells,
holding the phone out the one small window
to where I thought
the ringing was—

Vespers scavenging the evening air,
headset fisted against the huge dissolving

where I stare at the tiny holes in the receiver's transatlantic opening
to see evening-light and then churchbells

send their regrets, slithering, in—
in there a white flame charged with duplication—
I had you try to listen, bending down into the mouthpiece to whisper, hard,

can you hear them (two petals fall and then the is wholly
changed) (yes) (and then another yes like a vertebrate enchaining)
yes yes yes yes

We were somebody. A boat stills on a harbor and for a while no one
appears,
not on deck, not on shore,
only a few birds glancing round,

then—before a single face appears—something
announces itself
like a piece of the whole blueness broken off and thrown down,
a roughness inserted,

yes,
the infinite variety of *having once been*,
of being, of *coming to life*, right there in the thin air, a debris re-
assembling, a blue transparent bit of paper flapping in also-blue air,

boundaries being squeezed out of the blue, out of the inside of the blue,
human eyes
held shut,

and then the whisking-open of the lash—the *be thou, be thou*—

—a boat stills in a harbor and for a while no one
appears—a sunny day, a crisp Aegean blue,
easy things—a keel, a sail—

why should you fear?—
me holding my arm out into the crisp December air—
beige cord and then the plastic parenthetical opening wherein I

have you—you without eyes or arms or body now—listen to

the long ocean between us

—the plastic cooling now—this tiny geometric swarm of
openings sending to you

no parts of me you've touched, no places where you've

gone—

Two petals fall—hear it?—moon, are you not coming soon?—two fall



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And it may be that that other Romantic bromide, the distinction between useful and useless, craft and art, commerce and aesthetics, will vanish as well. I really can't tell whether the Internet is "useful" or not, and I don't really care. Sometimes I accomplish practical things on the Internet, such as ordering a book from Amazon.com, but more often I just wander around aimlessly. I gaze at traffic patterns in Washington, D.C., just because I'm already at Washingtonpost.com; I trade contentless instant messages with my daughter, who's at her mom's house; or I spend an hour on Google searching for information about John Prine. The Internet is not useful or useless; it's just there—like a forest or a mountain. There is no reason or justification for its existence, but all reasons and justifications, all commerce, will eventually flow through it. The beauty or ugliness of the Internet will not be useless or useful: it will be a kind of increate, inchoate fact. This is just an extension of the reality of the computer. Computers seem useful. They "save time" and so on. But in fact people have no more time now than they did before, and each increase in computer speed is compensated for perfectly by the increased demands of the software it runs: no gain is a gain and no efficiency is achieved; there is just an ever ascending spiral of signal densities.

Perhaps art in the next century will amount to a kind of terror in which collaborations of unknowable numbers of people and machines will make beautiful things that no one understands. Perhaps in the next century, works of art will begin both to fashion and to interpret themselves. Perhaps artists will grow works of art the way one grows a field of soybeans, hoping for the best. Perhaps the concept of art itself will become otiose or impossible in the face of the self-creating artifact. Or perhaps the greatest works of art of the next century will be self-consuming artifacts, communicative information viruses that grow by themselves and destroy through communication all communication in diabolically beautiful ways.

The forward-thinking artist of the next century will make works too complicated to be grasped in a visual or auditory act. The machine will grow ever smaller and ever larger until we are hooked into huge communication systems all the time through tiny devices on or in our person. Institutions and governments will seek to control the Net and us through processes of simplification, screening, and monitoring, but will find that surveillance is impossible in the beautiful mess; the whole concept of power will have to be radically reconceived as communicative and pseudo-organic rather than ideological. The classical machine will play for the twenty-first century the role that nature played for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: it will be the object of longing and nostalgia. We will wish for industrial production in the way that Thoreau wished for oneness with nature. The industrial worker will take on the iconographic status of the cowboy. Paintings by Charles Sheeler will appear on posters in hotel rooms. People will design useless pseudoclassical machines, or they will make postclassical processors that look like classical machines. Self-perpetuating and self-annihilating technologies will make art a branch of horticulture. New and inconceivable hatreds will spring up and yield beautiful things. Beauty will be viral: impossibly profuse and self-replicating and arbitrary and infectious and lethal. And finally, beauty will once and for all detach itself from pleasure, so that there is no reason for anything to be beautiful or not: no goal, no justification, only an inconceivably huge communication system awash in an arbitrary syntax of electronic impulses imploding into a beautiful death, as when you look at the remanufactured corpse in the funeral home and all you can say is, "Doesn't he look natural?"

[Interview]

THE FUTURE OF CINEMA

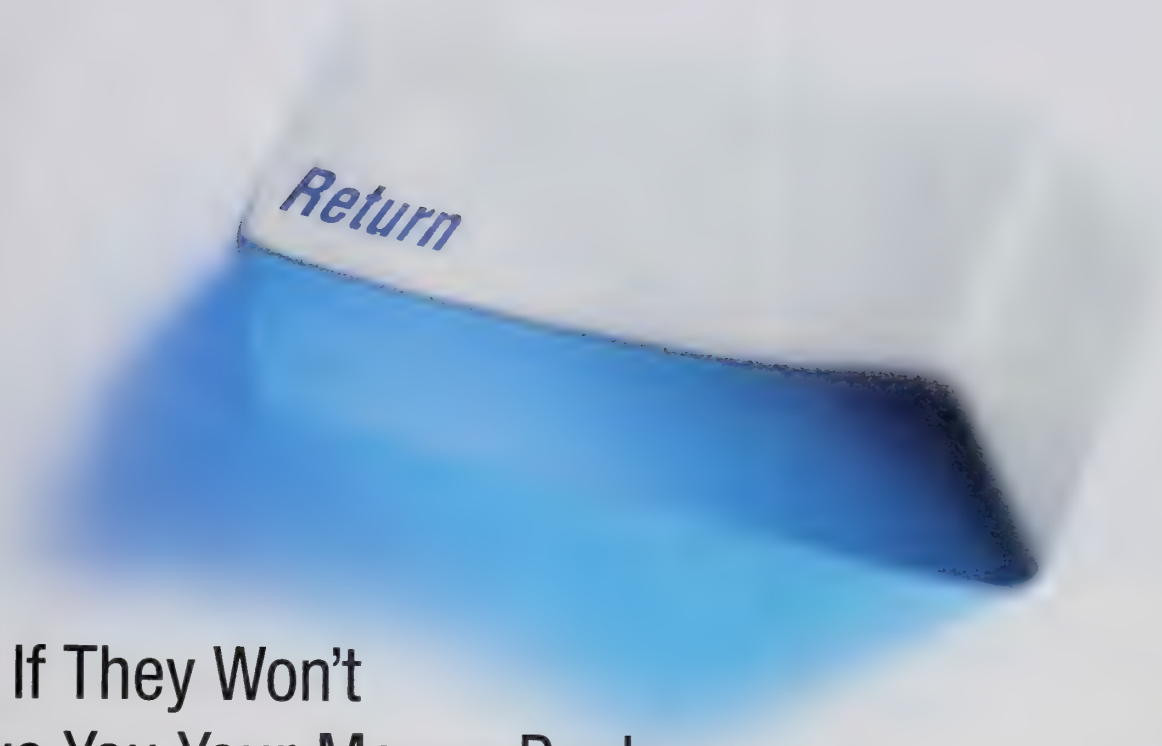
From an interview with filmmaker Harmony Korine, in the September 29–October 5 edition of the New York Press, *an alternative weekly. At eighteen, Korine wrote the screenplay for Larry Clark's 1995 film* Kids. *He has directed two feature films,* Gummo *(1997) and* Julien Donkey-Boy, *which premiered at this year's New York Film Festival. The interview was conducted by Adam Heimlich.*

ADAM HEIMLICH: So, how are you gonna stay hungry now that the *New York Times* is liking your movie?

HARMONY KORINE: I don't know. It seems like my films are so divisive no matter what. No matter how many people like it, just as many, I'm sure, will hate it.

HEIMLICH: Talk to me about the way you piece it all together. You've defended the break with narrative structure in terms of poetry, that there can be poetry out of pictures.

KORINE: I think the best films have a poetic truth to them. I don't think there's ever an ultimate truth, even in documentary or cinema verité; there's always a manipulation or a



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"New York, 1998," by Michael Ackerman, was on display in November at the Margaret Bodell Gallery in New York City. Ackerman's ne book, End Time City, *was published in July by Scalo.*

point of view. But something hovers about the great works—like *The Night of the Hunter* or *The Passion of Joan of Arc*. To me there's something more insightful than truth. I feel like the only thing that might be shocking about my films is that maybe it's the first time you see an image projected in this way. Or maybe it's upsetting if you film something grotesque in a beautiful way, or vice versa. It's kinda confusing to certain people.

HEIMLICH: That brings us to *Fight*.

KORINE: I couldn't really finish it. It got to a point where I was getting really hurt and arrested and weird shit started happening. I broke my left ankle and I couldn't tap-dance. I was gonna make this tap-dance movie too, and I literally can't tap-dance anymore. It fucked the whole thing up.

HEIMLICH: Well, what was the idea?

KORINE: With *Fight* I wanted to make a great comedy. I thought that was the best way to achieve it. I'd get a little drunk, but not so drunk that my motor skills weren't working. I did a few fights—one after the other. But what I didn't really think about was how short hard-core fights last. When you're fucking hitting each other in the head with bricks, it can only go two or three minutes, so out of the six or seven fights that I did, I have maybe fifteen minutes of pure, hard-core bone breaking.

HEIMLICH: You'd provoke people until they hit you?

KORINE: I would go around with a camera crew, and the only rules were that I couldn't throw the first punch and the person I was confronting had to be bigger than me. Because that's where the humor comes in. It wouldn't be funny if I was fighting someone my size. They had to be bigger than me, and no matter how bad I was getting beat up—unless I was gonna die, that was the rule, unless I was like passed out and they were still killing me—they couldn't break it up. Because that's where the comedy comes in as well.

I'd have to say whatever it took to make someone fight me. I'd get in their face and I'd say anything, it didn't matter, to get them to throw the first punch. And then once they threw the first punch it was on. And we just went, y'know, mad. In the last fight you just see this fucking bouncer from Stringfellow's. This guy took forever. He's a big bouncer, and he's wearing a tuxedo and shit. No matter what I said the guy wouldn't do anything. Nothing I could do. Just, "You fuckin' little shrimp—get the fuck outta here." So then some stripper, some bitch that worked there, walked out with a balloon on her wrist. And she's in high heels, y'know, "What's going on?" So I went up to her and I went like this [a feigned backhand smack], like my dad used to do to me when he'd drive. Because I never used to be comfortable as a kid. I was never comfortable as

a kid. We'd drive and he'd go like that right in front of my face. He wouldn't hit me—he'd just go [demonstrates]. So I was always, like, nervous. So I did that exact same thing to her. In the video I turn around, and the camera crew is across the street, sitting on a stoop—four or five people. There's some producer with a clipboard, writing shit down, keeping track of whoever gets in the frame. And as I'm turning around you see the guy take me by the back of the head and the belt and just throw me into the middle of the street. I just get tossed into the middle of the street. So I jump up and I'm like, "Yeah, right on!" He comes running out, and the guy is so pissed. I took a brick—it was like a piece of broken sidewalk—and smashed him in the head when he got close. Really hard. All this blood just went *kshhhhht*. Then I started taunting him. So he starts running after me. We're going around this car, running in circles, and that's where the whole Buster Keaton thing comes in. It's really high comedy.

Finally he catches up to me and just goes boom. Busts me in the face. Right on the lip. I just go flying back. And this is the funniest part. This is where, really, the comedy comes in. I'm like, "Yeeesss," because I'd get off on the pain. It'd just make me like, mmmmmm. Because as a kid, growing up in Tennessee, violence was just a way of life. Everybody, no matter how big you were or anything—I'm a teeny guy, and I was even a smaller kid—but it was like no matter what, you had to fight. It was one of those things, a real redneck thing. Violence was part of life. I hated getting hit, but I never minded it so much when it was a fight. I hated getting hit by teachers or by my parents—I didn't like that. But a fight's all right, as long as you have some kind of chance. So anyway, I got back up and tried to throw this trash can. There's a trash can on the sidewalk, and I'm like, "C'mon you cocksucker!" I go to pick up this trash can and throw it at him, but the fucking thing is chained to a lamppost! And the guy just knocks me out. Literally knocked me out. I fell back on the street and hit the back of my head. So my left foot is—you can see on the video that my left foot is up on the sidewalk. And you just see the guy run up and go [mimes a two-footed stomp] and snap my fucking ankle.

HEIMLICH: Both feet?

KORINE: Yeah, both. My ankle just goes like that [gestures as if snapping a twig]. I'm smiling in the video. You see me get up and go to hit him or whatever. I had no idea. Then the cops came. The producer is right across the

[Crimes]

REACH OUT AND WHACK SOMEONE

From a report released in August by the U.S. Department of Justice detailing federally prosecuted cases of inmates' use of telephone privileges to facilitate crimes while in prison. All federal-inmate calls are recorded, though prison officials monitor only 3.5 percent of them.

Inmate bilked trucking companies out of funds (approximately $100,000) available to truckers on the road, using three-way calling and outside contacts to cash the checks.

Inmate used phone to direct the importation of heroin from Pakistan to New York.

Inmate defrauded females he met through "lonely hearts" ads. He claimed to be a white-collar criminal with much money on the outside that he needed the females to help him access.

Phones were used to assist in planning construction of explosive device.

Organized-crime-member inmate schemed with co-conspirator on the outside to re-encode magnetic strips on counterfeit credit cards.

Inmate used phones to communicate to co-conspirators concerning a multi-kilogram cocaine deal. Also used a cellular phone, provided by correctional officer, to arrange the murder of the judge in his pending case.

Inmate used phone to arrange with his mother to procure someone to murder the girlfriend of one of the witnesses in his case.

Inmate laundered $175,000 to pay his attorney fees, using other inmates' phone accounts and call forwarding.

Inmate used the telephone to arrange a drug delivery to a tree outside the institution to be picked up by inmate while working as a member of the grounds crew.

Inmate had his corporate secretary forward calls for hours each day to conduct a bank-fraud scheme that involved buying and selling airplanes.

street, and she tried to explain it. Y'know, "We're making a movie here." And she's like, "Can we have your signature on this release form? It's a film!" And the guy, the bouncer—it's amazing—got so sad when he found out it was all staged. He was like, "Oh my God, if I knew this, I never would have touched the guy!" And so he signed the release form.

[Sting]

THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT

From a complaint filed by the Chicago Police Department last year in a $433 million lawsuit brought by the city against twelve suburban gun dealers alleging that they are subverting Chicago's gun-control laws. In a sting operation conducted last year, Chicago police officers posed as gang members and made scores of illegal gun purchases. Several of the stores named in the complaint, including those below, were indicted last August.

On August 10, Officer 6 entered B&H Sports and purchased two 9mm handguns. While writing up the purchase order, the salesclerk asked him what he did for a living. Officer 6 responded that he hung out on the street. The salesclerk asked what occupation he should list on the forms. Officer 6 told the salesclerk to write that he was in "sales." Officer 6 then told the salesclerk that he had recently lost his 9mm gun. The salesclerk asked if he had been caught with it. Officer 6 responded that he had not been caught with it; rather, he had run, and he thought the police had gotten it. The salesclerk responded that as long as you do not get caught with it you have nothing to worry about.

Officer 6 then related that he believed he had figured out who had "ratted [him] out" and that he had to "settle up with him." After the salesclerk told him to return in three days to pick up the guns, Officer 6 told him to save some "ammo" for him because he would need it. The salesclerk responded that they had plenty of ammo.

On August 14, Officer 6 returned to B&H Sports with Officer 2 and spoke to the same salesclerk. Officer 6 inquired about an Olympic Arms Model 0A-96 .223 caliber pistol with laser sights and a 30-round high-capacity clip. In discussing the gun's laser sight, Officer 6 asked whether the bullet would hit someone in the chest if he put the "dot" on the target's stomach. The salesclerk responded that it would. Officer 2 said he needed something for his "spot" (a street term for drug-sale location), and that he needed a size that females could hide easily. He also told the salesclerk that he wanted to buy a machine gun with a laser sight. Officer 2 told Officer 6 that he needed the guns for that night because he had "business to tend to" and the police had gotten one of his shotguns the night before. The salesclerk told Officer 2 that he could put a laser sight on a shotgun for him, but he had to remember that shotguns fire high, so if anyone comes at him he should "just go down." Officer 2 declined the offer, saying he could "take care of more business with a machine gun."

Officer 2 returned to B&H Sports on August 19 with Officer 3. Officer 2 told the same salesclerk that Officer 6 owed him money and was likely on the run. He stated that Officer 6 had to be dealt with before he left town and said he needed to "get a Tec for his ass." Officer 3 agreed that they had to "take care of business today." The salesclerk recommended an Intratec 9mm assault weapon that could fire 100 rounds per load, telling them, "You made a good choice; this will take care of business."

On September 2, Officer 1 entered Bell's Gun & Sport Shop to purchase firearms and ammunition. The salesclerk explained that "pre-fabricated" bullets contain gel and small fragments that explode upon impact. The advantage of that type of bullet, he explained, is that it "doesn't go through the target and hit a little girl on the next block, because then you've bought it." Officer 1 purchased those bullets, and the salesclerk suggested that he share the bullets with some friends so as to split the cost.

On September 8, Officer 1 returned to Bell's and asked a salesclerk to recommend a "throwaway" 9mm or .380 caliber firearm. The salesclerk told him that one should not buy a "throwaway" gun from a gun store. He said that it is better to buy the gun with cash from someone who does not have a license. In that case, you write a certified letter addressed to yourself in which you document things about the person from whom you purchased the gun; if the gun is recovered and you need to go to court, then your lawyer will take you to court with your wife and kids and open the letter in order to prove that you bought the gun in good faith. But if something happens and you need to pin the blame on someone else, then you go home and burn the certified letter.

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[Guidance]

MUZZLE TOV!

From "Ask the Rabbi," an advice column published on the Web site of Jews for the Preservation of Firearms Ownership, based in Hartford, Wisconsin. The column is written by Rabbi R. Mermelstein.

Rabbi:

I wanted to know if you are aware of any Jewish shooting groups located in South Florida. I live in the area and would like to find such a group to shoot with. Thank you.

Dear Sir,

I'm unaware of any Jewish shooting groups in Florida. If any Jewish shooting groups exist they've yet to contact me.

Legitimate firearms enthusiasts are one extended family, however, regardless of their religious beliefs. When I'm around such folks I'm usually in good company. Our hobby (passion?) transcends all religious and ethnic lines.

Dear Rabbi Mermelstein:

Are there areas in the Talmud where the great Rabbis said it was correct for a pious Jew to have a firearm? If so, to which parts of the Torah and Haftorah do they refer? L'Shanah Tovah!

Dear Sir,

The Torah, which the Talmud explains and amplifies, is clear in the matter of self-defense and the obligation of individuals to protect their lives. A fire poker or a pipe wrench may well serve in some instances to defend life and limb, but they were not designed for that task. Firearms are more efficient.

There are numerous references in the Talmud to the use of weapons by Jews to defend lives. (See my article "Carrying Weapons on the Sabbath.") I'm at a loss to comprehend any arguments that guns are "un-Jewish."

Dear Rabbi Mermelstein:

I am looking to replace my 1911A Clone with a double-action semiauto pistol. I would like a de-cocker and really need a SMOOTH trigger pull. I also want an exposed hammer and, as a lefty, need an ambi safety. A police return S&W 645 is in my price range, but I am not sure if it has the de-cocker feature I would like. G-D bless you, Teacher.

Dear Sir:

A police trade-in S&W Model 645 in good condition would fall perfectly within the parameters of the pistol you are looking for. The de-cocker feature is nice, but I've never found it essential as a safety feature. After practicing to lower the hammer many times without a round in the chamber, it becomes second nature. I haven't (thank G-d) yet slipped and sent a round through the floor.

Dear Rabbi Mermelstein,

In my unit of the Texas Constitutional Militia we have struggled with the issue of weapons and ammunition standardization. We finally settled on a compromise, the 7.62x39mm. Do you have any suggestions or recommendations?

Dear Sir,

Indeed, the 7.62x39 is a fine cartridge. However, in the past, the biggest plus going for that round has been the relatively inexpensive retail prices of shipments from overseas. The importation of this ammo could be halted with a stroke of the executive pen, and I'm a bit uneasy relying on foreign supplies for replacement parts in the future.

Dear Rabbi:

As a longtime libertarian and defender of the Bill of Rights, it was a revelation to learn that I wasn't the only Jew in America who felt this way!

Now the question: although I have a Ruger .22 carbine (an M1 knockoff), I want to buy a decent handgun for myself and my wife to share. We are looking for a foolproof gun that's not too heavy, one that has good stopping power but isn't too expensive. What would you recommend?

Dear Sir,

The models at the top of my list that fit your requirements are the Smith & Wesson Model 686 and the Ruger GP-100. Either one can be purchased new for under $500.

It has always been my practice to recommend stainless steel handguns, such as the ones I've mentioned, to premenopausal women. During the menstruation cycle, a woman's hand perspiration becomes very corrosive to metal. Chrome-moly steel will rust from hand perspiration if not wiped down with an oiled rag after handling. Stainless steel, due to its higher chromium content, does not exhibit this problem.

Rabbi:

First, I wanna say that I'm French. When I read such a stupid page I think there's a lot of crazy guys in this world. The guns must be forbidden and you people jailed for encouraging gun ownership. I think you're this kind of dangerous people as the religious fanatical people.


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[Course List]

STUDY OPPRESSION ABROAD

From Pentagon documents obtained by the East Timor Action Network detailing U.S. military training courses completed by Kopassus, a special forces unit of the Indonesian military responsible for widespread atrocities in the twenty-four-year military occupation of East Timor, which resulted in the death of 220,000 people. Although Congress killed the training program in 1992 after a particularly gruesome Kopassus-directed massacre, the Pentagon continued to train Kopassus under a different program until April 1998.

TYPE OF TRAINING	DATES OF TRAINING
Sniper Level II	June 26–August 3, 1993
Demolitions & Air Operations	August 24–September 22, 1993
Close Quarters Combat	January 7–February 20, 1994
Pathfinder/Aviation Operations	April 25–May 14, 1994
Special Operations Force/Air Drop Operations	June 10–July 1, 1994
Advanced Sniper Techniques	January 17–February 19, 1995
Support for VIP Protective Operations	August 3–30, 1995
Maritime Operations	June 1–30, 1995 August 8–September 1, 1996
Air Assault Leaders Course	April 4–May 15, 1996
Special Reconnaissance Training	August 8–September 1, 1996 May 12-June 13, 1997 November 4–20, 1997
Psychological Operations Training	December 1–18, 1996
Military Free Fall Training	January 6–February 15, 1997
Mortar Training	February 23–March 28, 1997
Nuclear Biological Chemical Training	July 25–August 25, 1997

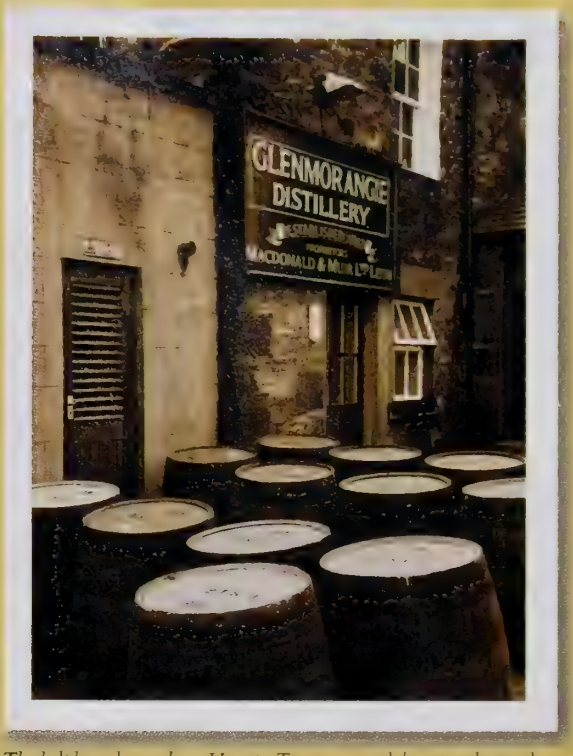
Dear Sir:

This e-mail is hysterical, and your perception of history is pathetic. Twice in this century the U.S. has saved your people from speaking German and worshiping at the feet of a German demagogue. Your people, trying to curry favor with the Nazis, planted trees all along the streets of Paris because the Nazi troops were uncomfortable marching in the sun! We Americans saved you cowering sycophants with guns. And you have the peerless audacity to criticize firearms ownership? If you don't like our Web site, you may consider visiting Web sites about European socialism and Bordeaux wines. By the way, learn some better manners before you speak to a clergyman as you did in your e-mail.

[Interception]

APT PUPILS

From a series of two-way radio transmissions between East Timorese militia members and Kopassus, an elite, U.S.-trained Indonesian military unit, that were intercepted and translated by the International Federation for East Timor Observer Project [IFET] in August and September. On August 30, the United Nations organized a referendum in East Timor in which the population voted overwhelmingly for independence from Indonesia. In the ensuing violence, pro-Indonesia militias killed thousands of people and drove more than 350,000 into hiding. The Indonesian government has maintained that the militias were acting independently.



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August 27, 1999

KOPASSUS: There is an order that you have to fulfill tonight. Tonight all Ablai [militia members in the town of Same] have to be on standby in their posts and in their houses. Nobody goes anywhere. The situation is hot everywhere. From time to time there will be a call from us, and if you're not monitoring, it's your own fault. Do you understand?

ABLAI: Yes.

KOPASSUS: You have to be ready in case we need your forces. Ablai 4 has to be responsible. We have to be on standby so that we won't get a bad mark from UNAMET [United Nations Mission in East Timor]. We can't be the first ones to start it, but if they fish for it we will fight back with a hard hand.

KOPASSUS: The war has begun; saddle your horses. Ablai 4, what is your position?

ABLAI 4: I'm in Nularan.

KOPASSUS: Please stand by. Keep the radio on constantly. Beginning tonight, no one turns their radio off, because in Dili, Los Palos, and Maliana the war has begun.

ABLAI: Only two days remain. Tell all of our friends in the field and all the components that work for us that we have to coordinate, integrate, and synchronize. Go to the polling places where people will be standing in line to cast their votes. Station yourselves in pairs to watch those who are voting, to observe and monitor them. On August 30 no vehicles can leave the area of Manufahi.

We all have to die in Same. We have had it easy here, but now it's time to get serious. I ask you respectfully to follow through on these orders. Gather your forces at the individual places so that nothing unexpected happens. We don't want it to happen before the vote. Of course, if the opposition lights the first fire and smoke rises everywhere, then we can light our fire too and make our smoke rise.

September 1, 1999

ABLAI: I have a message from a Kopassus commander regarding the pickup of rifles in Kassa. When should that be?

KOPASSUS: Tonight. But be careful so the people of UNAMET who are watching and checking us the whole time don't find out about this at the cantonment.

KOPASSUS: Those white people [the IFET observers] should be dumped in the river.

ABLAI: If they want to leave, pull them out, kill them, and dump them in the river.

KOPASSUS: They need to be stopped. The car needs to be stopped.

ABLAI: It will be done.

KOPASSUS: If they go to Ainaro, send people to close the road there.

ABLAI: If we can't catch them through Babolu, we'll catch them at the fork in the road.

AGUSTUS [militia member in Letefoho]: If they want to keep going, stop the car and let them walk.

ABLAI: If they try to pass through here today, I'll wipe them out. All of them. Nobody gets out, especially the white guys. Hold the car and let them walk.

ABLAI: I'll eat them up.

KOPASSUS: Nobody gets to go out. If they want to go to Dili, hold the car. If they want to walk, that's their business. Send the car back.

ABLAI: I'll make them stop here.

AGUSTUS: Better to send them up to Dadina [a military post], and we'll dump them in the Kara Ulu river.

[Profiles]

LET THE GIFTS BEGIN

From internal notes and memoranda describing International Olympic Committee (IOC) members, written by organizers of Atlanta's bid to host the 1996 Summer Olympics. The documents were released in September by the Atlanta Organizing Committee at the urging of Representative Fred Upton (R., Mich.), who chairs the House subcommittee investigating the relationship between the IOC and the Atlanta committee. The investigation aims to determine whether gifts, including those outlined below, were in fact ever offered or accepted.

Prince Albert de Monaco—Honest, open, and fun. Likes the good life: wine, women (some say men as well), and song. Relationship is all-important here. If he likes you, you got a shot at getting his vote. Visit to Atlanta should be low-key with press but an all-out orgy for Al & his friend.

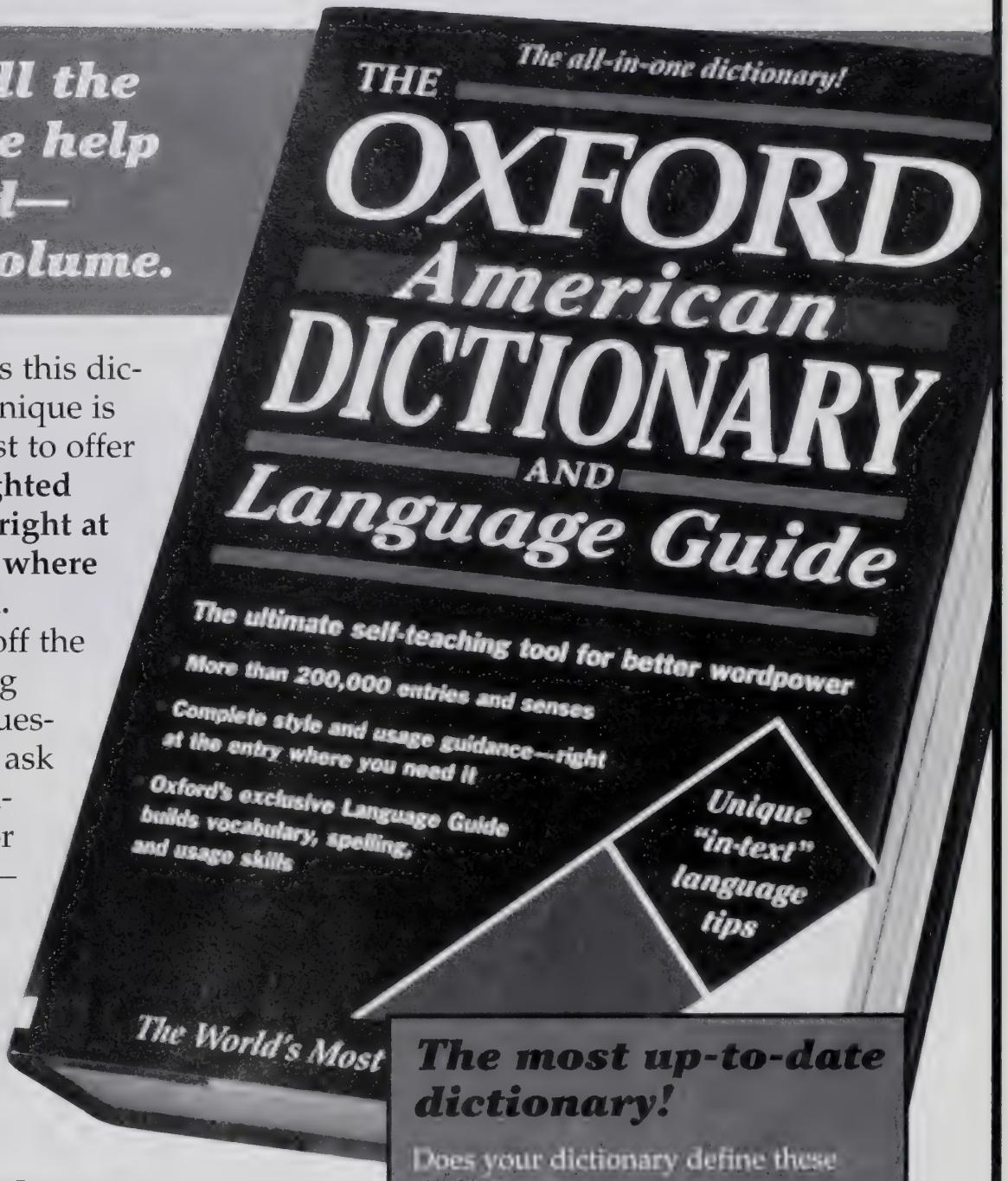
Bashir M. Attarabulsi—will accept gifts. Also for son. Educated in Africa rather than Europe or Soviet Union, therefore has African mentality.

Comte Jean de Beaumont—Will probably not vote. Is a banker, and we should stress the financial advantage of an Atlanta games to him. Likes pretty women. Likes to talk about Nigeria and going on safari.

Hadj Mohammed Benjelloun—Mr. Benjelloun's son is in the hotel business. Training at the Atlanta Marriott or with the Marriott Cor-

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"Big Cow," part of America from the Edge, *a series of photographs by Steve Simon. Simon's work will be on display in May at the Pekao Gallery in Toronto.*

poration would be a good avenue to pursue. Mr. Benjelloun also will accept gifts.

Matts Carlgren—He is not an optimistic man. Could be a health problem, could be a family problem. He seldom laughs.

Sindeco Franco Carraro—Forget about Carraro visiting Atlanta. He seldom visits. He is a socialist. (Perhaps A.Y. [Andrew Young, Atlanta Organizing Committee chairman] could influence.) He has a son who is eleven or twelve years old who skis and plays soccer. Perhaps we should invite the son to Callaway and/or Orlando.

Ivan Dibos—Does accept gifts. His wife is influential with him. Gift for his wife may be useful. An invitation for the Dibos and their children to Walt Disney World and Orlando should be in order.

René Essomba—He is a pharmacist, and appropriate gifts might be antique apothecary jars.

Raymond Gafner—Fan of ice hockey. Perhaps we could get a stick signed by Wayne Gretzky. Maybe a hockey puck that we would say is from some famous game (whether that is true or not). Perhaps an agreement to publish his novel in English?

Louis Guirandou-N'Diaye—Gifts are okay. Gift of female okay.

Anani Matthia—Has a heart problem? Should we invite to see a specialist in Atlanta?

Mrs. Samaranch [wife of IOC Chairman Juan Antonio Samaranch]—Mrs. Samaranch does not like to get up early and likes late nights. She does not like adhering to her husband's very tight schedule and prefers to shop (line up a Saks and Lord & Taylor visit with the store managers, and when she selects something make them insist that it's on the house because she is such an important person, etc. Make it convincing by prior arrangement with the respective stores).

Raja Bhalendra Singh—Lives in a palace. Did accept two ladies from Barcelona.

[Journey]

MY HUMBLE SELF

From Boy with Loaded Gun, *by Lewis Nordan, to be published next month by Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill. "The Conversion," from Nordan's most recent novel,* Lightning Song, *appeared in the April 1997 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

When I was fifteen years old, I began to dream of foreign geographies. I dreamed of faraway places and exotic lands. Such dreams became my constant occupation. These fantasies I entertained behind the lawn mower, or behind the soda fountain of the Bena Drug Store in Itta Bena, Mississippi. I imagined myself beneath a tropical sun on the deck of a ship, cutting banana stalks with a machete. Always nearby lay olive-skinned women and tarantulas. My skinny ass and freckles were transformed to bright copper. My muscles grew and rippled beneath beads of gleaming sweat. Or I dreamed of frozen oceans and ice-jammed ships, the icy poles of the earth, white bears and penguins, sealskin parkas and Nor'westers, hardtack and blubber my only rations, scurvy my sometimes friend. A dark-skinned woman generally found her way into this fantasy as well. I mowed the lawns and breathed the fragrance of freshly cut grass and wild onions. I scooped ice cream from cardboard barrels and served it on cones. I saved my pennies for a time when I might actually leave that patch of Delta soil and make my place in the larger world.

This was the 1950s. One day, I heard about the beatniks. It was a word as yet undefined, or only vaguely defined for me, but wonderful. Goatees, yes, berets, possibly, dark glasses and dissipation. I thought they might go around reading the works of Edgar Allan Poe. I heard that beatniks hung out in coffeehouses, drank espresso, played bongos, read poetry aloud. Poetry seemed better than tarantulas and penguins. Dissipation and E. A. Poe beat machetes and bananas. I believed I could learn to drink coffee. With enough sugar and milk I could do it.

The problem was, the beatniks were in New York and I was in Mississippi. Everything I had suspected about the inadequacy of my life and geography seemed confirmed. More than ever Mississippi became my prison, the details of my own history, my damnation. I longed for New York more than for the banana boats or icy seas. Now when I pushed my lawn mower or dipped ice cream for some redneck's banana split, those dark-skinned women no longer lay about with tarantulas but sipped bitter coffee and listened to jazz and read the works of Edgar Allan Poe.

I went on with my part-time jobs. Saturday mornings and afternoons I walked behind the rattling little lawn mower with the Briggs & Stratton engine, and Saturday nights I stood behind the Bena Drug soda fountain wearing a paper hat until midnight. I had no obligations, so the money piled up a little at a time. What it took me a while to gain was enough imagination to know that New York need not remain a dream. You could get to New York on a bus, for God's sake. You could go down to the Southern Café and tell Mr. Pirelli you wanted to buy a ticket, and then you could wait on the curb for the bus driver to show up, a guy in a baggy gray wool suit and a billed cap and whiskey on his breath, wheeling around out of the cinder lot at the depot across the street in a blue-and-white coach with a picture of a running dog on the side, and take your sorry self anywhere you wanted to go, become anything you wanted to be.

I don't know when all this occurred to me, exactly. I don't know what possessed me, one day, to act upon this startling impulse, but without telling anyone, without any clear plan at all, suddenly I was going to New York. Gimme a chocolate milk to go with that barbecue, Miss Sara. Hot sauce, right. I puked halfway to Memphis, and a lady bought me a Coca-Cola in Batesville to calm my stomach down. I slept a long time after that, and then when I woke up the lady was gone. I discovered that I was frightened, that I had no idea what I was doing, that I didn't know what I would do when I got there. I rode and rode, and a long time and many filthy bus stops later I got off the bus in New York City. Grand Central station, maybe, who knows, it was so long ago.

If anything is remarkable about my trip it is that I actually found the beatniks. They were there in New York, Lord knows what street in Manhattan, but right where rumor and corny jokes had said they would be. Poetry, bongos, a guitar. Beards, bandannas around their necks, cigarettes and espresso. The name of the coffeehouse was Your Father's Mustache. There was a little stage with a few instruments propped around it. A jukebox was playing at the time. Jazz of some sort, though of course I had no idea what or who. Anyway, the place was so dark that when I chose a small table near the door, I didn't notice that someone was already sitting there. It was a woman—an African American woman, I need to say—maybe ten years older than me. My eyes adjusted sufficiently to the light that I could make out her features. Her eyes were huge and white in the darkness. Her lips were red and moist. She was dark-skinned and heavily made-up. She wore an extravagant scarf and large dangling earrings.

It was one of those fictionlike moments that sometimes actually occur, an epiphany. She was not beautiful, but this did not matter. She was beautiful enough for me, beautiful enough to be the woman I had been looking for. And on the table in front of her was a hardbound copy of the *Selected Stories of Edgar Allan Poe*. My heart stopped, or seemed to stop, I swear. All traces and memories of pork barbecue disappeared from the face of the earth. The woman shifted slightly in her chair and placed one long-nailed finger on the dust jacket of the book, which carried a famous picture of the author, dark-eyed and fully dissipated. I said, "Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't see you." I added, "It was so dark." She tapped her fingernail on the book cover. Her expression did not change. I said, "I didn't mean that the way it might sound." She didn't answer. I said, "I'm sorry." I didn't know what to do, how to act. I didn't feel welcome. Maybe I should have stayed.

I pushed back my chair. I got up and left Your Father's Mustache and went back to the damp hotel where I had found a room, near the bus station. The next morning I took an early bus back to Mississippi. When we stopped for an hour in Roanoke, I washed my face in the rest room and called my parents from a pay phone and told them where I was.

And that's where the story ends. I went back home, and nothing much changed. Maybe I went through those days and hours for no reason at all. Who can say? In any case, I want to tell you about that hotel where I stayed. Where in the city it lay, I have no idea. The street was noisy with the sounds of people who were not having any fun. The door was solid, unpainted steel, I remember that. The room was tiny and bare. There was a single bulb on a cord, hanging from the ceiling, and it cast harsh light over the tacky, sparse furnishings, a deal dresser, with no lamp or radio or even a Bible. The bedspread was threadbare and dusty. The sheets, when I pulled back the covers, were not clean.

It may surprise you that I had smuggled a half-pint of whiskey with me, all the way from Mississippi, where it was then illegal and could be purchased easily on the black market by minors. What exactly I had imagined its uses to be, I don't remember. I had not imagined that I would retreat to it now, at the end of my first and last day in the city, as a refuge against loneliness and despair. I was hungry, I missed my parents, my bed at home. This was the kind of room—indeed, the very room, I am certain—that was rented to carry out a suicide. I took off all my clothes. I wrested the whiskey bottle from the backpack and cracked the seal and managed a warm, weird solitary swig and lay back on the dingy pillows and wished I had never left home. There seemed to be a buzz coming from no place outside myself. The room was hot and airless, and I lay on top of the covers of my bed in the harsh glare of the single bulb. I drank more. I got up to go to the bathroom.

There was no bathroom, I remembered now. I stood in the middle of the floor. My lips had gone numb. The only bathroom provided was one to be shared by everyone on the hall. I looked out my door. No one was in sight. I was drunk. I had never been drunk before. Getting dressed seemed an impossible task, fraught with loneliness and despair. I looked down the hall again. The tiled room at the end seemed, suddenly, as much like freedom and happiness as tall ships and distant seas had seemed only yesterday. The bathroom was ice floes and penguins. It beckoned to me like the geography of a dream. I decided to take a chance. I ran, bare-assed naked, Mississippi kid, eyes rolling, feet flying, hotfooting it down the carpeted hallway of a dumpy midtown SRO. Yahoo, baby! Go, cat, go! I made it. My feet skidded on the tile as I stopped. The place was empty. Nobody there, nobody in the bathroom, I was naked, I was free. I walked in, I strolled, I swaggered, I rambled, I bopped right up to the urinal. No zipper, no hands, nothing. I did my business, swing your partner, oh yes, feeling good, feeling fine, and then, outahere, gone, flying back down the hall, home free.

I was not home free.

The door to my room was locked. It had shut behind me. I rattled the knob. It would not turn. Never had a door been so locked as that steel slab. I stood there. My heart filled with strong feeling. I was young, I was naked, I was drunk, I had found the beatniks, I was locked out of my room in New York City. My heart filled up with joy. I realized my estimable life had begun.

I've always been quick on my feet, a problem solver. I stood in the hallway, holding the doorknob, and I thought for a minute. I had an idea. I walked back down to the bathroom, taking my time. A calm had come over me. I had more than an idea, I had a plan. My plan was to wrap myself in toilet paper. That was it. I would use a full roll, if necessary, two rolls. I would spin it off the reel, around and around my body until I was well covered, absolutely modest, and then I would take the elevator down to the lobby, go to the front desk. "I seem to have locked myself out of my room," I would say. I would try to disguise my Southern accent. It was a plan. It wasn't a good plan, but I was happy enough to have it.

The thing is, it didn't work. It should have, but it didn't. The only toilet paper in the bathroom was the kind that comes in a million slick single sheets from a tiny dispenser. I stood and



Details of Lil' Hotstuff *and* Guardian Angel, Rocket Boy, Caveman Shaman, *and* Stinky Blast Off, *from "All Systems Go: Mission Poesy," a series of paintings by Thomas Woodruff. The paintings are on display this month at P.P.O.W. Gallery and Debs & Co. in New York City.*

looked at the dispenser. I was discouraged but not defeated. I began to pull out the single sheets, one by one—it takes a very long time to make much progress with one of those dispensers—and to stick them with water to my body. Slap, slap, slap they went on, some more successfully than others. Wet they were not so good a cover as the roll kind would have been, but with enough of them plastered around me, I began to develop a sort of skirt that was more or less opaque. I concentrated entirely on the lower part of my body, though in Plan A, I had imagined quite an elaborate modesty, a togalike garment, with an over-the-shoulder feature, to cover large areas of skin. When I had used several thousand sheets of paper, the whole apparatus sagged badly and threatened to slide off in a single soggy mass around my feet. For this reason, I walked with a peculiar shuffle, as I moved out of the bathroom and made my slow way down the hall to the elevator.

I was not jailed, screamed at, insulted. I did not have to present myself in the lobby downstairs to ask for a key. I was not arrested. The solution was fairly simple, and I already had it in mind. In those days there was no such thing as a self-service elevator. Every hotel elevator, no matter how lowly the hotel, employed an operator. This person was always male, so my disgrace in nakedness would be minimal. I knew this, just as I knew that I could count on being rescued.

I pressed the button, and immediately the elevator began to make its clanking noises, groaning up its steel cable in my direction. I stood there in my skirt of toilet-paper sheets. My head was clearing slightly from the alcohol. I took a couple of deep breaths. I waited. The elevator door opened and revealed the operator sitting there, fully uniformed as all of them were in those days—a faded and filthy uniform by the way, all wool even in the summer heat, gray in color with what once may have been red trim about the jacket, stripes down the sleeves, around the cuffs, et cetera. Except for the preposterous pillbox hat that he was required to wear, with a chin strap, he looked for all the world like a Confederate soldier after a particularly arduous retreat. He was sullen and uncommunicative, neither amused nor unamused by what waited for him in the hallway, me I mean, in my absurdity. He knew an easy dollar when he saw one, that was the extent of his expression, the poor light in his dull eyes, as I remember them. He did as I asked, went back down to the lobby for a key to my room while I hid out in the bathroom, and soon enough I was inside the room again and all my money was in this man's hands, and I stayed awake for several more hours, as yet unable to see the humor of my situation.

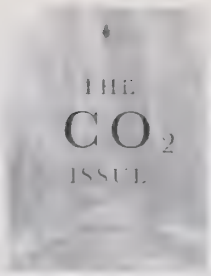
There is one further detail, though I hesitate to mention it: The elevator operator was what we would call in these more enlightened days one of the little people. I mean he was a midget. He was wearing a midget uniform, a midget pillbox hat. His midgety feet dangled high above the floor from his perch on the elevator seat.

Please do not mistake me: I have no bias against midgets, none at all. I like midgets. I have known several over the years, and each of them I have found to be charming in every way, particularly Mitzi Hayworth, my father's friend. An entire family of midgets lived in a small mobile home on my parents' property for a while, working on a pipeline being laid across the Delta. I mean no harm to midgets; they are human beings with the same feelings and hopes as any of us. If you prick a midget will he not bleed? Shakespeare might as well have written.

And yet there he was. His appearance cast me into a terrible and unexpected depression. His materialization before me seemed a judgment upon me. The lesson seemed cosmic, if only I could discover what it was. I was not free of Itta Bena, and never would be, so long as my destiny was in the hands of midgets. It made no sense then, and makes none now, but that was the message that seemed written for me in the stars. I had chosen this hotel, chosen it myself out of a million others, this night, and in this moment I knew, believed anyway, that I was different somehow, doomed, or cursed in a particular way, from which reinvention would never be an effective escape. I had chosen this particular rescuer, I was not sure how. A kid from Pittsburgh, or Ames, Iowa, or Butte, Montana, or anywhere else on earth would not have chosen a hotel in New York where the late-night elevator man was one of the little people, whose name I wish I could say I remember, or ever knew, if only to humanize him for myself now. I was a child of Itta Bena, my father's son. To me, this man was a freak, only that. He was tiny, wrinkled, dirty, alcoholic, he was dressed in a hideous monkey suit of a uniform, his voice was a bitter squeak. I saw myself in him, or if I did not see it then I see it now. He was my salvation, and in a sense he was me, tragedy and comedy locked in a single human form. He was the hidden part of myself that before I could become an adult I had to accept as my own—solitary, lonely, deformed, drunk, costumed in ways that least spoke of myself, small, out of proportion to what I wanted out of life, but me in any case, the inner self that has nothing to do with the inner child we hear so much about these days. This was the inner midget, my humble self. ■

e President Gore writes, "[A]ny disruption in cli-
te patterns can dramatically affect the distribution
ainfall, the intensity of storms and droughts, the
ections of prevailing winds and ocean currents,
l the appearance of erratic weather patterns, with
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SOLDIERS OF GREAT FORTUNE

Is America's military training warriors or humanitarians?

By Bob Shacochis

Peoples of civilized nations have wished, and even come to believe, that wars could be conducted in ways that would reflect their civilization.
—Samuel Hynes, from *The Soldiers' Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War*

I: THE BITTERSWEET LIGHTNESS OF SUPERBEING

The numbers stagger and overwhelm, and thrust us far beyond weeping over the endless constellation of lives, so many many lives, brutally discontinued. Twenty-five million men and women in uniform slaughtered in two world wars; 60 million? 70 million? dead civilians. Nobody really knows the count; they are uncountable. Millions more in all the other wars of our time, our century, the American century, history's bloodiest century. Surely the last to die will fall in a ditch or alley in some forsaken place, a bullet in his chest, shrapnel through her skull, on the very eve of the millennium as the dazzling ball of the future descends in Times Square.

For the living, the endless expanse of blood is indivisible from the blessing, *Pax Americana*, or so I thought, watching the Sea Harrier jets come home last May to the USS *Kearsarge*, on whose hot deck I stood with the flight crew of the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit, peering out over the calm blue Adriatic, here at the end of this century held too long in what Rudyard Kipling called "the whirlpools of war."

Two fighter jets appeared out of the haze, their silhouettes no bigger to the eye than a pair of migratory geese. Where they had come from, what they had done, that they had found their way back to us—these gave weight to the moment. So it was sobering to see the Harriers circle and break their coupling, the first jet banking for its cautious approach, its landing gear extended like stubby feet, a terrible bird of prey hovering above the stern. The second Harrier blasted in a few minutes behind it, turbines winding down like sirens. Beneath the dull gray wings, the undercarriages were empty; the planes had dropped their bombs on Serbia.

Released from the colorless anonymity of his warplane, the first aviator, all business in his olive-green flight suit and helmet, shook hands with the flight crew, his manner laconic, uncomplicated, elite. The second pilot, the squadron leader, was different, though: what was apparent to me, from the moment I approached him, was that he had a soul, pure and transparent, there for all to see, should they choose to look. Not all men make such an impression, and when I say *soul* here, it is to remember the words of Vietnam veteran William Broyles, talking about combat survivors: "If you come back whole, you bring with you the knowledge that you have explored regions of your soul that in most men will always remain uncharted."

The emblem screened onto the fuselage of the pilots' jets—a knight's armored helmet over a crossed battle-ax and sword—resonated with the second pilot's features—long face, long Norman nose—tightly framed by his own flight helmet, which made him seem so much like the reincarnation of a medieval crusader. His fingers, too, were long and unexpectedly elegant, and on the back of one hand were inscribed grid coordinates

Bob Shacochis, a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine, *is the author of five books, including* The Immaculate Invasion, *a personal account of the American intervention in Haiti. His most recent article for the magazine was "Missing Children," which appeared in the October 1996 issue.*

e had written with a ballpoint pen. His mouth as wide and elastic; smiles contorted into gri- aces, toothy laughs into the pained resignation f his jaw. He was, for the few minutes he stood y his warplane, separated from its awesome glo- and yet still bathed in the light and darkness f the run, a mythic figure, exalted and tortured y grave responsibility.

Today, the pilot allowed, was a good day, lendid weather, and they were able to get their bother to comfort myself with the humanitarian cloak. My job is to just attack." But later, with his dark eyes weathered and sad, he said, "I pray that it works," meaning the air campaign, bowing his head. "I pray that it works. We've got to end it soon, end the suffering."

Maybe such humanity in one of our own warriors shouldn't have surprised me, given the acute sensitivities of contemporary American society, but it did. Then again, humanity is a luxurious



rdnance off. That combination always made im feel better, less frustrated, but his eyes held e contradictions of his mission in the Balkans, , for that matter, the role of the American ilitary here at the end of the twentieth centu- . He had flown Harriers during Desert Storm o, but there was a not insignificant difference— e feeling, he said, that this was less than a nflict and more like a training mission in the tates. Later, belowdecks in the officers' mess, we ould talk about the Orwellian corruption of nguage—NATO labeling the bombing a "hu- anitarian intervention"—which the pilot found stasteful, as if the bombing were the equivalent philanthropy, one of the many illusions that ntributed to the current notion that people n't, or shouldn't, get killed in a war or that fed e more airy delusion among politicians and e public that somehow America, here at the d of a war-saturated epoch, has achieved the mutable end of war itself.

"Is it a fair fight? No, it's not a fair fight," he said, king that he not be identified by name. "I don't byproduct of waging yet another "war" so abstract, distant, and sanitized.

After almost a decade of America's secular jihad against ruthless disorder, it is the sacred and profane pairing of the humane warrior—forged by the military, the Clinton Administration, and the counterculture-turned-popular-culture—with the volume of inherited history that much of the nation and much of the world finds curious, puzzling, suspect in its claim to virtue. Repeatedly throughout the bloodshed in Kosovo, the punditry referred to the "new military humanism," the defense of human rights, as a righteous, or self-righteous, form of armed conflict.

In the mostly illusionary void created by the end of the Cold War, America, too, like nature, reflexively abhors the relative emptiness of a vacuum, filling it with bursts of policy, another type of gas, and not necessarily inert, but more often than not perfumed with what the nation chooses to believe are good intentions: free markets, democracy, international order, the shining light of moral crusades. Applied to the United States,

strations by Mark Penberthy

however, the phrase "military humanism" seems oxymoronic and dangerously unrealistic. Better to sort out the confusion generated by the de facto intertwining of military operations and humanitarian operations. How to distinguish between each entity? Where does the persona of soldier as samaritan end and his identity as killer begin? Can the so-called end of ideology really be extrapolated to mean the end of war, or has it merely inflicted the military and its operational doctrine with paradox, ambiguity, and ad hoc missions? Have we turned our military into a force of steroid-bloated cops stationed at the door of a reform school for regional delinquents, or has America truly evolved into the supreme do-gooder, "the ultimate benign superpower," in the words of *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman, "and reluctant enforcer" of an imperial but enlightened globalism? In other words, here at the triumphant end of the Cold War, if we have regained the military and economic superiority that characterized America at the end of World War II, have we also regained the moral stature that accrued to us after the defeat of fascism, or has the subsequent defeat of Communism somehow muddled our collective value system, leaving us inspired but directionless in the absence of an apocalyptic pairing of good and evil?

Oh, the bittersweet lightness of superbeing, alone in the world in our greatness, alone with the imperfect mirror of our ideals. Our power both ends grief and begins it. Against great harm we enact greater harm, preventative or corrective or sometimes even punitive, in the name of hope and abiding decency and the beckoning future.

THE PHRASE "MILITARY HUMANISM" IS OXYMORONIC AND DANGEROUS. WHEN DOES THE SOLDIER-SAMARITAN BECOME A KILLER?

While history will perhaps measure our good intentions with approbation, our conspicuous goodness, as writer and World War II combat infantryman Paul Fussell has suggested, might be part of the trouble, allowing us to mislead ourselves and others into believing an ancient, terrible lie: that somehow war can be something less than "the very quintessence of immoral activity." Immodesty of purpose and certainty of belief—two aspects of America's vaunted optimism but otherwise known as sanctimony—never *have* been a particularly wise or holy mix.

But it, as Fussell insists, all war is a crime, what then are OTW —military operations Other Than War? Can war itself be decriminalized by separating it from ideology and vital interests and instead building it to moral imperatives and parceling it out as humanitarian actions? Or, as one of the Marine captains guarding a refugee camp in Albania put it to me: "If we go to war for economic reasons, why not for moral reasons? I don't want to get emotional about it, but for Christ's sake, man, is NEVER AGAIN just a bumper sticker?"

Both answers, the affirmative and the negative, seem applicable to the historical moment.

II: SLOUCHING TOWARDS CLINTONISM

In a Kosovo Liberation Army training camp in the foothills of northern Albania's mountains, I asked Ilir, a young officer back from the front, the question du jour: Had he lost any family members in the ethnic cleansing?

"*Everybody* who's a victim in Kosovo is my relative," he said emphatically, providing perhaps the only answer that could justify the existence of an insurgent army and steady its resolve against charges of terrorism.

One might be forgiven for thinking that Bill Clinton and the NATO leaders had reached the same impassioned conclusion about their own relationship with the Kosovars. Select crops of the administration's "relatives" have sprung up near and far across the planet, while other tribes of victims have been, either ruefully or cynically or shamelessly or pragmatically, disowned. The selective motto I FEEL YOUR PAIN, embroidered over a scarlet background of apologies, is one of the more fickle pennants overflying America's currently chivalrous foreign policy. But however freshly restyled its overt sentimentality, the philosophy of virtuous compassion urging us as a nation toward a higher calling has been seeded in to the American experience since Day One.

Great powers always cast their actions as demonstrations of moral superiority. Our sense of exceptionalism arrives in nascent, quasi-mystical form with the New England Puritans, who believed they would supply a "moral example to all the world," and flows, contracting and expanding but mostly unbroken, to the Vietnam War. Thomas Paine wanted America to begin the world over again. John Adams brazenly declared that the United States "will last forever, govern the globe and introduce the perfection of man."

At the dawn of the American century, following the United States' brief but ugly flirtation with colonial acquisition during the Spanish-American War, it was Woodrow Wilson who imagined that America would provide "a positive moral example to all the world" by refusing to join Europe's continental war and the insupportable callousness of its ruling classes. But Wilson failed even to persuade his own countrymen that his crusade was worth it. The naiveté and hubris of his

nse of American moral superiority, compounded
the venal self-interests and ethnic hatreds of
uropean politics, resulted in a peace badly made.
hus the first world war begat the second—the
ear-eyed commitment to destroy Hitler and the
panese, the Jehovah-like wrath of Dresden and
iroshima—and the second, its intemperate se-
el—the rise of the Soviet Empire and Maoist
hina, and postcolonial mayhem on three con-
ents. After the tens of millions slaughtered, sav-
g the world now meant saving it for *democra-*
, which really meant defeating, or at the very
st, stalemating, Marxism-Leninism in any of its
rious incarnations.

For this we were presented with a one-size-
s-all strategic tool, the Truman Doctrine. "It
ust be the policy of the United States to support
e peoples who are resisting attempted subju-
tion by armed minorities or by outside pres-
res . . . ," the president informed Congress in
47, creating a foreign-policy environment of
dless interests (containment of the Reds, which
en meant active support for such thugocracies
Duvalier's Haiti or Mobutu's Zaire, Somoza's
caragua or Suharto's Indonesia), endless en-
nglements (Korea, the Persian Gulf, Cambodia,
uba, Taiwan), and dishonorable intrigues
uatemala in 1954, Iran in 1953, Chile in 1973).
he Truman Doctrine committed the United
ates to the defense of legitimate governments
ainst insurgencies. Legitimate simply described
e immediate postwar status quo and its effete
lonial handovers, before the Soviet Union
unched its internationalist juggernaut in its as-
nt as superpower and supercolonizer. America
e missionary battled or subverted or boxed in
e godless menace around the world, sometimes
rectly but more often clandestinely, through
oxy wars of increasing intensity.

But just as Wilson's crusade for globalism had
oiled back into isolationism, the Truman Doc-
ne's global embrace vanished in the jungles of
dochina. Vietnam imploded not just our sense
exceptionalism; the damage went beyond that.
nericans started to believe that there was some-
ng essentially wrong with our vision of the
rld. If there was such a thing as a national des-
y vis-à-vis the world, we were fairly sick of it.

In 1975, after the humiliation in Southeast
ia and the angst of Watergate, sociologist Daniel
ll, one of many voices announcing the nation's
scent into self-doubt, proclaimed the End of
nerican Exceptionalism. Americans could no
nger believe that their country had a uniquely
oral role in world affairs, he wrote. We were, Bell
ncluded, "a nation like all other nations." The
a sprang open a trapdoor in the American psy-
e, leading to the upwelling of malaise that Jim-
Carter dared to acknowledge. But a scant
elve years after Bell's eulogy, Ronald Reagan had
resold America to Americans, repaired the national spirit, rediscovered the nation's place in the world, and set the stage for a new era of "crusading interventionism" despite the public's indifference to or shallow understanding of America's international role.

The Iran hostage crisis not only demanded that Reagan seduce us back from self-induced impotence into proactive foreign affairs but spurred the extraordinary technological advance, professional competence, and increasingly unconventional shape of today's military.

"In dealing with such Third World issues," wrote Simon Serfaty, the director of the Johns Hopkins Foreign Policy Institute, in 1987, "the Nixon-Kissinger-Ford foreign-policy administration had attempted to introduce the country to the imperatives of history—a predilection for might over right. . . . Next, the Carter administration sought to return the country to its historical right of birth—a predilection . . . for right over might. . . . Thus the Reagan administration's opportunity was to attempt to develop a blend of right and might."

Late in Reagan's second term, political scientists noticed that he combined Carter's vision of a virtuous American foreign policy with an image of strength and confidence, resurrecting the messianic idealism of Wilson. Whereas his predecessor had declared "our policy is designed to serve mankind," Reagan upped the ante, echoing America is "the last best hope of man on earth," and his ensuing call for a "crusade for Freedom" became known as the Reagan Doctrine, in which the president declared the legitimacy of active American military support for guerrilla insurgencies on three continents.

America then anointed teams of rebel surrogates in Nicaragua, Angola, and Afghanistan, avoiding the direct use of our own military forces except in Beirut and Grenada in 1983—the first a "peacekeeping" catastrophe, the second akin to a local 911 call. America was kept free from war until history could play Santa Claus for Reagan—the collapse of the Soviet Union, peace in Central America—and Reagan's Cold War rebel surrogates would morph into Bush's blue-helmeted U.N. surrogates in Bosnia.

It is more than a little ironic that whereas Reagan saw the globe through the eyes of a crusading liberal, drawing comparisons to himself with his Democratic predecessors in the White House and their robust rhetoric directed toward "saving" the world, Clinton sees it like the moderate, cautiously realistic Republican he appears to actually be. Still, the advocacy of human rights is a fundamentally interventionist posture. Human rights, the liberal *cri de coeur* during the Cold War's final decades of realpolitik, have become a geopolitical beachhead for the rapidly evolving ac-

tivism of international law and the apparently noble motivation for a steady deployment of battle-ready American troops—peacekeepers, we are told to call them.

Enter, then, William Jefferson Clinton onto the chaotic street of world affairs, lungs full with the legacy of precedent, his eyes illumined by the exceptionalist light of hope, pockets heavy with the fervent globalism of the corporate class, all the while enjoying the most powerful military ever offered by history to back him up. The Clinton Doctrine, such as it is, is not quite a "new Wilsonianism." These days America is not trying to save the world. Rather, we operate a sloppy triage, trying to keep the neighborhood from hemorrhaging in too many places at once; or we administrate a postnatal ward, indifferently or arrogantly baby-sitting the planet's infant democracies. In zones of conflict, Clinton feels the compulsion neither to support existing governments (Truman) nor to undermine them (Reagan) but to *Americanize* them. The old "moral equivalency" of the American and European radical left (the United States and the Soviet Union said to represent two sides of the same evil coin) has been replaced by the new moral equivalency of the Anthony Lakes and Sandy Bergers and Madeleine Albrights (sans Slobodan Milosevic) treat the terrorists and the pro-democracy coalitionists as equally legitimate forces in Haitian society; ditto Croats and Muslims in Bosnia, Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo, Palestinians and Jews in Israel—thereby avoiding the Somalia syndrome, where taking sides proved politically disastrous and cost the lives of American soldiers. What the President most seems to desire is the removal of images of atrocity (at the top of that list scenes of lifeless American GIs dragged through the streets of some Third World dump like Mogadishu) and their substitution with images of virtue (soldiers helping hurricane victims in Honduras)—to replace war with operations other than war, an empty space in an army's traditional reality, where there are no friends and no enemies, no front or rear, no victories and, likewise, no defeats, and no true endings. At the beginning of 1999 the United States had seven engaged deployments of its army somewhere around the world. Last year the Army's Special Operations Forces alone deployed 35,500 personnel on 2,500 missions into 112 countries. Altogether there have been twenty-seven large military deployments to date, costing at least $20 billion, during Clinton's deceptively maximalist administration. On average, he has ordered fired one cruise missile every three days of his administration. As the century ends, and the millennium with it, so ends a distinct epoch in the role of the American military—its identity, its use, its own worldview, the public's perception of it.



And yet, until some unforeseen day, the military's culture *is* war, will always and must be war, not peace. Kill, win. Upon these roots only can be grafted the fruit of humanitarianism. Society's responsibility here is to ask the questions: Kill whom? Win what?

III: WAR, THE ROCK CONCERT

Man-made humanitarian disasters—famines caused by civil wars as much as by ethnic cleansings or religious persecution—are directly wired to political meltdowns and spiritual bankruptcy. Outlaw states, failed states, lost states, self-murdering states, leaderless states; name the collective psychosis, and somewhere on the globe it is raging through a formerly stable society. Humanity has come this far only to look back into the future at its oldest archetype, its savage, predatory face. Heart-wrenching imagery, the pornography of violence, flashes into our living rooms from cameramen in

he field, but, as U.S. Army Captain Dave John-
on asked me during the annual Special Forces
Conference and Exposition at Ft. Bragg last April,
A picture's worth a thousand words, but what if
very one of those words is irrational?"

The captain had a point. The Powell Doctrine
equired that the deployment of troops be con-
ngent upon the support of the American people,
ut irrationality—impulse buying, obsession with
otteries, addiction to sensational entertain-
ients—often describes the unreliable emotions
ithin the consumerist soul. The increasingly
referred answer, I suppose, to the captain's ques-
on is this: Pack your ruck, show up at the airstrip
n the morning, get the bloodbath off the net-
orks by tomorrow afternoon.

The conference's theme, Regional Engage-
ient and the Future, had the high command
rangling over what the Army was going to look
ke in the year 2020—the Army After Next, as
has been formally titled and gamed. "There
re still men in uniform wed to the past," groused
he towering chairman of the Joint Chiefs of
taff, General Henry Shelton, who flew in from
Vashington after a night spent reviewing the
elgrade bombing target list with the Pentagon's
wyers. At least the conference nailed the basics,
nveiling quality-of-life improvements for sol-
iers in the field, including the next generation
f gourmet MREs (meals ready to eat): seafood
rtellini, black-bean burritos, and Hooah! energy
ars. But the bigger issues—Who are we? Where
e we headed? What are we supposed to do when
e get there?—were still unresolved.

The conference's most repeated slogans—EQUIP
HE MAN, NOT MAN THE EQUIPMENT, and HUMANS
RE MORE IMPORTANT THAN HARDWARE—signaled
he cause of the confusion. In the next fifteen or
venty years, the development of on-the-ground
chnology, the battlefield immersion into virtu-
l reality, and the real-time communications net-
ork, both visual and auditory via personal satel-
te hookups wired into helmets and headsets,
eans soldiering will finally be transformed into
he much prophesized ultimate video game, with
rgets—people, machines, buildings—zapped off
icroscreens like so many bloodless clumps of
ectrons. *Way cool*, the next iteration of extreme
ort, and only the bad guys eat it.

In the language of pop culture, it's no-pain,
igh-gain Baby Boomer warfare, executed by
eneration X technokillers who, because of the
ncreased lethality and precision of evolving
eapons systems, can close down the rock and roll
n a time frame more associated with dance
arathons and spring break—weeks, days, hours.
his is not the vernacular the military thinks in,
owever. Pointing with laser pens to high-tech
raphics projected ubiquitously throughout the
onference hall, the brass spoke of politicians or
chiefs of state as "clients"; they talked about "what sells"; about "how to guarantee the product"; about "zero defects" (translation: everyone on our side comes back alive); and made knowledgeable references—"the holistic approach," "our core ideology"—to a professional-development book entitled *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*. They talked, as you might expect from the largest politically correct insti-

WAR HAS BECOME OPERATIONS OTHER THAN WAR, WHERE THERE ARE NO FRIENDS AND NO ENEMIES, NO VICTORIES AND NO DEFEATS

tution in the galaxy, about "enabling" and "empowering" their men and women to explore their own capabilities to be all that any locked and loaded human being could possibly be.

It did indeed sound brilliant and farseeing. But there was a sense at the conference—as the cruise missiles slammed into Belgrade from Navy ships and Air Force bombers, as the Marines lashed out at Serbia from their floating platforms in the Adriatic, as Special Forces forward observers ripped off their American flag shoulder patches and slipped into Kosovo (a KLA colonel told me), and as the 1st Infantry hunkered red-faced in Macedonia minus three POWs—that maybe the conventional Army itself was lagging toward a form of obsolescence, a big, brawny scarecrow, overmuscled, risk-averse, and not so productive, the last ones interpreting the Powell Doctrine's criterion of marshaling overwhelming force against an enemy to mean *a whole bunch of people with a lot of heavy equipment but nothing much to do*. There wasn't even demand for 155mm howitzer rounds anymore. In the new tactical environment, in which the Gulf War was more of an aberration than a foreshadowing, one last spectacular hurrah for conventional infantry and artillery, the Army could at least take comfort in the fact that it was no longer being fielded as cannon fodder. "No casualties" by definition meant, first and foremost, no ground wars. The Air Force didn't shape the battlefield in Iraq, it destroyed it, and all the Army had to do was sweep up. In the absence of monolithic threats, the soldiers were going to be *occupiers*, the folks who drag ass into town after the pilots and Marines and Navy and Special Operations snake-eaters had taken care of dirty business. Well, it's a job.

Any understanding of the Army's *fin-de-siècle* thought process begins with its perception of the changing nature of the enemies on the horizon, described in military-speak as asymmetric threats: terrorism, guerrilla warfare, information warfare, enemies taking sanctuary in inaccessible and ur-

ban terrains, theater missile defenses, the byzantine relationships forming between terrorists, criminals, failed states and non-states, and of course the spread of weapons of mass destruction, biological, chemical, nuclear. The Pentagon, closely examining the decade's operations other than war to determine what the dimensions might be for real warfare, noticed a trend: the bad guys were paying attention, learning from our mistakes as well as our successes. Compounding the problem was the accelerated exportation of state-of-the-art technology that the military would rather keep for itself. "The operational edge—owning the night [with night-vision equipment]—is not as decisive as it once was because of the international market," lamented General John Abrams, who runs the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, a lesson the Russians barely lived to regret in Chechnya. In Albania, at Task Force Hawk, I'd hear another Army officer shrug and say, on background, "There's very little we can hold on to. All technology gains are temporary." For the past fifty years, the central tenet of the United States military strategy has been to make war far too expensive a proposition for anyone who might dare to challenge us, which has worked on the macro level, superpower to superpower. But history's Goliaths have trouble remembering that stones are free and slingshots easily stolen.

DAILY LIFE FOR THE MARINES WAS WHOLESOME AND AFFLUENT, A MILITARY LAKE WOBEGON—THE WOMEN STRONG, THE MEN GOOD-LOOKING

The Cold War's monolithic threats spawned fixed patterns of response based on military doctrine, but now the decision-making process had to be rethought for asymmetric threats—adaptability takes precedence over traditional models. Abrams, whose presentation was academic and abstract, high on reasoned solutions, loved to talk about "transcending the dogma," refining the uncertainty factor "so the enemy can never predict our actions," and more than once he genuflected before the blinking altar of information technology. The general was, as were so many of the officers in the room, a warrior-scholar, ornamented with postgraduate degrees alongside combat medals. Cerebral and flinty, eggheads with guns, as overeducated in theoretics, I sometimes felt, listening to their esoteric badinage, as the Modern Language Association. Not that they didn't exist, but you had to go out of your way to find a certified idiot in this crowd.

The idea was to balance the dynamic of war—coercion—with the dynamic of peace—influence. Simple enough, but it meant a radical shift in the military's approach to non-war-fighting tasks. In order to *avoid* war, the Army's Special Operations wanted to build professional regional engagement forces (REFs) for dealing with operations other than war—counterproliferation, combating terrorism, foreign internal defense, pyschological operations, civil affairs, direct action, unconventional warfare, combat search and rescue, counterdrug activities, humanitarian assistance—in recognition "that the military was continuously on an operational footing." But the regional engagement concept was not without its troubling aspects. For one thing, it reflected, as the head of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, Lieutenant General William Tangney, explained, *constant presence;* that is, military globalization by any other name, but with a lighter footprint than the massive worldwide encampments of the recent past.

But as I listened to the conference's three days of symposia, it was apparent to me that the REF concept wasn't going to propel the Army into the twenty-first century anytime soon. As General Shelton warned, the hierarchy of the conventional Army still didn't quite grasp what its own Special Operations Forces did, though many of the officers in attendance believed the entire force was going to become more SOF-like in the future. "Only a small group in SOF are trying to make the concept of regional engagement happen," said another general, Sidney Shachnow. "The majority couldn't care less." Another panelist worried that REF, because of its focus on global scouts and information, would precipitate significant changes in the law that, without proper vigilance, would "break the firewall between intelligence gathering and operations that has been there for thirty-five years." Another speaker was even more pessimistic: "With every passing decade, the media and the international community's sensitivities are more attuned to what you're doing. We didn't invent Special Forces to do peacetime engagement. SF is not going to be used as Mother Teresa. The SF pulls off the humanitarian mask and is suddenly doing covert operations."

The discussion turned frequently toward the role of the individual soldier. Major General William Boykin, head of the Army Special Forces Command (Airborne), was not happy with the SF recruiting ads, which focused on humanitarian assistance rather than warrior skills. "Train warriors," he said, "and everything else will fall into place. This nation needs warriors."

Major General Shachnow: "There are two extremes of soldiers—the warrior door-kickers and the great humanitarians. The SF doesn't emphasize one or the other but operates across the full spectrum . . . whether they're dealing with a waitress or a guerrilla leader."

General Peter Schoomaker, commander of U.S. Special Operations: "We have a fundamental problem in the well-resourced Western world dealing with warrior-class cultures. Sometimes I wonder if anybody's been in a fistfight, deep down within that logic."

From a military point of view, Schoomaker was right: the bombing campaign was a coercive political tool, really designed to affect the morale of civilians and soldiers, a textbook Clausewitzian extension of policy meant to persuade Milosevic that he couldn't afford the political cost of keeping his forces in Kosovo. From the perspective of a senior Army officer deeply involved in combat operations at Task Force Hawk on the ground in Albania, this political reliance on the Air Force, which the Air Force eagerly embraced, in effect deep-sixed the Powell Doctrine, allowing politicians to underresource the military without accountability, and that path was booby-trapped with familiar hazards.

"The Air Force preaches you don't need all the tools," said the officer, but then you regressed back to a Lyndon Johnson scenario, signaling the key to your enemy's eventual success. The polar extremes of the U.S. military, labor (the Army) and technology (the Air Force), were tumbling out of their correct proportions. The thinking, called Halt Phase Strategy, was that you didn't need a big army, or even an active army; you just needed reserves, because the Air Force was so good. "But if you run across a completely committed foe"—say, for instance, the Somalians, rather than the Serbians—"if you use technology, all you do is drive the conflict down the scale to guerrilla warfare. If the question is, How do you want your armed forces structured in twenty-five years? your determination to advance technology and forget labor will always be for naught."

Well, maybe. This is an ongoing argument in which the Air Force will likely persevere, but the ironies generated by the clash of operational doctrines are profound riddles. Unlike Kosovo, the battle of the Black Sea in Mogadishu was a military victory for the United States, but it was a political disaster exploding through American society, and so no victory at all. The political victory in the Balkans, though it took ten years and cost hundreds of thousands of civilian lives, was, as an example of U.S. military power, something along the order of a grand non-event—a steely gesture of morality. It's not unfair to say that the military wasn't even looking for a "victory" in Kosovo.

The ambiguity of the relationship among the USA and the United States and NATO underscores the paradox at the core of the post–Cold War doctrine of humanitarian intervention: we do not deploy our military with belligerence in our hearts. Instead, we merely choose to believe we have no enemy, just countries we deal with when their behavior crosses the line of what we find acceptable. With such an absence of long-term strategy or a consistent foreign policy, tactical operations applied to the moment—bombing Serb positions in Bosnia, protecting Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq, removing a tyrant in Haiti—create the illusion of a genuine, coherent, and extended political commitment to justice, democracy, and nation-building. In fact, the post–Cold War interventions have been mostly marked by futility, a lack of resolution, and a lingering sense of betrayal, because what we ultimately seem most willing to invest in is the status quo—Iraq out of Kuwait, a weak Aristide returned to his palace, the refugees back in Kosovo. Beyond that threshold, the costs mount, the risks escalate, the political will falters, and our good intentions are met with skepticism. In such an environment, the Army's concepts of constant presence and perpetual operations dwindle toward hollow self-justification.

IV: SINGING SONGS WITH THE REFUGEE GIRLS

The smallest female officer in Marine history, four-foot-ten-inch Captain Gabrielle Chapin, insisted on lending me her sleeping bag. "It's clean," she wanted me to know, though I would have been equally grateful if it were not. I was being choppered ashore from the USS *Kearsarge* with a platoon of reinforcements to Camp Hope, a refugee camp in central Albania, where the 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, provided external security.

Daily life was almost too welcoming, wholesome, and affluent aboard the USS *Kearsarge*, which at times seemed nothing so much as the military's version of Lake Wobegon—the women strong, the men good-looking. "Our Marines are motivated, and the food is good," Captain Chapin would say in a self-mocking tone, parodying her assignment as the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit's public affairs officer, responsible for coddling the visiting press, invariably bored with the *Kearsarge*'s insularity and unnewsworthy narratives until they discovered the ship's ATM machines.

And the food, as she wryly advertised, was good. In the four mess halls, the ship's nutritionists had carefully labeled each slice of cake or serving of fried shrimp with its caloric count. The cappuccino machine was appreciated, the salad bar marvelous—unless you knew about the 1st Infantry's salad bar in Macedonia, extravagantly supplemented by an individual pizza bar, a burger bar, a taco and burrito bar, a fruit bar, and a tantalizing dessert bar stacked with locally made pies and tortes, all this bounty in addition to a full-service cafeteria line, the feast wolfed down be-

neath the flickering images of the mess hall's big-screen TV and then worked off in Task Force Sabre's warehouse-size gym.

Here on the ship life was mellow, almost festive at times. Occasionally there'd be a barbecue on deck, or tuna fishing off the belowdecks stern with the crew in charge of the air defense guns, or even romance. Of the approximately 850 personnel on the ship, about a third of them were women. (At Task Force Hawk's vast compound ashore, plenty of the troop tents were co-ed.) Belowdecks, when the ship went to red lights in the early evening, there was easy laughter, archipelagos of music, brash flirting, only infrequently punctuated by the far-above whoosh of Harriers taking off, the noise punching down through the decks like a massive airlock being secured. College instructors traveled with the MEU, so you could work on your degree. The ship had centralized television, its own channel stocked with a thousand movie titles. And for anybody who still felt, as at times everyone did, that he or she was in a faraway place, engaged in a faraway war, and that this wasn't real life, or a real family, homesickness had been diluted by e-mail.

"It's very deceiving," said a female sailor, an African American from Philadelphia, as we stood in the forecastle the morning I left the ship, looking at the sun rise over the mountainous Albanian coastline. "It's all so beautiful out here, and there's so much horror on shore."

She wished she could go in and do something to help, cook for the Marines, hand out blankets to the refugees, anything to feel she was more a part of it. "It's surreal to be out here, everything so calm, on such a beautiful day." Above our heads, there was the sudden crack of M-16s—live-fire practice up on the flight deck, the bullets slapping into the water about a quarter-mile off the port side. The Marines practiced every day: marksmanship on the deck, or, down below in the ground transport cargo hold filled with hovercrafts and armored Humvees, they learned a few phrases in Serbian and Albanian—*Drop your weapon! Lie down now!*—and rehearsed detention and arrest techniques, or practiced how fast they could drop to one knee and jam a fresh clip into their rifles. Unlike the conventional Army, they actively trained for humanitarian ops too, to prepare for what the Marine Commandant General Charles Krulak called the corps' three-block model—feeding people in the morning, house-to-house fighting in the afternoon, low-intensity conflict in the evening.

The beauty of the day remained by the time I walked off the Sea Knight helicopter into the blazing heat of the Albanian plain; what had changed was the feeling that you were getting closer to war, somebody's war. Every night, in the hayfields surrounding the refugee camp, you heard AK47 fire and unnerving bursts from machine guns, standard nighttime fare, the entire population toting assault rifles after the country disassembled in 1997. Several nights before I moved in, the company of Marines guarding Camp Hope had come under direct fire, bullets impacting in the dirt throughout their wide-open compound, whizzing over their new Eureka! tents. The gunnery sergeant had brought forward a Humvee-mounted TOW antitank missile launcher and used its thermal sights to locate the gunmen out in the pastures, then sent a stream of illumination rounds streaking past their heads.

Nights grew considerably quieter after that, but force protection, so abused by the conventional Army in Haiti, had become a legitimate obsession. Backhoes had clawed out firing positions, berms of sandbags were stacked waist-high, battle-ready Marines in full body armor manned checkpoints and sniper positions throughout the area twenty-four hours a day. In the irrigation canals that bordered the camp, frog gigging was locally popular after dark, and the Marines had given villagers chemical lightsticks to keep them from getting shot.

"There ain't no business as usual around here. Period," drawled Major Bill Jurney, an amiable, squint-eyed, fearless gentleman from North Carolina. He had been to Liberia, the Gulf, Cuba, Haiti, Panama, and now this, commanding the first Marines ashore in Albania, tacked on to the first Joint Task Force Shining Hope mission. The 160 men, the major explained as he showed me to my quarters—a piece of cardboard covering the bare ground in an open-walled supply tent—had come up against "a good dozen shoot/don't shoot situations" since they arrived on Easter Sunday. Jurney was continuously, persistently, reevaluating his security measures, in dogged adherence to Patton's growling axiom: *Plans should be made by the people who are going to execute them.* "You create your own picture of what's going on in your area," said the major. "You don't rely on national agencies." When he first came ashore he walked around with a digital camera, filling a disc with images of the site, which were then taken back to the *Kearsarge* and made into a cyberlandscape to train the troops who would be rotating into the camp.

Force protection—a doctrine that includes morale-boosting quality-of-life comforts such as movies, hot meals, barbells, phone service—had its contemporary roots in Southeast Asia and the bombing deaths of 241 Marines in Lebanon during an ill-fated, ill-conceived, and politically foolish peacekeeping mission in 1983. For the Marines, Vietnam and Beirut were the big lessons, maximum comeuppance. "Now we won't deploy unless we can be self-protected, the rules of engagement have to be decisively clear, and we don't like to stay anyplace too long," said one of

he *Kearsarge*'s Cobra pilots, Captain "Bull" Mar-o. Force protection, however, had been taken to reposterous extremes in Haiti, the 10th Moun-ain Division apparently believing it had been sent o the island only to guard itself, and although it was miraculously true that no American soldier ad been killed by hostile fire since the peace-eeping forces arrived five years ago in Bosnia, it was also true that no French or British soldiers had een killed either, yet the Americans were "tur-led up"—required to wear full body armor—and he Europeans weren't. Madeleine Albright's con-eit of an "indispensable nation" had trickled own to produce the individually indispensable I sheltered by a society that expected its mili-ary to be not only omnipotent but immortal. ivilians, aid workers, journalists—these are the nes killed in today's war zones, not soldiers.

At the Special Forces conference in April, rigadier General William Boykin was one of he few top-ranking officers I heard address the is-ue straightforwardly. "As for force protection," aid the general, "we've gone too far with it. It an't be a mission. If you let soldiers believe that heir job is to not get hurt and that's how you easure success, then we've made a mistake.... e don't want anybody hurt, but we're breeding generation of young officers that believe that ay, and that's a problem."

Many of the commanding officers of infantry nits I spoke with in Albania and Macedonia be-eved that American troops presented a "higher-alue target" than troops from other NATO na-ions, which necessitated not just a more aggressive osture but greater prudence. And as you moved loser to the "front," force protection was a logic ew felt the need to question. Task Force Hawk, t the Rinas airfield outside of Tirana, was vul-erable to attack from shoulder-held missiles fired om the surrounding hills, surface-to-surface mis-iles launched from Yugoslavia, or Serbian MiGs tationed in Montenegro, five minutes' strike time way. Hawk lived on high alert under camouflage etting and walls of stackable bastions; its men tur-led up round the clock with armored vests, sweaty elmets, gas masks bouncing on hips as they ran r cover during air raid drills.

"What's interesting to me," said Lieutenant olonel Paul Brygider, senior commander of the EU's troops, "is the American public's accep-nce of civilian casualties here [in the Balkans]. hen we start taking military casualties, I won-er if they will accept them any better." "I hate o say it," Lieutenant Colonel Bruce Gandy told e out on the *Kearsarge*, "but there seems to be parting of the ways between society and the ilitary. We're citizen soldiers, but we're used to etting on ships and sailing away from society, tak-ng care of ourselves. We've asked nothing from ur country but to be allowed to go to the fore-front and fight, without complaint. The DOD used to be hawkish, State used to be pacifist. Now it's switched. You have to understand the human cost of deploying for fuzzy principles."

Until the day in mid-June when they crossed the border into Kosovo, though, there would be nothing overtly fuzzy about the Marines' immediate mission. When the Kosovars were cruelly herded toward borders after the bombing commenced on March 24, over twenty nations mobilized assistance to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, the organization ultimately responsible for managing the welfare of 900,000 displaced people. Israel came as well as Saudi Arabia, the Germans, the Japanese. U.S. Air Force Major Tom Dolney described the scene as kind of like a pickup game on a school lot—"It's not countries getting along, it's a whole bunch of helicopter pilots getting along." Within three months, twenty nations grew to fifty.

SOCIETY EXPECTS THE MILITARY TO BE NOT ONLY OMNIPOTENT BUT IMMORTAL; CIVILIANS AND AID WORKERS ARE KILLED IN WAR, NOT SOLDIERS

In the middle of April, NATO, belatedly, created Operation Allied Harbor, expanding its humanitarian effort, so far limited to hauling cargo and replenishing stocks, to actually building camps and shuttling refugees. Joint Task Force Shining Hope, commanded by an Air Force three-star general, was conceived by the American military to organize a framework for the United States' humanitarian relief effort but not actually do the work. The Air Force subcontracted the Bechtel Corporation to build Camp Hope, someone from the Defense Department oversaw quality control, CARE ran the camp, U.S. Army Civil-Military Operations Center (CMOC) orchestrated the contractors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as ADRA (food distribution), Merlin (medical emergency unit), and Save the Children. The French were there, the Turks, dozens of Albanian workers, and about 3,000 refugees.

The foundation for an infantryman, however, would always be the same—combat operations. "But the same principles that made you successful in combat ops," said Major Jurney, raising his voice to be heard over the noise of a nearby well-drilling rig, "will make you successful in humanitarian ops. The key to success is how quickly you can transition from humanitarian relief to deadly force."

And therein lies a conundrum. How can we be certain that any humanitarian organization's—including an army's—self-proclaimed impartiality isn't an illusion, a sinister form of hypocrisy,

a tactic, a mask to be whisked away at the appropriate moment, revealing the unforgiving face of an adversary? Certainly the residents of Mogadishu have very little reason to trust the humanitarianism of America or its military. In Haiti the Clinton Administration's veneer of altruism became all too transparent when the National Security Council and people in the embassy instructed the Special Forces to treat the blood-drenched FRAPH, a far-right terrorist group, as if they were a legitimate political party, the "loyal opposition" to Haiti's democratic forces. And

AMERICAN SOLDIERS DON'T GO ANYWHERE THESE DAYS WITHOUT THEIR TVS, VCRS, PCS, CELL PHONES, AND HUGGIES DISPOSABLE WIPES

while Rwanda and Bosnia (to name but two) provided indisputable evidence of our failure to act against aggression, why were we so intent on labeling the liberation forces in Kosovo "terrorists"? The blowback of moral equivalency: nobody's right, nobody's wrong, we want to help everybody. Yet the truth is that short of marching on Belgrade and ruling Yugoslavia for the next twenty years, places like Kosovo won't fit nicely into America's multicultural moral template. The Kosovars want what we have—independence and freedom from state-sponsored terrorism. In significant ways it is ours to give, but we won't give it to them. This is not a moral decision. Our moral crusade ends here.

"They [the Clinton Administration] are internally inconsistent about moralism," said a senior officer I spoke with in a guarded, no-access command tent at Task Force Hawk who asked to remain unidentified. "When you start drifting into a moral universe, you have to ask, *Whose morals?* It's impossible for those guys to have a consistent, coherent foreign policy, because every time they bump into something, it's a Gordian knot. They're trying to get somewhere, but they bump into inadequate resources and intractable moral dilemmas. They—Sandy Berger, Madeleine Albright—can't help but be inconsistent."

Meanwhile, there was no question among any of the Marines but that they were doing the right thing—helping the suffering Kosovars—and since no one could yet predict that the war would end so shortly, both the camp and the mission were expanding daily. As far as the eye could scan, green tents were being uncrated and erected to shelter an expected 20,000 refugees within the month, 30,000 if the war continued indefinitely. The Kilo Company had been there long enough to be replaced by Lima Company, whose men I watched unstrap their rucksacks and sit down on the ground to be briefed by their company commander, a Captain Dan Sullivan. Each new Marine had brought with him a fresh plastic tub of Huggies disposable wipes, and each man had an extra set of dogtags tucked into the laces of one of his boots, should the set around his neck be somehow blown away.

"The NGOs know we're here to protect them, and they appreciate it," the captain told his assembled company. "This is the first time most of you are doing real-world ops." He didn't want to catch anyone fooling around with his weapon or losing a single round of ammunition.

"The refugees have been through a lot of shit,' he said. "There are a lot of kids here that have seen more shit than you've ever seen in a war movie. Treat them with respect. Say hello to them, treat them as you would treat your grandmother if she was a refugee." The captain tried to explain to his troops that they were in one of the poorest countries in the world, a place with strange customs, where it would not be unusual for them to see guys holding hands with each other. "Relax about it," said the captain, and handed over the briefing to First Lieutenant Adam Henrich. "The people here quickly realized we're not the bad guys, we're here to help them," Henrich told the Marines. "The NGOs, in my opinion, are doing the same thing we're doing. In my opinion, we're one big team."

After dinner—trays of huge grilled T-bone steaks delivered from the NGO's kitchen—I walked across the bivouac with Captain Sullivan and Lima Company's gunnery sergeant, Jack Sterling, to the CAAT (Combined Anti-Armor Team) motor pool—Humvees mounted with TOW missiles, Mark 19 automatic grenade launchers, and .50-caliber machine guns—and we took one of the vehicles up to the camp's main gate for a walking tour of the extensive compound. Although the Pentagon had instructed the Marines not to plan for any ground combat operations, few of the soldiers actually believed they weren't headed for a fight. "We thought we'd be in Kosovo right now, kicking ass and taking names," said Sterling, "but here we are with the refugee girls, singing songs."

We strolled down the graveled avenues past row after row of neat tents, families sitting silently in the shadows beyond the thresholds, mothers preparing the evening meal, old men and old women with head scarves nodding at us, teenage girls like any teenage girls anywhere in line at the water fountains, children running toward us to ask our names, take our hands in theirs. Here in Albania the refugees were free to come and go as they pleased, unlike at the dismal, filthy camps I would see later in Macedonia, where the Kosovars were locked in, concentration camp–style, behind fences and barbed wire. Here at Camp Hope

he mood was upbeat, if not uplifting; relieved, if ot refreshed. Among the younger refugees, laughter was not uncommon, nor was the sense of enterprise. People had begun to build primitive iosks to sell little things, soda and gum and cigarettes; the KLA even had its own clandestine ecruiting tent.

For two hours, until well after dark, the gunnery ergeant and I walked the perimeter, visiting the ew guards, Lima Company's teenage Marines at heir lonely posts for their first night of duty ashore. Despite my hesitation to play along, Sterling made ne complicit in a ritual, requiring each young oldier at each scattered checkpoint to articulate is mission. It's good for them, said the gunnery ergeant, to have to explain themselves to somebody who isn't in a uniform, and I was reminded f something Major Jurney had told me, that he imself was a product of lessons learned in engagements past, forced to develop his social skills, o communicate more comfortably, to agree to V interviews, to be mindful of the diplomacy of ommunity relations.

The nearly full moon had risen by the time I ade my way back to the Marines' blacked-out enampment, serene in its constant watchfulness, nd crawled into my borrowed sleeping bag, watching the cool mist descend outside the mosquito etting. In the morning the searing heat returned nd with it the novelty of Important Visitors. There was a need for novelty. The days I spent n Albania with Task Force Hawk and its superuous Apache helicopters were an admirable mix f industry, boredom, and suburban living. "We ave some surrealism around here," I heard an nfantry officer say, lounging in front of his tent. I feel like I'm in Atlanta, Georgia, sitting on my orch." Soldiers don't go anywhere these days ithout their TVs, VCRs, PCs, and cell phones. he compound bristled with groves of satellite ntennae, its boardwalks and grounds coiled with able hookups. The spring rains had stopped and he mud had dried, and there wasn't that much to o but slowly mass forces and matériel, perfect he logistics—communicate, communicate—and e more diligent about physical exercise, given the bundance and quality of chow.) The brass and the taff from Joint Task Force Shining Hope had lanned a major photo op and were being choppered in from their headquarters at Rinas airfield, orty miles away. Before long the crowd of officers ad arrived, their every step photographed by a adre of the military's own spinners. The idea was o do something nice, something fun, for the kids. he refugee children were lined up according to ge groups and marched to the far end of the amp, where engineers had scraped a play area nd blanketed it with gravel. An Air Force ergeant proudly displayed a blueprint for an extravagant playground he had designed. Lugging sacks of candy, the task force folks divided themselves up among the groups of children and organized games, assisted by translators and staff from Save the Children.

I lingered behind with one of the civilian watchdogs assigned to the MEU from the Center for Naval Analysis. Although they were civil service, the analysts wore battle-dress uniforms and helmets when they accompanied the Marines ashore from the *Kearsarge*. Even dressed to kill, this man looked like a Beltway technocrat and spoke lovingly, and at great length, about the various types of gravel spread around the camp. As we spoke, I looked over his shoulder at a large African American soldier teaching a circle of refugee children the hokey-pokey, putting his left hand in, his left hand out, twirling all about in his shiny black combat boots. It was a fine sight.

V: THE OTHER SOLDIERS OF TOMORROW

In Kukës, high up in the mountains on the Albanian-Kosovar frontier a week later, it didn't take long to relearn a basic lesson, that no matter how light-footed you walk through a war zone, something's bound to happen. I choppered up from the Rinas airfield with the Italian Coast Guard, seated between an Oxfam engineer and a portly Italian general going up to inspect his troops responsible for guarding the Kukës refugee camp. As we flew in, the reservoir below the city seemed to bob with countless flocks of seagulls, but as we made our descent I saw not birds but a vast spread of rubbish riding the still, blue water.

Barry Davies, the Oxfam engineer responsible for bringing water to the camps, had to tell his younger workers to get a grip when they arrived in town with the first crush of refugees. You're not doctors, he felt obliged to lecture his crew. You're not psychiatrists. The female interpreter would translate the stories of the rapes and executions to the team, and the less experienced workers would come unfocused, frantic with compassion, and Barry would tell them firmly to concentrate on the job, water was what they had come to do, look beyond the suffering and get these people water or things are going to get a lot worse.

Kukës, which had the potential to be a gorgeous alpine town nestled under snow-blotched summits, was a dump of rotting concrete apartment buildings and garbage-laden streets, full of spies and mercenaries, guerrilla fighters and groups of haggard-looking men—the tractor drivers the world had watched on TV. The Oxfam engineer's apartment, which rented for $60 a month back in the spring, now cost $2,000. A toy Uzi lay on the living-room couch, left by the child whose family had moved out instantly, doubling up with

relatives, to bank the cash. Everybody's armed, everybody's balanced on the edge, another nation with another festering pathology. There was a battle on the hillside above town last night, two clicks this side of the border, an Italian doctor told me matter-of-factly. NATO bombs, mortar and machine-gun fire, tracers slicing through the air.

Deep inside the Italian camp, filming a queue of women at a waterpipe, I soon found myself in trouble—two AK47s jammed in my face, a cocked fist aimed at my jaw. The KLA were forbidden inside the camp in uniform or armed, but here they were, and furious, mistakenly believing I had captured their presence on my camera. Instead of intervening on my behalf, the local employees of Oxfam who had brought me there averted their eyes and backed away, out of the probable line of fire. Throughout Albania, especially in the north, journalists and aid workers had been robbed and threatened and occasionally roughed up or held hostage by troupes of rogues—the mafia, the police, the KLA—had their cars stolen, their money, their satellite phones, but I didn't know of any Westerner who had been seriously injured, even up here on the border, except by Serb snipers. Nothing much happened now either—the two KLA soldiers demanded my camera, I refused, we yelled at each other in our respective languages, and finally they went away—and the reason I even bring it up is to acknowledge the distance covered by the American military since a sergeant told Philip Caputo in Vietnam, "You're going to learn that one of the most brutal things in the world is your average nineteen-year-old American boy."

I can easily imagine the circumstances that might skyrocket that brutality back to the surface, but as a rule it just isn't there in the ranks. "The truth about the Army," Colonel Volney Warner at Task Force Hawk told me, "is that there's very little difference between me and Private First Class Snuffie. She's bright, intelligent, talented, well-read. If I go to another [country's] army, the private first class is agrarian, uneducated, undisciplined, unprofessional." Because the U.S. Army has had little success recruiting from the middle class, it creates its own middle class, replete with bourgeois values. Because it has successfully eroded racial and gender barriers like no other giant institution in the world, it inculcates open-mindedness and tolerance and good manners. "The Army doesn't look for brutes anymore," said Captain Marty Downie, also at Task Force Hawk. "They want the thinking man, someone who's going to make a smart decision, someone with a conscience." It's a smokeless, lite beer, nice guy/gal culture that prides itself on calculated lethality. I was offended by the very nature of these two KLA fighters who, compared with American GIs, were so quick to point their guns in my face. It's not a question of who are the more effective, efficient killers—we Americans are. But these guys were more dangerous, period, and the distinction is not a small one, here in the Balkans, or the Mideast, or Africa.

It was the seventy-second day of bombing—six more days to go. I walked up a mountain road toward the border. The war was almost over but no one knew that yet, and the exodus of refugees continued to trickle down the slope toward Kukës, cars with license plates ripped away, tiny tractors pulling wagons stuffed with people and foam mattresses and pots and pans, women in wool coats and head scarves on this hot, bright day, pretty young mothers cradling swaddled infants. It was a lovely day for a ride out of hell. The last tractor I saw before I turned back to the Italian camp was pulling a cart loaded with children, two dozen little ones, presided over by one old man wearing a white skullcap, the de facto patriarch of a wayward future.

Overhead, American jets and their surging, pulsing roar had been continuous since midafternoon. Occasionally I would spot their metallic specks, gleaming in the sun. Back in the refugee camp, I was surrounded by children who didn't want to let go of my hand, who wanted to play with my camera, wanted to introduce me to their sisters, their brothers, their mothers. *Where are your fathers?* They pointed over the mountains. *In Kosovo.*

The oldest, a fifteen-year-old boy, with raven-black hair and a grim smile, slashed his hand from ear to ear, again and again, holding an invisible knife, as he explained what had happened back in his village. There was an immense explosion, like the snap of a woolen blanket amplified a hundred thousand times. "*Aviones, aviones!*" squealed the children. The earth tremored lightly underfoot.

Would you like to know that if the bomb doesn't fall on you, it is a wonderful, terrible thing to behold?

Again, on the other side of the hill above Kukës, the earth exploded with a single, solid, indescribably powerful boom. "*Aviones, aviones!*" cheered the kids. So very high above us were the twin contrails of a B-52 bomber. The children were all over me, jumping up and down, dancing crazily, singing, *singing*. It was power itself, sheer and absolute and disembodied, that enchanted them, they who had known only the fate of the powerless. For a moment, believe me, they were happy amid the horrors of the world. There was one tenacious little boy in a Mickey Mouse T-shirt who positively refused to let go of my hand, and it was this child, I know, who was leading us all into the next century.

The children, I should add, were singing songs of war.

THIS IS YOUR BILL OF RIGHTS

The "war on drugs" began as a rhetorical flourish used by Richard Nixon to contrast his tough stand on crime with LBJ's "war on poverty." But as the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton administrations poured billions of dollars into fighting drugs, the slogan slipped the reins of metaphor to become just a plain old war—with an army (DEA), an enemy (profiled minorities, the poor, the cities), a budget ($17.8 billion), and a shibboleth (the children). As in any war, our political leaders have asked us citizens to make some sacrifices for this higher cause. When George Bush entered office, a *Washington Post*-ABC News poll found that 62 percent of Americans "would be willing to give up a few of the freedoms we have" for the war effort. They have gotten their wish. Initially applied only to the buyers and sellers of drugs, exceptions to our fundamental rights have been quickly enlarged to include every one of us. Bill Clinton's legacy is not the drug-free zone he wanted but a moth-eaten Bill of Rights.

THIS I

1 Most Americans consider the right to free speech, adopted as the First Amendment to our Constitution, to be unassailable. But in less than thirty years the tacticians of the drug war have found ways to erode this bedrock liberty. In 1996 voters in California, by referendum, permitted doctors to recommend marijuana as part of medical therapy. Alarmed that states were breaking ranks, the federal drug czar, General Barry McCaffrey, threatened to arrest any doctor who merely *mentioned* to a patient that marijuana might alleviate the suffering caused by AIDS, cancer, or other serious illnesses. Still, by last year, voters in seven states had approved the medical use of marijuana. In November 1998 an initiative in the District of Columbia tried to do the same. For almost a year no one knew whether the referendum had passed, because Rep. Bob Barr (R., Ga.) impounded the $1.65 it would have cost to tally the vote. Finally, last September, the courts overruled Barr. Seven out of ten D.C. voters had decided in favor of legalization. Refusing defeat, Barr pushed a bill through Congress that blocked the spending needed to enact the new law. As fallback, Barr has also proposed a joint resolution of Congress to simply overturn by fiat the will of the people expressed freely and fairly at the ballot box.

2 In 1984, the state of Oregon denied unemployment benefits to two Native American workers fired for using an illegal hallucinogen—peyote—during a religious ceremony that predates the Christian custom of drinking sacramental wine by some 8,000 years. Once upon a time, the decision would have been simple. Freedom of religion. Case closed. But Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, one of the drug war's unacknowledged generals, decided that religious freedom would have to yield to the new drug-war orthodoxy. He declared that any law aimed at the drug menace could restrict religious liberty as long as it wasn't directly couched in bigoted language. But, in short order, the state began plowing directly into the affairs of more traditional religions. In 1993 the bitterest enemies, left and right, banded together to pass the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. Only seven months after the act was passed—by a rare unanimous vote in the House and a nearly unanimous vote in the Senate—a Texas church challenged local zoning laws on religious grounds. The suit eventually appealed its way to the Supreme Court, which, citing the peyote case, declared RFRA unconstitutional. Enraged, Congress has pledged to continue its dangerous constitutional pissing match with the judiciary. All this to prevent two citizens from practicing an ancient rite involving a scarce and rarely abused drug.

3 Assembling peaceably at the voting booth is a waning American tradition these days—in part because the drug war is creating a growing and dangerous population of constitutional outcasts. As more people pass through our prisons, more emerge permanently forbidden from voting. Although most states merely disenfranchise felons in prison or on parole, ten vindictive states—Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Iowa, Kentucky, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, Virginia, and Wyoming—have banished more than one million rehabilitated felons from the voting booth forever. Just who these pariahs are is telling: possession of several grams of crack (a crime for which urban blacks are disproportionately prosecuted) makes you an instant felon, while possession of the same substance as powdered cocaine (a drug predominantly used by whites) results in misdemeanors. According to government statistics, blacks constitute only 14 percent of our drug-using population but 58 percent of those finally convicted. What literacy tests and poll taxes once did in containing black suffrage has found a contemporary replacement. (This is nothing new: in South Carolina at the turn of this century, adultery, arson, and housebreaking were crimes deemed necessary for disenfranchisement; murder—then thought to be largely a white crime—was not.) In Mississippi there are 145,600 disenfranchised voters, of which 125,000 are ex-felons and 81,700 are black men. Today, one in three black men in both Alabama and Florida is permanently barred from voting.

4 In 1762 the Crown of England sanctioned the use of "writs of assistance"—general warrants that permitted the king's deputies to enter any place at any time in search of contraband, then mainly molasses, tea, and rum. Colonial fury with the writs fueled America's rebellion and, later, inspired the prohibition of "unreasonable searches and seizures." Since the early 1950s, the Supreme Court has authorized cascading exceptions to this rule, allowing police helicopters to peer into windows, highway troopers to search the passengers of cars whose drivers seem suspicious, and, most notoriously, state agents to smash down doors without warning and without evidence of a crime. Last August, El Monte, California, police raided the home of sixty-three-year-old grandfather Mario Paz. At least twenty armed officers shot the locks off the back and front doors. They ordered Paz to put his hands on the bed. Although he did, one of the officers believed that Paz was "reaching for something." So the officer shot Paz, who was unarmed, in the back two times, killing him. No drugs or any evidence of dealing were found. The man the police had been looking for had lived next door more than fifteen years earlier. These "dynamic entries," as they are called, are on the rise. New York City has had to develop a policy for replacing the doors of homes mistakenly entered. Last year, New York police broke into the home of retired baker Basil Shorter, dragged his retarded, menstruating daughter from the shower, and handcuffed her while she bled down her legs. Although no drugs were ever found, investigators insisted that their informant's "information was good." Drug dealers, they explained, can operate out of the homes of innocent people *without their knowledge*.

Congress of the United States,

begun and held at the City of New York,
on Wednesday the fourth of March, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine.

The Conventions of a number of the States, having at the time of their adopting the Constitution, expressed a desire, in order to prevent misconstruction or abuse of its powers, that further declaratory and restrictive clauses should be added: And as extending the ground of public confidence in the Government will best ensure the beneficent ends of its institution.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, two thirds of both Houses concurring that the following Articles be proposed to the Legislatures of the several States as amendments to the Constitution of the United States, all, or any of which Articles, when ratified by three fourths of the said Legislatures, to be valid to all intents and purposes, as part of the said Constitution; viz.

Articles in addition to, and amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America, proposed by Congress, and Ratified by the Legislatures of the several States, pursuant to the fifth Article of the original Constitution.

Article the First	*After the first enumeration required by the first article of the Constitution, there shall be one Representative for every thirty thousand, until the number shall amount to one hundred, after which the proportion shall be so regulated by Congress, that there shall be not less than one hundred Representatives, nor less than one Representative for every forty thousand persons, until the number of Representatives shall amount to two hundred, after which the proportion shall be so regulated by Congress, that there shall not be less than two hundred Representatives, nor more than one Representative for every fifty thousand persons.*
Article the Second	*No law, varying the compensation for the services of the Senators and Representatives, shall take effect, until an election of Representatives shall have intervened.*
Article the Third	*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.*
Article the Fourth	*A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.*
Article the Fifth	*No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.*
Article the Sixth	*The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.*
Article the Seventh	*No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.*
Article the Eighth	*In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defence.*
Article the Ninth	*In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury shall be otherwise reexamined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.*
Article the Tenth	*Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.*
Article the Eleventh	*The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.*
Article the Twelfth	*The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.*

HARPER'S
MAGAZINE

ON DRUGS

From 1970 to 1998, the inflation-adjusted revenue of major pharmaceutical companies more than quadrupled to $81 billion, 24 percent of that from drugs affecting the central nervous system and sense organs. Sales of herbal medicines now exceed $4 billion a year. Meanwhile, the war on Other drugs escalated dramatically. Since 1970 the federal antidrug budget has risen 3,700 percent and now exceeds $17 billion. More than one and a half million people are arrested on drug charges each year, and 400,000 are now in prison. These numbers are just a window onto an obvious truth: We take more drugs and reward those who supply them. We punish more people for taking drugs and especially punish those who supply them.

—Joshua Wolf Shenk, "America's Altered States" (May 1999)

We may not hear as much now about the war on drugs as we did in the days of Nancy Reagan, William Bennett, and "Just Say No." But in fact the drug war continues unabated; if anything, the Clinton Administration is waging it even more intensely than its predecessors, having spent a record $15 billion on drug enforcement last year and added federal death penalties for so-called drug kingpins.

—Michael Pollan, "Opium, Made Easy" (April 1997)

The militarization of the rhetoric supporting the war on drugs rots the public debate with a corrosive silence. The political weather turns gray and pinched. People who become accustomed to the arbitrary intrusions of the police also learn to speak more softly in the presence of political authority, to bow and smile and fill out the printed forms with the cowed obsequiousness of musicians playing waltzes at a Mafia wedding.

—Lewis Lapham, "A Political Opiate" (December 1989)

It's easy to start thinking all users are media stereotypes: ghetto trash, neurotic child stars, mutinous suburban adolescents. Users, the media imagine, can't hold jobs or take care of their kids. Users rob liquor stores. Real users, for all their chilly scorn of the straight world, buy into the same myths, but turn them inside out. The condescension becomes a kind of snobbery: we are different from the straight people, we are special, we are more free. We are spiritual adventurers.

—Gail Regier, "Users, Like Me" (May 1989)

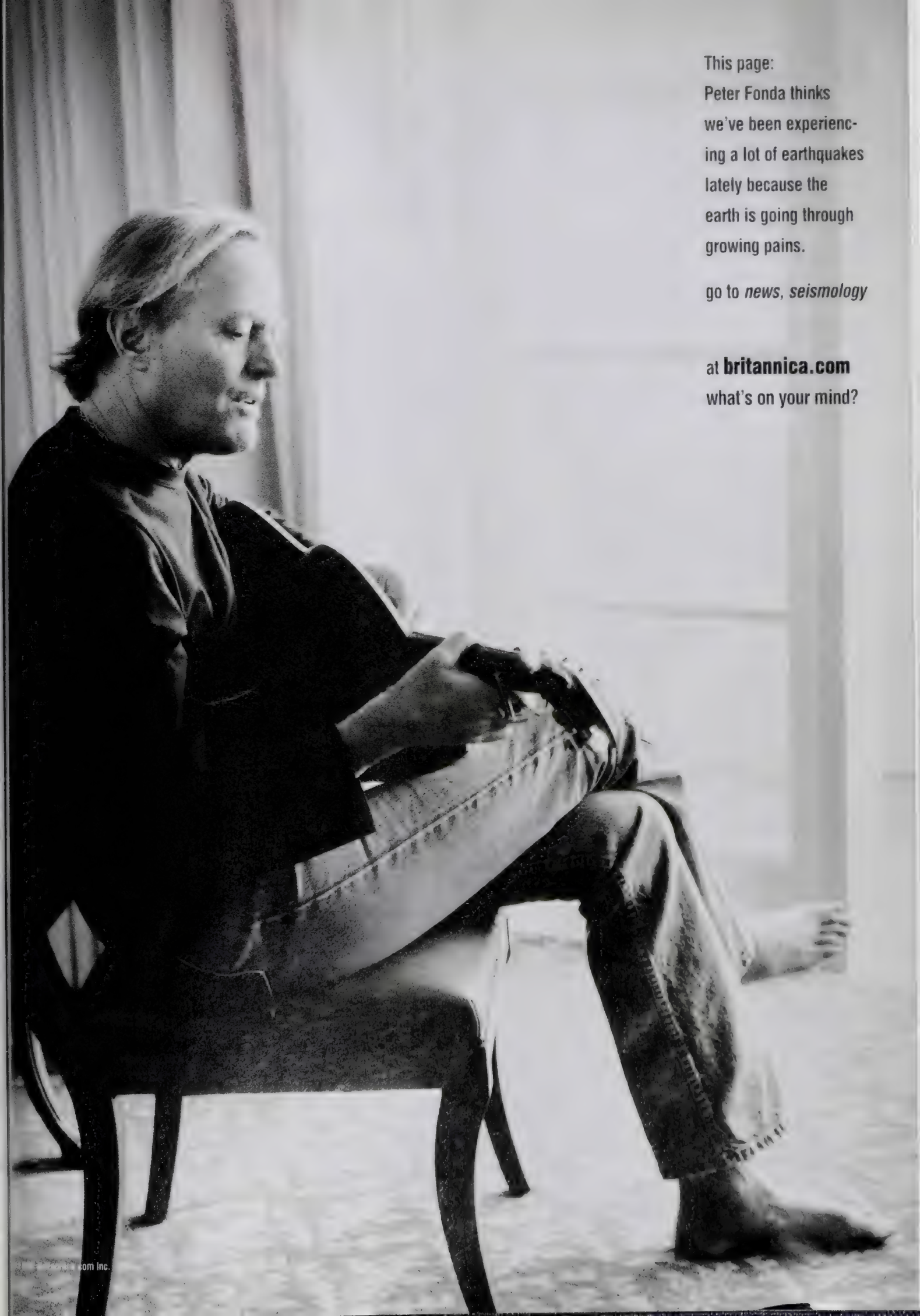
"Just say no!" we tell [our children] and each other when we talk about crack and cocaine. It is necessary that we say this because liberation starts from there.

But we live in a society based overwhelmingly on appetite and self-regard. We train our young to be consumers and to think most highly of their own pleasure. In this we face a contradiction which no act of Congress can resolve. . . .

Against these drugs can we ever, rhetoric aside, bring any kind of real heroism to bear? When they've said no to crack, can we someday give them something to say yes to?

—Robert Stone, "A Higher Horror of the Whiteness" (December 1986)

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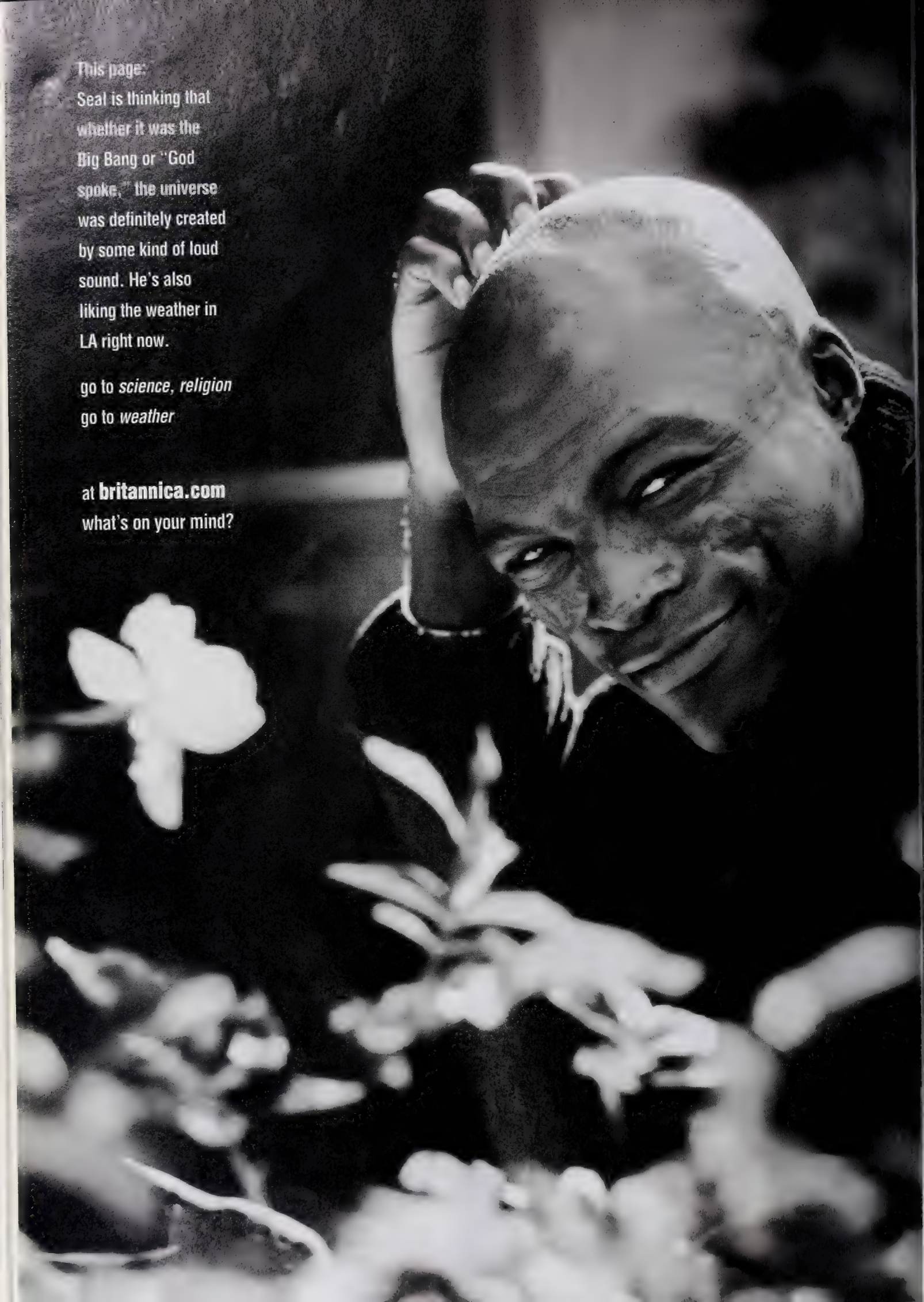


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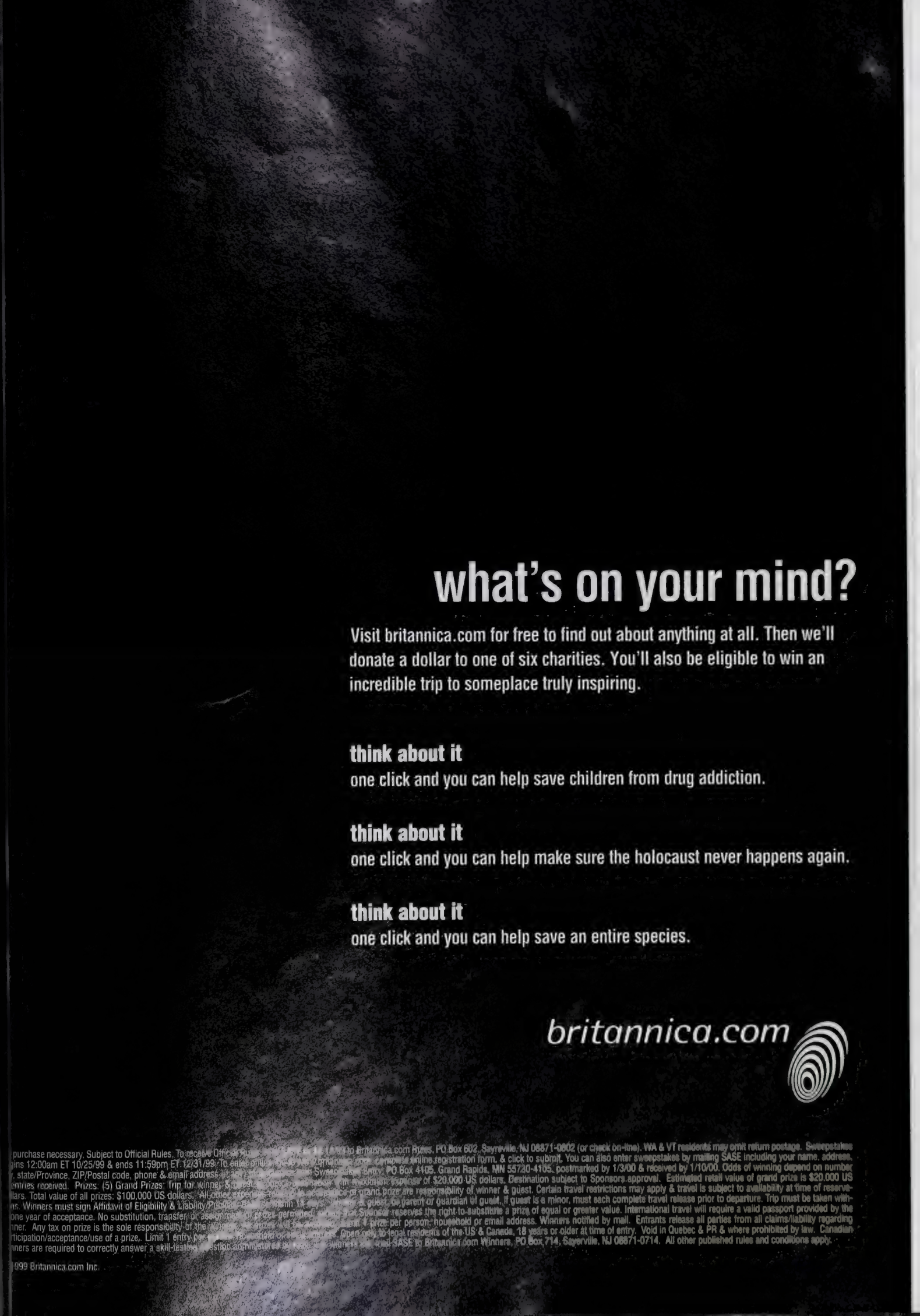
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DOWN AND OUT AT THE HOTEL PROVIDENCE

Scenes from a Bowery flophouse

By Guy Lawson

The Hotel Providence stands at the intersection of Grand Street and the Bowery in lower Manhattan, a nondescript five-story brick building kitty-corner to the Romanesque columns of the long-defunct Bowery Savings Bank. To the west there is the bustle of Little Italy and Soho; to the east there are Latino neighborhoods and the bars and bistros of the gentrifying Lower East Side. The facade of the Hotel Providence is chipped, the paint the color of wan flesh, and the sign advertising its presence is small, inconspicuous in the riot of billboards and storefronts along the Bowery. Days on the Bowery, the streets of Chinatown surrounding the hotel are teeming with pedestrians; passersby hurry along the sidewalk without a sideward glance. Nights, after the lighting-fixture and restaurant-supply stores have rolled down their metal sliding doors, the avenue is deserted, lit only by the thin yellow glow of streetlights and of traffic slowly making its way downtown.

The entrance to the Providence is wedged between a Chinese restaurant and a vegetable market. Inside, beyond the two or three men always loitering in the doorway, a single, steep flight of stairs leads up to a landing, where a clerk sits at the front desk behind a thick glass cage. To the left, there are steel doors that can be opened only by a security buzzer. NO VISITOR, the notices at the front desk say, RENT MUST BE PAID IN 24 HOURS OR ROOM WILL BE EMPTIED, STARTING NOW PEOPLE THROWING SOMETHING OUT THE WINDOW WILL BE KICKED OUT. Rooms at the Providence are let to men only; the price is $10 a night, payment in cash, in advance. Like the few other flophouses still left on America's legendary skid row—the World, the Grand, the Sunshine, the White House, the Prince—the Providence is a remnant from a time when dozens of Bowery hotels offered refuge, of a kind, for a man in need of shelter and alone in the world. In the early twentieth century, when bars and hotels lined the street, some 25,000 men lived on the Bowery. Now, the best estimate is that 6,000 men in New York City are without shelter each night, but there are rooms for only 1,500 of them on the avenue. There is rarely a vacancy at the Providence; the place has 224 boxes crammed into four small floors, and every night the joint is packed.

Bowery flophouses have long offered men a convenient location, with few questions asked and the freedom to come and go. The alternatives, at the end of this century, are few. In the run-down area of Far Rockaway, Queens—21 rail miles, fifty-seven minutes, and a $1.50 subway fare away from the soup kitchens, social services offices, and methadone clinics of Manhattan—there are a growing number of homes illegally operating as boardinghouses. And in poorer neighborhoods throughout New York City's five boroughs, there are furnished basements and spare rooms, rentable on a weekly basis, a trade that is generally under the table and unregulated. After those options, which both usually require a security deposit and as much as a month's rent up front, the choices narrow and harden: a free cot in a city-run shelter, with wide-open rooms, military camp–like rules, and rampant crime; a bed in one of the few church-run missions that continue to operate in lower Manhattan, with the accompanying religious services and demands of sobriety; or, finally, living rough on the street.

Last year, very late one night at the beginning of October, I walked up the stairs of the Hotel Providence. There was a vacancy, so I paid the $10, plus a $5 key deposit, intending to report on a month in the lives of the men and the hotel. For decades, the Providence had

Guy Lawson's last article for Harper's Magazine, *"Hockey Nights: The Tough Skate Through Junior-League Life," appeared in the January 1998 issue.*

een one of a string of Bowery flop-
ouses owned by the same corpora-
on, but recently they had brought
n new management. The new oper-
tors are Chinese, and their sides of
onversations about paying rent, try-
ng to pick up mail, and complaints
ere shouted across the front desk in
actured English.

On the second floor of the hotel, at
ne far side of the security door, a short
ark corridor opened into a large room
ith high, echoing ceilings and scat-
ered tables and chairs. The lobby was
ttered with full ashtrays
nd sleeping cats, and half-
ressed men drifted in and
ut; here was the only
athering place in the ho-
el, the only place to sit out
f the weather, eat, have a
ouple of beers, watch *Wheel of Fortune* on the old
elevision propped in a cor-
er. The marble floor was
racked and riven with
rime, the air thick with
ne smells of men left to
heir own devices. The
indows were stained
rown by generations of
igarette smoke and soot; it
as impossible to see into
he hotel from the street,
mpossible to see out from
he lobby.

At night, before the al-
ohol and drugs had tak-
n hold, the talk in the
obby was muted and
iendly: "How'd you eat
oday?" "Got an extra
moke?" "Burger King has
special, a Junior Whop-
er for ninety-nine cents,
buck seven with tax."
he roach ends of joints
ere passed around, and
ps about horse races and
oup kitchens were ex-
hanged—the closest thing the men
ad to society—until, at nine-thirty
r so, a couple of the regulars went
own to the street to bring up boxes
lled with sandwiches and oranges
nd cartons of milk donated by the
Coalition for the Homeless, and the
ood was set upon, wolflike.

The men went by first names,
icknames, jail names, aliases; the
point of staying in the hotel was to
be left alone, to hide from the law,
family, creditors, the past, oneself,
and the men I met agreed to let me
write about them on the condition
that I didn't reveal their real identi-
ties. Many had become permanent
residents of the Providence, some
having lived there for decades, and
they had gained the legal rights of
tenants under New York law: their
rent raises were controlled by the
city in accordance with the rate at
the time the man first moved in.



Some men were still paying as little
as $4 or $5 a night, and, in theory at
least, they had recourse to the courts
and police to ensure that they were
not evicted. New arrivals, classified
as temporary residents, faced a rule
that wasn't posted but that was uni-
versal on the Bowery and strictly ap-
plied: the most time that the man-
agers permitted a newcomer to stay
was twenty-one nights in a row. The
days each new arrival spent in the
Providence were carefully marked in
a ledger book, and at the end of
twenty-one days he was required to
leave the hotel for a night or two
before he was allowed to
return.

On a Monday night in early
October, after the drink and the
dope had set in and voices in the
lobby began to rise, as always, an ar-
gument broke out. Bobby, a tempo-
rary resident, had picked
a handful of discarded
lottery tickets from the
garbage in the Provi-
dence. The tickets were
losers that had first been
gathered from garbage
cans outside lottery stores
in Chinatown by Dwight,
a permanent resident.
Dwight had already
checked the Quick Draws
for mistakes—a $2 win
that had been chucked
away, a missed combina-
tion, an unnoticed bonus
number—and he had
thrown the tickets away
again himself. He was
wild drunk, though, and
he accused Bobby of
stealing from him.

"I'll kill you. I'll slit
your throat," he yelled as
he pushed Bobby against
the wall.

Two other men, who
wanted me to identify
them only as Tommy the
Shark and Raul, followed
Dwight when he went
out to the bodega to get
more beer. They stopped
Dwight on the street next
to the Providence.

"NYPD," they said.

Pretending to be plainclothes po-
lice officers, Tommy and Raul de-
manded Dwight's ID, searched him
for drugs, and told him to mo
along and stay out of trouble
ward, back in the lobby, D
the other men that th
worked him over. H
afraid to walk outs
just wanted to be le

Photographs by Jeff Mermelstein



THE POWER OF SUNNY DAYS AND COOL BREEZES

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his beer and die. He was too wasted to register that Tommy and Raul had returned and were sitting in a corner watching *Monday Night Football*.

Tuesday morning, Tommy the Shark stood at the corner of the Bowery and Grand Street waiting for Raul. Tommy and Raul had a scam they were working together, Tommy said. He said the shakedown of Dwight the night before had been a kind of payback: Dwight was a punk and a drunk, and Bobby was harmless and couldn't defend himself. Tommy and Raul had met in the Providence lobby only a few nights earlier, but they were fast friends. Tommy was five feet eight inches of nerve and cadge, dressed in a pair of jeans with a tear at the knee, a light blue jacket, and scuffed white high-tops. That morning he had spent twenty-five cents on a pack of JJ's Flavor Filled Cupcakes for breakfast, and his last dollar had gone for a new pair of black tube socks. Clean socks are the most important thing to a man on the bum, he said: clean socks, a shower, a shave, a decent haircut. "Thirty-five years old," Tommy said, "and for the first time in my life I can't even afford fucking underwear." He said he was losing weight fast, ten pounds in the week since his mother had kicked him out of the house. He was already three days behind in rent at the Providence, and he was worried that the owners would put a padlock on his room; before Raul had explained that Tommy might be able to sneak past the front desk to his room without paying, Tommy had spent two nights that week on the street, one night catching some sleep in a booth in a West Side bar where he knew the bartender, the other night wandering the streets aimlessly, sleeplessly, until he had passed out on a park bench and had been roused by a beat cop.

It was past ten-thirty, and Tommy was growing impatient. He began to walk uptown along the Bowery, past the strip of cheap restaurants and hair salons and the True Love Wedding Center. Tommy said he had good eyes, street eyes—they were brown and sharp and constantly darting from side to side—and he spotted Raul while he was still a dot in the distance. Raul, who lived at another $10-a-night Bowery flo house, the White House, was lar and soft, with an open smile and loose-limbed walk. He called eve one "Papi," a Latino term of affe tion. "Sorry I'm late, Papi," Ra said. "I slept in a little bit." On t subway ride uptown, Raul's forehe was beaded with sweat. The eigh milligrams of methadone he to daily were kicking in, and his ey had turned glassy and spare. Tom fingered the police badge in l pocket. The badge was shiny a gold, a real police ID from Nor Carolina, which a friend had giv him years ago. Tommy and Raul to me about the scam they were wor ing: they were on their way to extc money from a Manhattan store ow er by impersonating undercov cops. Shouting over the rattle an screech of the subway, they r hearsed their lines and reviewed th plot. They were, they said, "gettir into the zone."

"What name did you use on Sur day?" Tommy asked Raul.

Raul paused for a moment. "De tective Ramirez," he said, remembe ing, "and you're Sergeant Kramer."

"I'm not flashing my badge thi time," Tommy said. "A real dete tive, he doesn't flash his badge fiv times. You do it once, people kno who you are."

Raul said Tommy should do mo of the talking. "I'm going to hang back Papi," Raul said. "I'll come in har when we get down to the money."

Tommy was a finesse con: h looked for angles, watched for weak nesses no one else noticed, and h never used violence to get money though the suggestion of violence wa kind of the same thing, really, he said Raul said he was a poet and a forme heroin junkie; he made his livin shoplifting steaks from supermarket He had never worked a scam before but he was trying to learn somethin new from Tommy, expand his hori zons. On the subway, Tommy an Raul became worried that the polic might read this article and come afte them, so I promised to change de tails—the kind of store, the owner' name, the location—that might iden tify the scam. The story Tommy an Raul told me of the setup was this



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two days earlier, they had been walking from the Bowery to the Upper East Side to search for a way to hustle a few quick bucks. Late in the afternoon, after most of the shops had closed, Tommy had noticed a hobo type of guy walking into an electronics store carrying a CD player. Tommy watched and waited, and when the bum came out without the CD player Tommy stopped him and asked if the store would buy goods, no questions asked. "No problem," the guy said. "Whatever you got." "This is criminal activity," Tommy said he was thinking, "receiving stolen property." Tommy and Raul went inside, and Tommy flashed his badge, carefully palming it to hide the mark of the jurisdiction. The owner was a fat old lady who looked like a pit bull. Her name was Constance, and she was counting money; she had maybe a couple hundred bucks in her hand. Tommy said he spoke calmly to her.

"Women don't understand a payoff," Tommy said as the express train raced uptown.

"Not to put women down," Raul added earnestly.

"I know she is a fence," Tommy said. "And I'll tell you one thing: you can't con an honest person."

Out of the subway and onto the streets of the Upper East Side, Tommy and Raul tried to convince themselves that she would have the payoff ready for them. Tommy told me he knew all the inner workings of the New York Police Department, the hierarchies and precincts and operations; *NYPD Blue* was his favorite TV show. "If the bitch doesn't have the money," Tommy said, "I'm telling her I'm going to send in the safe, loft, and truck squad. Go through every piece of inventory in her store and demand receipts for everything." Drawing nearer to the store, Tommy and Raul grew visibly

ANOTHER MAN, WHO COULDN'T MUSTER THE PRICE OF A ROOM, TRIED TO SELL ANYTHING HE HAD COME ACROSS: BIC RAZORS, A BROKEN WATCH, A SNOWSUIT

"I see you have a good business here. You're probably a family person," he said. "You don't want to get in trouble with the law." Constance just looked at him like she didn't know what he was talking about. Tommy told her he had seen the bum come in with the CD player and he had questioned him and he knew that she was buying stolen goods. "I wasn't trying to see what I saw, and I don't want to file a report," Tommy told her. "I don't want to do anything to hurt a friend." Tommy was sure Constance thought they were cops; the quality of the acting was too good. Raul said he had wanted to strong-arm her and take the cash in her hand then and there, but Tommy was patient. Tommy was laying the groundwork for a second visit: he was planning to come back and collect an envelope stuffed with cash. Constance had denied Tommy's accusation, though, and they weren't sure that she knew what was expected of her.

nervous. Tommy's strut became uneven and he started to talk too loudly, mounting his indignation at Constance's lawlessness. Raul began to lag behind. They cut in to a McDonald's to use the bathroom. While Tommy was gone, Raul wiped the sweat from his face and said he was worried: he was down for crime, but he had only known Tommy a few days, and he didn't know if Tommy was crazy or not. Tommy was a force of nature, Raul said. They left McDonald's urging each other on.

"Get in the zone."

"Stay in the zone."

Five minutes later Tommy and Raul were back at the McDonald's. The store was closed. Tommy was desperate and wanted to wait until Constance opened for business; the attendant in the parking lot next door said the store was usually open at that time of day. Raul seemed relieved: he wanted to split and kill the rest of the day in the reading room of a public library downtown, where he passed most afternoons. Traffic on the street was backed up, horns were blaring, and an argument started between a taxi driver and a muscle-bound man in a Chevy. The large man got out of his car and came at the cabbie. Tommy took his badge from the breast pocket of his shirt and claimed he was going to break it up.

"I think it's good the store was closed," Raul said to Tommy. "Maybe somebody was looking out for us."

The lobby of the Providence, the point of return at dark, filled with men as the sun set and the coming winter began to chill the nights. The men were mostly white and Hispanic. The permanent residents and regulars, like Raul, were in their late thirties and forties and older, though many looked decades beyond their years. Stevie, a gaunt methadone junkie, his complexion deathly pale, sat at a table and drank a bottle of Wild Irish Rose; Turk, dressed in shorts and a canvas sun hat, shared the leftover wonton and tofu he had collected from a Chinese restaurant across the street. In one corner, a man silently played scales on his portable Casio electric piano, the headphones askew, his face expressionless. Another man, who couldn't muster the price of a room but was allowed to spend his evenings in the lobby, tried to sell anything he had come across in his wanderings that might have value: Bic razors, a broken watch, a snowsuit. The transients were younger, in their twenties and thirties; new men turned up in the lobby on most nights.

The Providence was originally built in the 1880s as a place for sailors to sleep off their shore-leave drunks. At the time, places like the Providence were known as "cage hotels"; then, as now, the "rooms" weren't, in any real sense, rooms at all: most were cubicles measuring three and a half feet wide, six feet long, and eight feet high. The walls were flimsy wooden partitions, there were no windows in most rooms, and chicken wire was strung over the top in place of a ceiling. Among the varieties of shelter once available on



he Bowery—"barrel ouses," which pro- ded a place to sit out the rain in exchange r the purchase of keg eer; "rope houses," ith ropes strung ross the room for en to lean against as ey tried to sleep anding up; "flop- uses," often amount- g to nothing more an a roof overhead d a space on the oor of an open om—the cage hotels, ith a private "room" d chicken-wire ceil- gs, were relatively market; they have come what are now own generically as phouses.

The second floor of he Providence was divided between e lobby and the rooms mostly oc- pied by permanent residents. Up- airs, each of the floors had reputa- ons for violence and danger that aried depending on who was talk- g: the third floor was safe, the urth and fifth infested with drug alers; the fourth was all right, but e third and fifth were crazy risky. y room was on the fourth floor, ear Tommy the Shark's and Ste- e's. Whenever I opened the door, was met by a waft of rank, dead air. side, a rickety metal-frame cot ith a piece of plywood under a afer-thin mattress was covered by a ngle torn sheet pocked with ciga- tte burns; pillows and blanket eren't provided. The room was inted in two tones, dull green and ll red, and there was one exposed ghtbulb and one hook and Spanish affiti scratched on the wall next to faded poster of an Indian chief and note taped in a corner that said, ST A REMINDER . . . TO KEEP TRYING. he bathroom was at the far end of e floor, four toilet stalls for more an sixty men, the tiling cracked d filthy and marked with scrawl- gs of FLUSH DON'T BE A PIG and reats and counterthreats, claims d counterclaims, that someone as a HOMO who TAKES IT UP THE ASS. In the dead of night, the man in the next room moaned in his sleep, his low cries joining the chorus of hacking coughs and wheezes and the deep guttural rasp of throat-cleared phlegm sounding throughout the hotel. Roaches crawled across the floor and walls, and small, airborne, biting midges lit on the sheets. Some men tried to control these plagues with sprays and chemical bombs, but most just tried to live with them. That first night, like the protagonist in "An Experiment in Misery," Stephen Crane's 1894 short story about a young man staying in a Bowery flophouse, I didn't sleep at all.

Mornings came early at the Providence, stirrings beginning just after dawn, voices calling out, televisions turned on, radios tuned to Howard Stern and salsa and all-news stations. Sleepout Jackie, a longtime resident, lived a few doors away on the fourth floor. Sleepout ran a kind of restaurant out of his room, a "chuck wagon," he called it: he sold heros and meatball sandwiches for a dollar each. His walls were covered with newspaper clippings of old-time gangster crimes and columns *Newsday* journalist Jimmy Breslin had written about Sleepout's days as a street beggar on the Upper East Side. Sleepout said he had been attacked with a machete once, and he stayed clear of the lobby at night because there were too many fights. Stevie, the methadone junkie who lived one hallway over, had battled with Sleepout, and Sleepout had thrown buckets of cold water through the chicken wire of Stevie's room.

In the Providence, I soon discovered, there was little interaction among the men apart from the evening gatherings in the lobby and in a nook at the back of the second floor, where some went to smoke joints. The rooms were too small to fit a visitor. Conversations in the hallways and the stairs were brief and perfunctory; the longtime residents knew one another and took vague notice of comings and goings, of illnesses and arrests and deaths, but there were few friendships. There were occasional low-budget visitors stopping at the hotel, like the college graduate from the Midwest who worked as a bike courier in Manhattan and quickstepped his way to his room each evening, or the two young French hipsters in black leather pants and silk shirts who checked in one night to cop heroin. For the residents, though, the Providence's drug dealers were a

constant and watchful presence. Sleep was difficult, impossible when a drunken argument started. The stench was close and tangible; the temper, lawless.

Detective Robert Suschinsky from the 5th Precinct, who regularly checked the hotel's register for men with outstanding warrants and who was often called in to collect the corpse of an alcoholic or junkie who had died in his sleep, told me the police wouldn't send undercover cops into the hotel because most of the men there had done time in jail and they could smell anyone who didn't belong there. It was too dangerous, he said, not worth risking an officer's life.

Thursday morning, two days after Tommy and Raul's failed shakedown, an NYPD cruiser was parked on the Bowery in front of the Providence. Tommy was hanging out in front of the hotel with Stevie. "There was a murder last night," Stevie said. A man had been stabbed in the chest twenty-four times a few doors down on the Bowery, and the man the police suspected in the killing was a resident of the Providence; he had run up the street and up the stairs of the hotel. Stevie said he knew the guy the police were after: he had tried to sell Stevie a bag of heroin the night before. "The cops have videotape of him," Stevie said. "Turns out there's a camera behind the counter of the front desk. Six and a half years I've lived in this place, and I had no fucking clue about the camera. No one knew."

Uniformed and plainclothes officers were coming and going from the hotel. Tommy stood to one side, leaning against the wall just out of their sight. On the landing beside the front desk, the police were combing through the garbage bags searching for evidence. Tommy had changed his shirt and jacket; he said he was lying low for a while. He had stashed his badge under the mattress in his room and was worried that the police hunting for leads in the murder would search his room and come across it. "They need a warrant to go into my room, right?" he asked me.

Two real detectives stopped to talk at the entrance of the hotel, and Tommy suggested a walk. He took epic walks every day to kill time and look for action, wandering uptown along Fifth Avenue to Central Park, back down the West Side to the Village and Wall Street. Tommy told me that one of the permanent residents had threatened to kill me or any reporter who came to the hotel, and on this walk I decided to stop staying at the Providence overnight. Tommy had a con he was working in Washington Square Park, he told me, as we pushed through the crowds of Chinatown. His walk was straight-legged, an open-toed strut, and he stopped dead in his tracks when an attractive woman crossed his path. He stared at the women fully and frankly, and he moaned and winced and called out, "Oh, baby, oh, baby baby." Tommy said it was impossible for a man on the bum to get a piece of ass: he didn't have the money to even buy a woman a cup of coffee; he had nowhere to take a broad.

Tommy said he had run into an old friend from college named Harry walking down Broadway the day before. They had taken a history course together, he said, and the guy was now a stockbroker and had made $400,000 in each of the past two years. Tommy had told Harry that things weren't going so great for him, and Harry had opened his wallet and slipped Tommy twenty bucks. Harry's wallet was snakeskin, Tommy said, and he had only one card in it, a platinum American Express. Tommy's wallet, on the other hand, was falling apart and was thick with debris from his past: the pawn tickets for the watch and the diamond pinkie ring he had hocked, the registration for a Cadillac sedan that he said had been repossessed, dozens of business cards of police officers and lawyers and contacts in the import/export industry. The snapshots of his parents—his mother with a blue-rinse dye, his father in the dress uniform of a federal cop—were fading and torn at the corners.

Washington Square Park was filled with students and tourists spending the day in the autumn sun. Tommy searched through the block for the woman he was scamming. She had a table with a display of trinkets for sale, Tommy said, and he had flashed his badge and asked to see her street vendor's license. She didn't have one and he had let it pass, but now he thought he might pay her a visit and hit her up for a few bucks in return for not arresting her. He said he was staying in the Providence because he was in the middle of a run of bad luck. He told a long and involved tale of $180,000 worth of ladies' clothes sitting in a warehouse in the United Arab Emirates that he owned but couldn't get released because his former partner in the import/export business had skipped town with all of Tommy's money. Tommy's stories overlapped and spun back on one another: stories of "made" guys like Hank the Bank and Philly Dogs from his childhood neighborhood, his failed marriage, his years in the army, lawsuits he had pending, the specifics of thieving he had and hadn't done, the thousand-dollar Italian suits he had once worn. He said he had no intention of getting a job, because he was overqualified for any kind of regular work. He said he had always gambled; if he had a spare dollar, often his last dollar, he spent it on the New York Lottery. He always played the same number, the only number, he said, that had never won.

Tommy couldn't find the street vendor in the park. He said the reason he was on the Bowery again was that his mother had kicked him out of her apartment in Queens. He had secretly run up $1,000 worth of calls on her telephone account calling the Middle East trying to chase down his former partner, trying to get the women's clothes released from the warehouse outside Dubai. His mother had been furious when she discovered the bill. "I'm ashamed to talk to my mother," he said. "She's on a fixed income, she's an old lady. She doesn't need her only son giving her shit."

Tommy wanted to walk over to an outdoor basketball court at the corner of West Fourth Street and Sixth Avenue. He had met a ball player there the other day, and the guy was big and fast and good, good enough for the pros, Tommy said. He had

d the player that he was a lawyer d an agent and that he could get n a contract in the Continental sketball Association. The basket- l court was deserted, and there was sign of the player. "The thing I'm st worried about is my dog," Tom- said as we turned back for the wery. Tommy had left his pet poo- at his mother's apartment. "I just pe my mother's taking care of the g, feeding her, taking her for walks, getting her groomed."

n mid-October the new manage- ent of the Providence began to novate the premises. Sheets of dry- all and planks of lumber were cked in a corner of the second- or lobby, their purpose unex- ained. On the fifth floor workers re adding steel caging to the tops the rooms; the caging reached to e ceiling and made it impossible men to climb the walls and cut e chicken wire and sneak into eir rooms, or into another man's om. The toilets on the fifth floor re being torn out, to be replaced with two new toilets and two shower stalls; the showers were new, but now there were two fewer toilets. The new management was slowly working its way down through the hotel, Stevie said, and they were going to add the steel caging and redo the bathrooms on all the floors.

Meanwhile, for the permanent residents, there was routine—eat, sleep, try to hold down a minimum-wage job maybe, wait for a welfare check to arrive at the front desk, somehow get the money to cop drugs, watch game shows and ball games in the lobby. One night in the middle of October, a man died in his sleep. He was an old alcoholic who had been at the Providence for years, and his death was the subject of conversation for an evening and then forgotten.

For the temporary residents, the passing time was punctuated by the onrush of the twenty-one-day limit. Tommy had been in the hotel for two weeks, and the time limit was closing in fast. Bobby, designated homeless by social services despite the room at the Providence that he was able to afford for part of each month, shuffled in at night, exhausted from his days at workfare, and ate what food he had managed to scrounge: sandwiches from a soup kitchen, noodles from a Chinatown take-out joint, the leftover wonton that Turk gave him.

Raul came to the lobby every night near the time the food from the Coalition for the Homeless arrived; he relied upon the lobby, he said. The twenty-one-day limit applied at Raul's flophouse, as it did at most of the Bowery hotels still open for business, but Raul had made a "lease request," and he had stopped paying rent, hoping the owners didn't have the power to make him leave while the request was pending. He had a crumpled, tattered copy of a circular entitled "Tenants' Rights" distributed by a free legal services office in the neighborhood. "The hotel is not allowed to do anything to keep you from becoming a permanent tenant with full rights," the advice said. "The so-called 21 days agreements are not legal or enforceable." One night, more than a week after he and Tommy had tried to ex-



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tort money from Constance, Raul came to the lobby carrying a handful of [illegible] steaks he had [illegible] from supermarkets that day. Raul said he was exhausted; he was sweating and was high from the reefer he had just smoked to take the edge off the methadone. He said shoplifting was hard work—risky, tense. Raul was warm and quick to please, and he had the remnants of an easy charm. He said he had a strong leaning toward spirituality and philosophy. In college he had written a long paper on the notion of cause and effect, and he said he thought about the question a lot. The narrator of Robert Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* had nearly lost his mind trying to fathom the great questions, he said, and he reminded Raul of himself. "For everything that occurs," Raul said, "there's an antecedent cause. And I'm saying, 'How can I improve my life by creating better causes day to day?' It comes down to taking responsibility for your life and realizing that problems are an integral part of everyone's existence."

Raul had traced the beginnings of his troubles in many directions: his mother's mental illness, growing up without ever meeting his father, the crack plague of the 1980s, a girlfriend's fatal overdose. He had been a crack addict in his twenties, nearly committing suicide in the trough of one of his deep depressions, and he had turned to heroin in his thirties; he used methadone now, with the occasional joint when he could get a couple of dollars together. Raul showed me his book of poetry, a thick black spiral binder with 166 worn and dog-eared pages. He had stopped writing when he became homeless. He had shown the collection to only a few friends: words were sacred things to him, he said.

On a Sunday morning in mid-October, the real-estate section of the *New York Times* carried a story about a businessman who had converted the derelict upper floors of a building on the Bowery into lofts that were "so chic, so decidedly hip" that they merited a feature article. The economic boom in New York City in the 1990s, which had gentrified poorer neighborhoods in every borough, had passed the Bowery by until now. A local residents' association had started to complain about the bums on the avenue and pressure the government for the removal of one of the Bowery rescue missions. Buildings along the avenue had been neglected for generations, so the area was relatively cheap, and, because it is also centrally located, multimillion-dollar conversions into lofts had begun, slowly, to transform the Bowery. In the *Times*, the businessman said he called his new frontier Boho, a play on "bohemian," of course, and on the name of the nearby shopping district of Soho. But also an inversion of the word "hobo."

The same Sunday morning, on the fourth floor of the Providence, Stevie's cat spilled his daily dose of methadone. At nightfall, Tommy saw Stevie walking up the stairs to the fifth floor with the sleeves of his shirt rolled up and a $10 bill in his hand. Stevie told Tommy that he was going to buy heroin. The next morning an NYPD van circled the block outside the hotel, its loudspeaker blaring in a monotone voice on a recorded loop asking pedestrians for any information relating to the murder on the Bowery the week before. Stevie came down the stairs of the hotel slowly, little more than five steps a minute. He looked as though he might fall at any moment. He was thin and disheveled, his chest concave, his long blond hair stringy and greasy. His sharp blue eyes were bloodshot; his perfect white set of false teeth was missing, and his face had collapsed in on itself. Stevie said he was feeling bad, "real bad." He asked if he could borrow a dollar, and he bought a caramel candy at the store next door.

Stevie was a III, the third man in his family to carry his name. He said he had been raised in a wealthy Long Island village. His parents still lived in a big house, with eight or nine bedrooms, he said, and in his hometown there were estates with private helicopter pads and $5 million mansions. The day before his cat spilled his methadone, I had gone with Stevie as he stopped by one of the few soup kitchens operating in lower Manhattan. Stevie said he was thirty-seven, though his sagging face and stooped manner made him appear many years older. He had been an auto mechanic, specializing in imports such as BMWs and Porsches. He said he had $10,000 worth of tools in the garage at his parents' house, along with a stash of methadone pills he was hoarding for the day he would wean himself off the drug by lessening his dose little by little. Unlike Tommy and Raul, who didn't get any public assistance and who were, for official purposes, nonexistent, Stevie received $192 a month in a housing allowance, $120 in food stamps, and a further $200 in welfare. Unlike Bobby, who also received government money, Stevie didn't have to meet the obligations of workfare to receive his stipend. Stevie had broken his back in a car accident, had broken his knees in a variety of falls over the years, and was subject to petit and grand mal seizures; he was also addicted to Klonapin, an anticonvulsant, which he said he took to stave off seizures. With his disabilities, he said, it was all he could manage to rise with the dawn every day, smoke half a dozen cigarettes before getting out of bed, and then set out on the twenty-five-block walk uptown to his methadone clinic; the clinic was closed on the Sabbath, which was why Stevie had had had his dose sitting on his bedside table.

Stevie paid only $6.25 a night at the Providence, the same rate he had paid since he first arrived six and a half years earlier, but he said his income wasn't enough to survive on. He often borrowed from loan sharks in the hotel: ten bucks doubled to twenty in a couple of days with some sharks; with others, the rates were lower and a loan of fifty became seventy-five. Stevie's mother sent him cash by Priority Mail, and she had set up a private toll-free 800 number for him to phone home, to save the charges he had long run up by calling collect; he phoned his mother

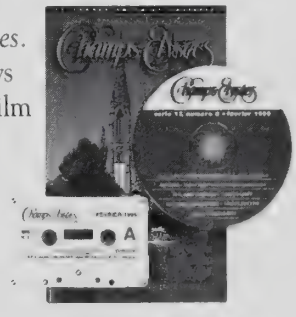
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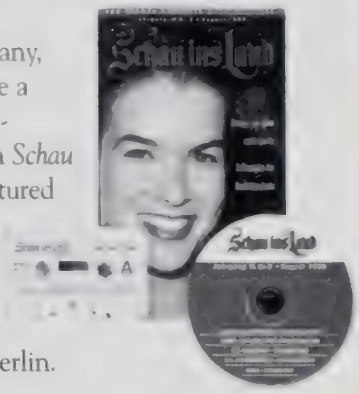
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every day, sometimes dozens of times a day, from a pay phone at the corner of Grand Street and the Bowery. He said that he wanted to move back home with his parents but that they wouldn't let him until he entered a detox program and got clean. Stevie had tried a number of times over the years to kick drugs, but he had never succeeded. "You ever heard the saying 'Misery loves company'?" he asked me. "You come out of rehab and you're doing real good, you've got your weight back, you've got your color back, and right away the drug dealers in the Providence are going to give you drugs for free."

Stevie said a lot of men who came to the Providence wound up dead. John, a neighbor of Stevie's, had been found with a needle in his neck eight months earlier. John was once an enforcer for a gangster named Matty the Horse, Stevie said; John was a big guy with muscles, but he was a junkie and got full-blown AIDS, and when he died he was nothing but skin and bones. John had lived in the room next to Stevie's on the fourth floor, and after his body had sat rotting for two days Stevie could smell something was wrong and had climbed up on the door handle and peered in through the chicken wire. John was sitting up in bed, stone dead; he looked like he had seen the devil, Stevie said.

Stevie's room was a few doors down from Tommy's, and he had an old television set on a shelf, posters of sports cars on the walls, dirty clothes and porn magazines strewn in a small metal locker. He had cut a hole in the chicken wire so that his cat, Malaka, could come and go as he pleased, and the sheets on Stevie's bed were filthy and pocked with cigarette burns, the remains of the times he had passed out while smoking. "My mother has no idea how I'm living," he said. "What I'm going to do, I don't care if it costs me every cent I've got, I'm going to get a fucking camera, one of those disposable cameras, and I'm going to take pictures of the fucking hotel, and I'm going to send them to all my relatives."

That afternoon, when we got back from the soup kitchen, a man was waiting for Stevie in the hallway outside his room. The man was mangy, with a three-day beard and a ponytail drawn back on his head, and he stood close in on Stevie; he was one of the men I had seen loitering in front of the Providence day and night. Stevie had borrowed $3 from the man the day before for a pack of smokes. The man asked Stevie if he had the five bucks he now owed, the extra $2 amounting to interest on the day-long loan. Stevie pulled four crumpled singles from his pocket. The man counted the money. "That's not the deal," he said to Stevie. "I'll give you the rest tomorrow," Stevie said. "That's not the deal," the man said angrily, and he stepped closer to him. I quickly reached into my pocket for a dollar, but in the moment of threat, in the time it takes menace to become fact, a door behind us opened and the man who lived across the hall from Stevie held out a dollar—Stevie and his neighbor watched out for each other, Stevie later told me. The loan shark took the man's dollar and he took my dollar, then he stared hard at Stevie and told him he'd better not fuck with him again.

Bobby returned to the Providence on Wednesday, after staying two nights in a warehouse in Queens because his twenty-one days had expired. He was unshaven and his hair was a mass of knots; his clothes were creased and stained. His tics—constantly sniffing and coughing, licking his upper lip raw, clearing his throat—had grown worse with the stress of displacement and the lack of sleep. A few nights away from the hotel had become part of what passed for the structure of each month for Bobby. He received $200 a month from workfare, plus $122 in food stamps and $15 every two weeks for subway fare to his Work Experience Program job, but the lunch money the city once provided for its unpaid workers had been taken away by the administration of Mayor Giuliani, and even with the workfare money, Bobby couldn't afford to pay $10 a night to the Providence for the whole month, regardless of the twenty-one-day rule. The "stuck period," as he called it, the week or so that inevitably fell short of the price fo room, was looming. The refuge had found in the warehouse Queens wasn't near public tra portation, and he had no way of g ting to work from the warehouse a had already fallen behind in workfare obligation; like more th 180,000 citizens of New York Ci under the terms of the welfare refo law President Clinton signed in law in 1996, Bobby had to work no pay two days each week. In or to avoid the disaster of being c from the rolls, which had happen three times in the past six mont Bobby now had to catch up on obligation by working four ex days. "I don't know how long I c keep this up," he said.

Two days later I went with Bob to his workfare job outside Manh tan. The sky was blue and cloudle and there was a sharp, chill wind the air. Bobby was back in the Pro dence, but he said he hadn't sle there had been screaming argume through the night. He had left t hotel at 7:30 A.M. and caught t subway to work; he had treated hi self to an Egg McMuffin, and us the washroom at McDonald's. H carried a plastic shopping bag wi him everywhere he went—he kep bottle of tap water in the bag, a toilet paper, napkins, newspape and the leftovers of any food he h saved—and he stashed the bag in t park's work house before starting labors.

Bobby's work duties, the expe ence he was meant to be acquirin consisted of helping with the gene maintenance of a small park in pleasant section of Queens, with t raced houses and tidy low-rise apa ment blocks and folks walking po dles and schnauzers and you mothers playing on the swings wi their toddlers. He wasn't provid with work clothes, and he said o of the worst things was that his reg lar clothes were getting ruined. T only pair of jeans he had that fit h were dirty, and his shirts were co stantly being ripped on thorns. H had no money to replace what w torn or wrecked; the $16 he had r cently been forced to spend on

ew pair of shoes had been a major etback in his monthly budget. He sked me to keep a distance from im in the park because his supervi- or was a city worker who was para- oid about getting into any sort of rouble. Still, in unguarded mo- ents, unwatched by his supervisor, obby worked steadily, raking leaves nto large piles, bagging the leaves, icking up garbage tumbling along he sidewalk.

In the lobby of the Providence at ight, apart from passing greetings ith his few acquaintances, Bobby ept to himself. He didn't drink or ake drugs. There were men who ould let him store his possessions in heir room when he was forced to eave every month, or when he fell hort of the money required, but he ad no friends in the hotel. Dwight outinely threatened to kill Bobby for ouble-checking the lottery tickets Dwight had thrown away. The only aw in the Providence is "every man or himself," Bobby said. He said he ould stay out of the lobby entirely ut the roaches and bugs made it im- ossible for him to eat in his room. He had a small black-and-white TV n his room, and his favorite thing to atch was figure skating; he loved the implicity and grace.

During the days when he wasn't at orkfare, Bobby loitered at the cor- er of the Bowery and Grand Street, or e drifted through the streets of Chi- atown collecting discarded soda cans or the nickel refunds; if he was lucky, n a week the money could add up to night's rent at the Providence. The ast for-pay job he had found was al- most a year ago, as a janitor at a Mc- Donald's on Long Island, but he had een fired after four days because he adn't been able to work fast enough. There had been other jobs over the ears, all at minimum wage and none f which had lasted: security guard, elemarketer, clerk in a record store, a ob he liked because music was his fa- orite subject and he was expert in ar- ane pop trivia. When he was in col- ege, Bobby had hoped to get into film r television, but he said he had no narketable skills and no experience nd those facts continued to plague im. He was nearing forty now, and he as trying to find some way to ge

workfare, but it was difficult without a permanent address or a telephone number, without a good night's sleep to calm his spirits. He had asked his caseworker if he could get assistance with finding a furnished room, but the caseworker had told him that the only choice Bobby had was to apply to live in a shelter; under the new guidelines of the city, unless Bobby was homeless and living on the street or working at a for-pay job, he wouldn't receive a high priority for public housing. "'I don't know what to tell you,'" Bobby said the caseworker told him.

"As you get older, people don't want to be bothered with you," Bobby said. "You know, those washout ages like twenty-nine or thirty. If you want to accomplish something by a certain point, you know, you're probably not going to do anything if you haven't by then. Most of my friends, they weren't wealthy, they were middle-class, but they had more than enough, and it was hard for them to understand my situation. They would try to help me sometimes. It became very hard, because I became afraid of rejection."

Later on the day that I went with Bobby to his workfare, the sun disappeared behind a cover of clouds, and the park became cold and deserted. Bobby had worked as diligently as he could, pausing only for a moment to exchange greetings with a couple of elderly ladies out for a stroll. In the blocks surrounding the park, there were police barriers and trucks and hundreds of NYPD cops. Since it was October, the congressional elections were in the news every day, and one of the policemen said there had been a political rally in the neighborhood for the Democratic candidate for the Senate, with President Clinton as the featured speaker. The presidential motorcade had passed within a hundred yards of the park that morning, under the embrace of an autumn sun, out of sight of Bobby raking the fallen leaves.

Monday night in the third week of October, the windows in the lobby had been cleaned for the first time ever, seemingly, and the light from the outside world was startling-

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ly bright, the shining glass gleaming the reflection of the men back at themselves. There was a football game on TV, but the room was mostly abandoned: there were still police officers staking out the fourth and fifth floors, hoping the suspected murderer would return, and the majority of the men in the Providence kept low profiles, out of the way of any encounter with the law. Tommy the Shark was sitting in a corner of the lobby. He had gone out to his mother's apartment in Brooklyn earlier and rung the bell, but she hadn't answered and there was no sign of her; he hadn't heard his poodle barking. He had lurked around for three hours, careful to avoid meeting any of the neighbors. Then, Tommy said, he had gone to a bar on the West Side and met with Harry, the stockbroker who was an old friend from college, and he had convinced Harry to front $10,000 for them to start an import/export consulting business together. The problem, Tommy said, was that he didn't have any money to eat and pay for his room. He was behind in his rent and was worried he would be kicked out of the Providence, even before he reached twenty-one days.

Upstairs, the renovations continued apace: the bathroom on the fourth floor had been demolished, and steel caging had been added to join the tops of the boxes with the ceiling; the work was rapidly nearing the main floor. The new owners were offering some of the permanent residents a cash settlement to leave the hotel and relinquish their claim to a room. It was common for the permanent residents to fall behind in their rent, some by as much as 500 days, and it was expensive and difficult for the owners to get the men evicted. The payout was, relatively speaking, a cheap solution. The amounts varied, but the maximum was $500, and Turk and some others had accepted the sum.

At nine o'clock, just after the kickoff of *Monday Night Football*, as I sat in my usual corner in the lobby, a young Chinese couple entered the room. The dozen or so men sitting around turned, amazed: no one had ever seen a woman in the lobby before. There were rumors that one of the drug dealers on the fifth floor was hiding a crack-addicted prostitute in his room, but none of the men had actually seen her. The young man and woman were both well-dressed and carrying luggage, and they had dazed looks on their faces as they stared at the men splayed around the room. "Hey, honey, what's going on?" Tommy said. "Come sit over here with me." The young couple walked down the hallway and opened the door of the room on the main floor that they had taken and then whispered furiously; it was one of the few double-wide rooms in the hotel, but, like all the rest of the boxes, its ceiling was chicken wire. Two minutes later they passed quickly through the lobby, still carrying their luggage, and disappeared into the night.

By the end of the third week of October, there was no way to get into the lobby. The second floor of the Providence had been turned into a construction site, and the ceiling echoed with carpenters banging nails and sawing wood. The piles of drywall and lumber began to shrink as the lobby was changed from one room into two. No one was quite sure what was going on. The men said that one room was going to be the lobby for men, the other for female residents; women, it was rumored, were going to take over the main floor. The rates were going to go up, it was said—$12 a night, $15 a night, no one was sure how much. The renovations were nearly complete, the new bathrooms and shower stalls in place. Other hotels along the Bowery that had once been flophouses had been redone recently, and the owners had started to rent by the night to tourists, some charging as much as $30 and $40.

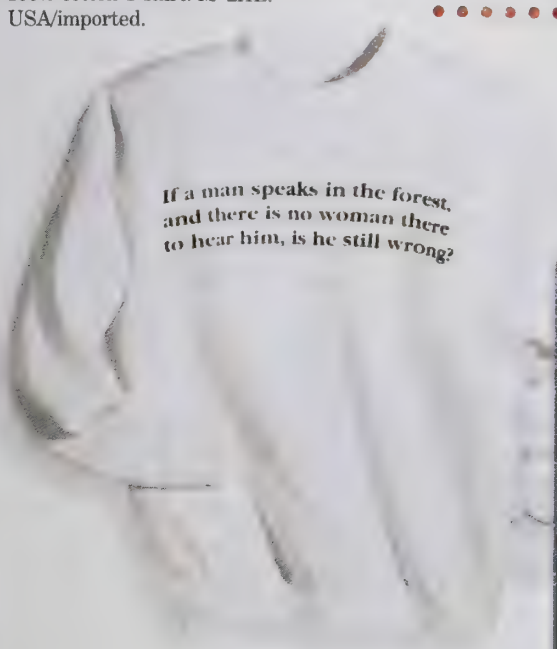
Late in the week, a small article buried in the bottom corner of a page in the middle of the *New York Post* carried the headline "Bowery man held in fatal stabbing." It was reported that a man who had been a resident on the fourth floor of the Providence had been arrested. He had killed one man and seriously wounded two others, it was said. He had been subdued by a security gu and an auxiliary cop after he had tacked a Chinatown shoe-store ov er with a knife in broad daylight. "stabbed people who rubbed him wrong way," the article said. T shoe-store owner had looked at h in a manner he found offensive. C of the other stabbings had be caused when he got angry at a m who spat on the sidewalk.

The same day that the *Post* st ran, Stevie rose early and walked his methadone clinic, then cau the train out to visit his parents Long Island. He did his laundry, h a shower, and picked up a win jacket and thermal underwear; h mother gave him boxes of cereal jar of peanut butter, and a few ca of soup, and she slipped him $2 His mother was pushing the idea him getting into a detox progra Stevie said when he got back to t hotel that night. He said he was se ously considering trying to qu methadone and the pills he w hooked on. There was a place in t city called The Realization Cent that he was thinking of trying.

The next day Tommy told m that Stevie wouldn't leave his roo or answer the door, that he was re ly depressed, suicidal even. I we upstairs and found Stevie watchi his television with a leather be shaped into a tourniquet on the b next to him, his shirt marked wi drops of blood. He asked me if would buy him a cup of coffee. W went to a bakery on the Bowery, a he chain-smoked cigarettes, his fi gers yellowed with nicotine stai He ate lemon rolls. He said he h walked by an automotive-repair sh just off the Bowery that specializ in imports and, for a moment, co templated going inside and applyi for a job, but the place was a dum and he didn't want to risk using h tools and getting them damaged stolen. He said he would never se his tools; that was like a writer gi ing up his pen, an artist giving up h brushes. He said he hadn't sh heroin that day or the day his c had spilled his dose of methadon He said he had changed his mi that Sunday once he got to his dea er's room on the fifth floor of the h

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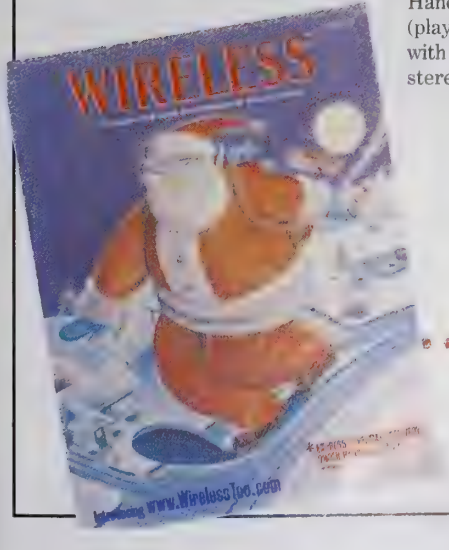




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tel, despite the aching pain of withdrawal. "I said to myself, 'If I still want it in an hour, I'll get it in an hour.' I still wanted it in an hour, but I read a porn magazine for a while, cleaned the cat's box, cleaned up my room a little bit, and the next thing you know it was time for bed."

He rolled up the sleeve of his sweatshirt to prove that he hadn't shot heroin. His arms were ravaged with angry, open sores and needle marks. Seemingly unaware of the contradictions in his story, or what the scars on his emaciated arms told of his situation, he said he couldn't shoot heroin by himself. He had a lot of good veins left, he said, but he was afraid of getting an air bubble in the syringe that would go straight to his heart. We walked out onto the Bowery, into the crisp autumn air, and he said he was depressed because he had gone to The Realization Center for an assessment that day and had been given the dual diagnosis of CD and MI—chemically dependent, mentally incompetent. He had been put in a holding room with people who couldn't even talk, with zombies. He feared he was going to be stuck in the Providence for the next thirty years. His biggest worry, the thing he cared about most in the world, was what to do with his cat if he entered a program to try to get straight. "If I could get my cat into my parents' house I'd leave the Providence today," he said.

I took the train to Stevie's hometown on Long Island, where the autumn leaves on the trees were red and puce and gold. The town was, as Stevie said, affluent, with quiet, winding streets, massive estates hidden behind steel gates, and a Norman Rockwellian red-brick high school where Stevie had once been a student. Stevie's parents lived in a modest two-story house in a less wealthy quarter of the town. The living room was decorated with throw rugs and stuffed dolls and portraits of their daughters' college graduations and weddings. Stevie's mother, who had the *New York Times* Sunday crossword completed in ink beside her on a side table, wore a cardigan and jeans and a pair of half-moon reading glasses strung on a necklace. His father, a retired investigator for the federal government, was a thin, soft-spoken man, and he sat at the dining table smoking a pipe. They had given Stevie $120 a month, month after month, for years, they said; Stevie knew when his mother's social security check arrived, and he always came out from the Providence to collect the money. Stevie's mother said she dreaded his visits. She also lived in dread that Stevie wouldn't arrive and that she wouldn't know if he was alive or dead.

Stevie had told me he was thirty-seven, but his parents said he was really forty-three. "We're both about to turn seventy," his father said, "and soon we'll be gone and Stevie is going to have to fend for himself." Stevie's mother played a message from Stevie she had saved from their answering machine that morning. "I'm taking five hundred dollars to leave my room," he said on the recording. "I'm going to leave the cat, because you promised me you would take the cat, but obviously you're not going to do that. It's obvious I'm going to die, so I might as well die on the streets. You know, five hundred dollars will be enough to give me a nice overdose."

"Stevie's always threatening that he's going to jump in front of a subway train," his mother said. "Or he's going to take all the pills he has and die on our front lawn. In other words, it'll make the local newspaper. In other words, to embarrass us."

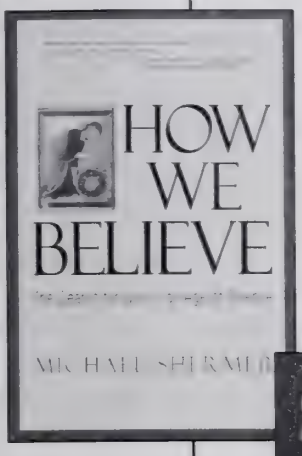
Stevie's parents said that his troubles had been going on for years, and it had become impossible to clearly distinguish one event from another. They had made mistakes as parents, they said. "We've apologized many times," his mother said. "We're not perfect people, or perfect parents. We all make mistakes. He was the first born, so he got more than the others. We're sorry, drop it, let it go, get on with your life." Stevie's mother said that they had moved from a working-class neighborhood to their new affluent town when Stevie was in grade school and that he had never fit in with the more well-to-do kids. Stevie's father said he had suffered a nervous breakdown when Stevie was a teenager, and Stevie had started to steal his quaaludes. The heavy drinking and marijuana and LSD and, eventually, heroin came later. They had bought Stevie BMWs over the years and paid for his training as a mechanic; he had wrecked the cars and lost a string of jobs. Stevie's father said that their other children, their daughters, had grown to hate the way Stevie's troubles affected the family. On their eldest daughter's wedding day, Stevie had turned up at the house high, and his mother refused to let him in. Stevie shot up on the front step; his mother watched from the kitchen window as he injected the needle and swore at them that he would be dead by the time they returned from the church.

Since Stevie had moved into the Providence, six and a half years earlier, he had continued to come out to his parents' house to sleep from time to time. His mother and father were terrified that he would fall asleep with a cigarette and burn the house down, though, and they had made him sleep in the basement, where the floor was concrete. Stevie hadn't been allowed to stay the night for the past few months; during his visits, his father, exhausted by the repeated accusations and demands, had begun to retreat to a room on the second floor, where he stayed until his son left. When Stevie had been locked out in the past, he would pound on the doors and windows and open the mail slot at the front door and scream through the night. His mother said that tough love, which they tried to practice, following the advice of drug counselors and others who had experience in such matters, was hard to live out. "It's very difficult for a mother to hear that your child hasn't eaten anything," she said. "Intellectually you understand what to do, but emotionally it's very difficult."

Outside, Stevie's mother and father opened the garage door and showed me the auto mechanic tools Stevie had told me about. The red Craftmaster tools were locked, and there was an empty pill bottle on top. They had bought the set for him at Sears: the tools were worth $800, not $10,000. Stevie's mother said she wished he would get into a good rehab program, one that lasted a full year. The problem, she said, was that they couldn't afford to pay for it, and

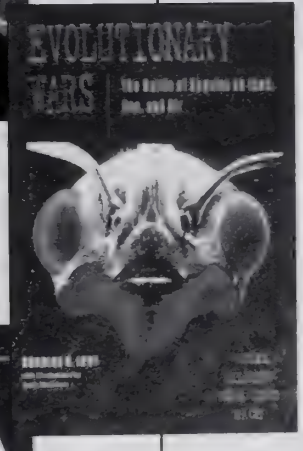
Just think.

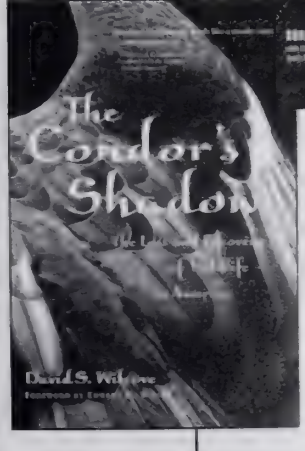
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Stevie wasn't covered by their medical insurance.

"We've seen a psychiatrist about this," Stevie's father said, "because I had always heard that eventually people hit bottom, and when they realize they've hit bottom they work themselves up, they try to come up. And he told me, 'An awful lot of people hit bottom and never do come up.' And that's what I'm convinced is happening now."

"If there was someplace out there for him to go," Stevie's mother said, her voice trailing away. "I wish I'd win the lotto. I would put him in some place. That's what I wish."

The lobby of the Providence was closed off entirely by the end of October. There were now two security doors near the front desk: one for the residents staying on the main floor, in the new rooms next to what had once been the lobby; the other, a black, prisonlike steel door that led to the stairway upstairs, for the men living in one of the three floors above. The renovation was complete. With no lobby, the men had to keep to their rooms to stay out of the cold.

The men I had met in the lobby of the Providence scattered to the four winds. Turk, it was said, went on a drinking jag and in a matter of days blew through the cash the owners had given him; the last report was that he was sleeping in the subway. Raul, no longer able to rely on the free meal provided nightly in the lobby, found a job working the midnight shift in a bakery in lower Manhattan. He said things were going well, that he had some responsibility for money and was proud of that. He just hoped he could keep it together. On the days Bobby wasn't meeting his workfare obligations, he and I searched for a furnished room he could afford; I offered to pay the security deposit and the first month's rent. There wasn't anything available in the neighborhood near the park where he did his workfare, so he went out to Far Rockaway and took a room.

Tommy the Shark had left the Providence, still owing back rent, and had moved back in with his mother. One afternoon I met him at the corner of Wall Street and Broadway. The cold of the early winter whipped through the canyons of the financial district as stockbrokers and lawyers and secretaries hustled along the street, their shoulders hunched. Tommy was dressed in a warm jacket, woolen slacks, tasseled loafers. He had gone to his mother's apartment the week before, just short of his twenty-one-day limit at the Providence, and she had let him come home. The dog was fine, he said; his mother had tended to her, fed her, groomed her. Tommy was eating regularly again, and he was starting to get his weight back. He said he had taken a job selling jewelry part-time in a shop in his mother's neighborhood, and he had worked one day in a menswear store; he was good at sales, he said. He had another scam he was working: a player in the National Football League he had met in a bar needed to renegotiate his contract, and Tommy was going to represent him.

Tommy suggested we meet on Wall Street because he had tracked down the street vendor he had tried to con in Washington Square Park. The vendor had relocated her table of trinkets to a spot near the New York Stock Exchange. Tommy talked to the street vendor and another woman who stopped to look at the goods on offer. The two women were both, it turned out, born-again Christians, and they discussed the best church services on offer in Manhattan. Tommy was still representing himself as an NYPD detective. He told the women that he, too, had been born again. The street vendor was married, Tommy said in a whispered aside, but the other woman was single; she was pretty and had an earnest, guileless manner. "I'm going to nail that broad," Tommy said. "Christian girls, they always go for it, and then they feel bad afterward." Tommy and the woman made a date to meet at a church social on the weekend.

"Praise Jesus," she said to Tommy.

"Praise Jesus," Tommy said.

In early November, precisely thirty days after I had set out to report on a month in the lives of the men an the hotel, Stevie disappeared fro the Providence. That night I went t the birthday party of a lawyer frien of mine who lived with his artist wi in a loft a few blocks away. Aroun midnight, for no reason other than growing sense of unease, I checke my answering machine, and ther was a message from Stevie's mothe "I have some sad news for you," sh said. "Stevie was killed by an aut mobile, walking from the railway st tion to our house this evening." La that afternoon, in the gatherin dusk, Stevie's train had pulled int his hometown on Long Island. H had called his mother from the st tion. He had said that he was on h way home. He was walking off th footpath, on the edge of the roa against the oncoming traffic, as h made his way along the main rout A van rounded a bend and hit hi head-on. Stevie's mother had bee waiting for him when she heard th town's emergency siren go off, th alarm screaming throughout the vi lage. Sleepout Jackie, who lived the hallway next to Stevie's on th fourth floor and who had feude with him over the years, said tha none of the men in the hotel ha mourned his passing. "He was shoo ing his arm up every fucking day Sleepout said. "He haunted people Nobody misses him."

The night Stevie was killed th handful of flophouses on the Bowe were scarcely noticeable, as alway sheltered in the shadows cast by th streetlights. A lone man stumble along the sidewalk, his thick glasse askew. He was carrying a crumple paper bag with a bottle of liquor i it, and every few paces he stoppe and took a long drink. Upstairs i the Providence, the windows in th room that had once been the lobb were blackened. The men in the ho tel had lost their only gatherin place, the only place for them to si out of the weather, eat, watch *Whee of Fortune*. In Far Rockaway, on th farthest margins of the city, were th beginnings of the next last resor On the Bowery, the time when man alone in the world had foun refuge, of a kind, in the heart of th city was slipping into the past.

THE END OF EMPIRE

Inside the revolving door of dreams

By Pico Iyer



When I was five ears old and (as it emed to me) the nly little Indian boy Oxford, England, I ad my first stage role er, as the change- ng in Shakespeare's *idsummer Night's ream*, passed back nd forth between iry king and queen midst the dreamy kes and illuminat- d, spirit-haunted ees of Worcester ollege. The Oxford University Dra- a Society must have been delight- l to find a "real" Indian boy to play ne half-real, motherless child, stolen from an Indian king," in the lay, and so, richly bribed with Rown- ee's Fruit Pastilles and Corgi cars very day for two weeks, I got up each vening in turban and jeweled brooch nd allowed myself to be fought over y rival worlds.

I knew far less about the "spicèd In- ian air" than many of the English stu- ents around me, I'm sure, and proba- ly had less interest in a place that was either home to me nor exotic; many years would pass before I could see the aptness of the part. (At school, I would learn that it was rumored, incredibly, that I was the son of a maharajah; while for years, kindly Englishwomen would tell me, "You speak such good English, dear.") Certainly, I could never see how people of my parents' generation could have such a fondness for Oxford, the grimy, everyday industrial town in which I'd been born. England for them was Fabians and Romantic poets and high- and public-minded civil servants—it was Mountbatten, perhaps, and Jowett and Plato; for me it was union strikes and fish-and-chips and the sound of broken glass when the pubs closed down at 11:00 P.M. I couldn't really share their admiration for an England I knew too well or for an India I didn't know at all. England—where they were fifty times as likely to be beaten up on the streets as a white (even in 1990), I remembered reading—was as familiar as yesterday's breakfast.

Growing up, I'd heard, over and over, the classic stories of passage, nearly always of bright young boys from the colonies—tropical Dick Whittingtons—coming over to England to make their fortunes: of Mohandas Gandhi, dreaming of becoming an upstanding English barrister, and schooling himself in French and dancing lessons long after he left the Victoria Hotel in London; of Lee Kuan Yew—later to say he'd always felt indebted to his British school principal for caning him—coming over on the *Britannic* (shocked at the people copulating freely on the lifeboat deck) before returning to Singapore, with the only starred First in law at Cambridge; of Nelson Mandela, named after Admiral Nelson, they said, combining in his person, those close to him had told me, "the perfect English gentleman and the tribal chieftain." In the stories, the pattern was always the same: the young foreigner masters the ways of Britain so fully that he is perfectly

ico Iyer is the author of six books. His last rticle for Harper's Magazine, *"Where Vorlds Collide," appeared in the August 995 issue. His new book,* The Global oul, *will be published by Knopf in ebruary.*

hotograph by Geuorgui Pinkhassov / Magnum Photos

equipped to undo them, armed, as Michael Manley, the prime minister of Jamaica (and a Marxist anti-imperialist), would say, with "nothing more than the finest tradition of self-criticism taught in British schools."

Much later, though, as I sat overlooking the backs of the Cambridge colleges on an outstretched English summer evening—the light as lingering and golden as in any tropical boy's imaginings—I began to hear a different second act. "The thing is, I admire the idea of England, but I can't stand the reality." My old Indian friend (of my parents' generation) was talking to me in a voice as plummy and rich as a major general's, the kind they don't seem to make anymore. "I don't know, call me sentimental, if you like—I suppose it's the weak, Indian, wishy-washy part of me—but I always thought that England meant fairness and free choice and all that kind of thing, that this was the center of decency. And now, of course, I find I'm much more English than the English.

"I mean, at least before, there used to be some sense of compassion. I know a colonial master-slave relationship isn't ideal, but if you're a slave it's the best thing you've got. I suppose some people would say those were all myths, of decency or whatever, but still it's better to have those positive myths than what we have now."

I looked at him in his New and Lingwood sweater, with the Coutts checkbook he'd made sure that I would notice; he lived in a thatched Elizabethan country cottage of the kind he must have dreamed of once, its address all bushes and thorns, "nr. Newmarket," and I felt as if I were watching someone play Othello after the theater had emptied and the lights were all turned off.

"I mean, if you're an Indian, they're happy to accept you so long as you speak like Peter Sellers and smell of curry and all that, because then you know your place. But if you don't, you might as well forget it. Because the typical Englishman doesn't understand that there is such a thing as class anywhere outside England, and that you and I are different from the Bangladeshi waiter at the local. The right wing want you to be nice smiling colonials, and the left wing want you to assert your solidarity and oppressedness by being 'ethnic,' and they refuse to allow you to be what you want to be. In many ways, the extreme right almost enjoy the extreme left—the Vanessa Redgraves—because they can see them as a good enemy. But if you're sort of middle-of-the-road, you get run over by both sides."

I looked at him and didn't know what to think. The punts were drifting past the shortbread-colored towers, and the late summer light was gilding the fields and distant spires as in the kind of watercolors the Empire used to send around the globe. My friend had a big heart, I knew, and a quick mind, but both were so lost inside the character he'd chosen to play that all I could hear, sometimes, was the sound of a lover disappointed, a boy who'd left everything he knew to pursue some ideal, unattainable woman, arriving at her doorstep only to find that she'd given herself over to some mobster from Las Vegas.

The story of migration I must have heard most deeply, growing up—piecing it together, only slowly, over the years—was the one of my own parents, coming to England just before the forces of globalism turned everything on its head. I can see my mother, neat in her English blouse and skirt, reciting the lyrics of Brooke and Shelley at the Cathedral and John Connon School in Bombay, and being rewarded by Carmelite sisters with playing cards of the Virgin Mary, which the girls swapped, she told me, as eagerly as I and my friends did "Soccer Stars"; even now, any Jehovah's Witness who comes to her doorstep, eager to convert the dark heathen within, will be greeted by a knowledge of the Bible more formidable than his own.

I can see my father too, graduated from the Doctor Antonio da Silva High School in Bombay, coming over to England two years before she did—three years after India won her independence—to the "dreaming spires" that both of them had read of in Arnold's *Scholar Gypsy*, sent there by the beneficence of the South African industrialist Cecil Rhodes, who believed that to be born an Englishman was to be awarded first prize in the lottery of life.

The one common link between my parents was the English history and literature in which they had been schooled, the one shared inheritance in a country as divided as Jerusalem; although both of them had grown up in the same city and gone to the same college, regional differences would have kept them apart in a world cut into Hindu and Muslim and North Indian and South and caste and subcaste.

When she was in her teens, my mother told me much later, she impressed my father (also in his teens, though already a professor) by reciting some lines of Tennyson; and on the last day of every school term, tears would run down the cheeks of the girls at Cathedral as they sang of England's "green and pleasant land" and were ushered forth into the world.

The setting of Blake's Jerusalem could never have been quite what the girls expected, if ever they took the boat to England, but the shock must have been many times greater when Britain became a suburb of the International Empire. The one thing "convent-educated" Indians were not prepared for, surely, was an England made up of Islamic Fundamentalists (and settlements like Glastonbury, where flaxen-haired kids sport names like Sita and Krishna and Ganesh); according to the British Tourist Authority the national dish of Britain now is curry (having triumphed, I assume, over doner kebab and pizza), and the most popular flavor ordered from Domino's Pizza in the U.K. in 1994 was tandoori chicken. What seemed most to upset people like my Indian friend was that so many of the people in England now looked a lot like him.

To an English-born outsider like myself, the spicing of England was all to the good: the island has grown stronger and darker, like a mug of tea in warm water in which 1.7 million Indian (and West Indian) teabags have been left to steep; the Earls you meet these days in London are from Trinidad, and the *Times* will inform you, without apparent rancor, that there are more Indian restaurants in Greater London than in Bombay and Delhi combined. Insofar as Princess Diana was taken to be an avatar

New England, it was not just be-
ıse she brought "American" val-
—health clubs and Prozac and Mc-
nald's and talk-show therapeutics
nto the mainstream, and not just
ause she upended the traditional
er by allying herself increasingly
h the rival, new aristocracy of the
ebrity culture; but also because she
linked, romantically, to a Pak-
ni doctor and an Egyptian film pro-
er, and visited a debutante friend,
ıima Goldsmith, who'd married the
tain of the Pakistani cricket team.
Yet those who'd always looked up to
ertain England (brought to them,
en, by homesick "Oxford men"
oad) were left not knowing where
turn. Recently, a friend told me,
readers of Sri Lanka, always eager
keep up with the latest in English
ers, had asked the British Council
send them some voices of Young
gland. Ever sensitive to the niceties
acial diplomacy, the British had
t Hanif Kureishi (half-Pakistani)
then Caryl Phillips (born in the
ribbean). No, the Sri Lankans said,
arly disappointed: send us a *real*
tish writer (in other words, some-
one who looks like the
people who held us down).

My Indian friend, though it
nds too perfect to be true, had run
ay from home and come to Eng-
d in the hope of making it as an ac-
, and one evening I went to see
ı in a play in the West End, on the
and, just across from India House.
was a piece written by one of
tain's most distinguished play-
ghts, drawn from his boyhood years
ndia, and yet it followed the pat-
ı of almost every English account
ndia: a young Englishwoman is
nted by some doglike, "English-
Indians who keep her in a con-
ıt state of sexual agitation. One of
actors on stage had actually played
ıdge in *A Passage to India* and a
gistrate in *The Jewel in the Crown*.
Chelsea is "my favorite part of Lon-
," says one Indian character, who
es Tennyson and Macaulay; his
t sentence is, "I hope to visit Lon-
ı one of these days." The play
ned on a series of such witticisms—
cannot be less Indian than I am"
l, "Oh, I thought you'd be more In-

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dian." Next to me, an Irishman lectured his pretty young Asian girlfriend on the hazards of multiculturalism in her native Malaysia.

After the curtain, I went to the nearby Opera pub to meet my friend, his makeup rubbed off and his fancy dress (if not his accent) put away for the night. "I know you're not going to like me saying this," he began (casting me, perhaps, in his private drama as a hypocritical Englishman), "but this is a very, very racist place, and it's getting worse with all this political correctness. It's just another kind of fascism, another way of putting you in a turban."

He'd had difficulty finding parts, I assumed, and in desperation, he confessed, he'd accepted jobs reading Kipling's works for Books on Tape (where his face didn't interfere with his Royal Shakespeare Company voice). Once he had "swallowed my pride and played a racist magistrate telling a black to go home." Even in this play, he said, they'd wanted him to wear a turban—till he'd pointed out that, post-polo, an Indian was far likelier to be wearing jodhpurs.

"It's getting to the point where they only let you play the parts you know," he complained. "It's like South Africa: we're all getting ghettoized." He blamed some of it on the Jews: "And I feel really angry after we fought to save them in the last war, and now they're turning on the Indians." What made it worse, though, were the other minorities. "The notion of a colored minority is a myth, because the Jamaicans hate the Trinidadians, and they both hate the Indians. But no one's letting on."

He would have been bitter anywhere, perhaps, but mobility had given him more people to blame and the chance to turn every decision into one of race.

"The one good thing about England," I said, to try to change the subject, "which almost redeems it, is the sense of humor."

"English humor is so cruel," he said, and he sounded so deeply shipwrecked that I didn't know how to answer.

But soon the curtain came up again, and he was telling me how he'd just gotten a call from one of Gandhi's grandsons, at the Nehru Centre, asking him to participate in a special reading. "Here it is, the bloody centenary of Tennyson, and the only ones celebrating it are the Indians! The only ones who care: don't you think that says something?"

I said very little, maybe because I felt he wanted only a confirmation that would compound his various agonies, and he turned on me, bitterly, with, "You're so English!" ("English" now meaning formal, cold, reserved.) "If there's one thing I don't like about this country—and there are many things I love, otherwise I wouldn't be living here—it's that they don't admit to their feelings. They keep them all inside."

He paused to take a breath, a sip of his beer, and to give me a genuinely warm and forgiving look.

"I mean, I love things here—like village cricket and going to the pub" (the very two elements a lonely English expat in Paris had just singled out for me). "But everything depends on who you know, who you went to school with—all that kind of thing. And of course, the other Indians here I really don't have very much in common with. They're from East Africa, they don't know anything; they're all Bangladeshi restaurateurs. They don't even know how to say 'Ramayana.'"

I didn't know how to say "Ramayana" either, so I kept quiet: there was nothing I could say if the place where he belonged was, almost by definition, the one where he didn't want to be and the place where he wanted to be was, almost by definition, the one that wouldn't have him.

"I should let you go," I said finally, since I knew where the conversation would go, and I had nothing to contribute to it.

"How terribly English of you," he snapped before releasing me, "saying you want to let me go because you want to go yourself."

One summer's day in England, I went to the cricket grounds at Headingley, in Leeds, to see the fifth and final day of the first Test match between England and the West Indies. Only six other people got off the train with me at the tiny country station near the grounds, and all of them, I noticed, were of my parents' age or older. Perhaps this was because England had lost to Australia, to India, and to Pakistan recently, and hadn't, in fact, beaten the West Indies on British soil in twenty-two years, winning exactly four of their last forty-four matches against their Caribbean subjects. It's the unemployment in the Caribbean, the old people were saying as we walked toward the grounds, and, besides, all the competitive fire's gone out of England there's a special value placed on success if you grow up in one of those poor countries.

Around me in the stands, most of the plastic seats were unoccupied for this climactic day (because of the recession, said the men with rolled-up brollies); so few had shown up the previous day that everyone in attendance had been given free tickets to return today. Now I saw a few men in ties, scattered here and there, following the action on Walkman's, and two others dressed from head to toe as Ninja Turtles (or "Hero Turtles," as they are ineffably known in Britain).

The players on the pitch, as I'd never seen before, had chalk on their faces so they looked like Burmese village girls, and the ads around the ground advertised "Daewoo"; one of the spectators nearby muttered about one of England's players being "very patrician" and was quickly told, "Actually not so patrician: he grew up in the East End, and his father used to stand on the street selling birds. The trouble was, they were homing pigeons."

On the radio, the famously articulate Old Etonian announcer, who had just dined with the Queen, was murmuring like a tributary of the Thames about "handsome strokes" and "cultivated cricketers" and shots pulled out "like a silk handkerchief being removed from a top pocket."

So much of it was like the England I'd grown up with, watching the regal West Indians effortlessly thrash the combined Oxford-and-Cambridge team in the University Parks: the red brick buildings grouped together under chill gray skies, the hand-operated scoreboard and the puddle on the pitch, the intermittent clapping as batsmen returned to the pavilion after "ducks" or bowlers completed "maiden overs" with their "googlies" and

ir "Chinamen." In one part of the
nds, a small band of merry West In-
ns was playing barbershop ditties,
l as the match began to go against
m started to sing, "Please, God,
ase" ("I think," said one of the fans
und me, "it's a West Indian rain
nce or something"); before the
ch had begun, I gathered, the York-
e Club president, Sir Lawrence By-
d (once Her Majesty's chief in-
ctor of constabulary), had reminded
assembled throng that the West
ian lads should be treated "with
respect they are entitled to de-
ve" and had issued a stern head-
sterly caution that "bad behavior
l abusive language have no place
a cricket ground."

Now, though, as England began to
se in on an unexpected victory, its
s struck up a beery, cheery chant of
od Save Our Pring"—a reference
their hero, Derek Pringle, an Eng-
player—and at the end the "man
he match" was given a jeroboam of
mpagne. In the national jubila-
n that followed, the one thing that
s not so often mentioned—and
re obvious to a visitor, perhaps—
s that the main reason England had
vailed was that six of its eleven
yers came from the colonies—
luding those in Africa, the sub-
tinent, and, in fact, the Caribbean
uch the most orthodox and secure
he England batsmen," according
he *Daily Telegraph*, had the newly
ical English name of Mark Ram-
kash). The one time in recent years
gland had fielded a team without
colored players—their style was a
le languorous, the gentlemanly ar-
rs of cricket had suggested—it lost
ve-day match before the third day
over.

This was not so much to say that
Empire had reversed direction as
t the very sense of what direction
ointed in was somewhat by the by;
same day that a "pitifully small"
wd showed up at Headingley, more
n 60,000 had packed into the
mbley arena to watch the London
narchs take on Barcelona in the
orld Bowl" championship of the
wly popular American football
gue in Europe. There were cheer-
ders and marching bands and car-
n characters performing somer-
saults, and the crowd, said the *Times*, was full of "youth and keenness" as well as "almost universally wearing some form of Monarchs merchandise." When the Monarchs held up their trophy, the entire stadium turned into a field of Union Jacks, and the players (most of whom were American) gamely ran around the stadium collecting and waving the English flag. It was as fine a celebration, a British sportswriter said, as ever seen in Wembley, and for a while England was back on top of the world. Not the dangerous plaything of hooligans (as soccer could be), not the polite diversion of gentlemen (as cricket occasionally was), American football had seemed to save the English from themselves.

The next time I saw my Indian friend happened to be in Los Angeles, at one of the Bombay Palace restaurants now reproduced around the globe. He had come to America in search of a new life, I guessed, and I was reminded, sadly, of how the unhappiest people I know these days are often the ones in motion, encouraged to search for a utopia outside themselves, as if the expulsion from Eden had been Eden's fault. Globalism made the world the playground of those with no one to play with.

As my friend began talking, I felt I was hearing exactly the same lines as before, in Cambridge; it was as if he were perpetually conducting a discussion (an argument, really) with himself, or with someone who said nothing in return. "I see so much hatred in England now," he said, as if to explain his presence in L.A. "Maybe it's just because I'm more aware of it than I used to be, but I know bloody well I speak better English than they do, and the English won't accept that. The English hate me for being more English than they are; they want you all to conform to some image they can patronize. But because I know more about English literature than they do, and because I believe in the good old notions of fair play and decency, they can't stand me. I should have won an Oscar for the roles I've played in real life."

The sentences went round in circles, much as he did; he'd lost track of where he was, I felt, playing an Englishman while he cursed the English, fleeing an India that was surely his great calling card in England.

"You see, I grew up with all these notions," he continued—tucking into the hottest food the waiter could find, his voice as sonorous as Gielgud's—"I used to pick a line of Shakespeare, and my great-uncle could always give me the next one. I think it was from there that I got my love of English literature, and the buildings, the history, all that. The men who raised me believed in all the Victorian values."

But Victoria, I wanted to say, had died almost a century ago, and I wondered how many of these memories had actually grown out of my friend's nostalgic accounts to Englishmen. "When I was a boy," he went on, "my aunt used to bring me a cable-knit sweater every year, handmade, from Dehra Dun; now I'd do anything to get a cable-knit sweater. It's funny: I suppose the only people who believe in the old values anymore are a few old fogies writing for the *Daily Telegraph* and talking about the loss of the country they love. So I find myself agreeing with the people I want to hate."

Just as I was beginning to despair, he surprised me with a shaft of self-knowledge, and I thought how deeply Indian he sounded even in his affirmation of Englishness (so assertive, so earnest, so passionate even; besides, few Englishmen would have been caught dead talking so warmly about the Beeb or the *Times* or the Marylebone Cricket Club).

"Whenever things fall apart," he said, and I was touched again, unexpectedly, "I turn to India. Indian restaurants, Indian faces, Indian news." But he couldn't go back, of course, until he'd made it as an Englishman, and I couldn't imagine many Englishmen wanting to be told by him what "Englishness" really was. America was a desperate last resort.

"The Indians living in England seem to me to embody all the worst qualities of England, to do with greed and undereducation," he said, "and none of the best. Maybe it was never really like that, but I always felt that England stood for something, that there were ideals there." In the made-for-export version, I thought, perhaps cruelly; in

the never-never England "before the war" that both of us could idealize because neither of us had ever seen it.

"I left England," I said, maybe only to provoke him, "because I felt that, from start to the 'right' school and college, I had no incentive to do anything; I could have been a homicidal maniac, and still, I felt, I could always get a good job."

"Then why didn't you stay?" he responded to this unkindness, and I realized that what I should have said was that anything can be a source of resentment in England: the details are neither here nor there. What colonialism had given me was the chance to grow up so close to the heart of Empire that I could never be enthralled by it. But that wasn't what he wanted to hear.

"I can't help thinking they've changed the rules on me," he said, and again I felt as if he were talking to himself. "They taught me to believe in one set of values, and I do; and now it's a completely different England."

Indeed it is, and the old, simple relation of dreamer to dream had been shaken about in the Global Age, as if by a hyperactive child in the heavens. When I got off the plane at Heathrow on a recent trip, it was to find the London cabs swathed in ads for Fujitsu and Burger King and the billboards in the tube stations advertising "Afro-Caribbean" hair treatments and an all-black production of *Antony and Cleopatra* (on my next trip, they were advertising a production in which Cleopatra was played by a man). The laundry list in my little hotel had a special box for "Arab Gown" (and spelled "college" with a "d"); in the Yellow Pages, a place that still bore the name of an Anglican church now advertised itself, impenitently, as a "Temple of Fitness" where you could "work off thy last Supper" with "our 100 American state-of-the-art machines."

Every myth (as the great fashioner of them, Wilde, explains in his parable of Dorian Gray) has a power to hang on long after the reality has shifted, and Little England would surely uphold old notions of "Englishness" long after Great Britain had reached out to the larger world; the country I'd grown up in greeted me in the tabloid headlines, such as, "He's Found the Chink in Chang's Armour," or the fire notice in my room—not far from a laminated card offering direct-dial service to Häagen-Dazs—warning, "Do not prejudice your safety by stopping to collect your personal belongings" (in the event of a conflagration). Cities face the same choice that celebrities do when measuring their shadows—they can either play to the cameras or turn their back on them (do a Norman Mailer, you could say, or a J. D. Salinger). England had unapologetically chosen the first course, marketing the Royal Family for all it was worth and encouraging bagpipers to play outside the Dunkin' Donuts parlor in "Theatreland." In the Keats House Museum you could buy a teddy bear wearing a sash that says, I AM A R❤MANTIC.

To me, again, much of this was welcome. No one but an American is likely to deny the appeal of American culture, and I can still remember, as a child in Oxford, sitting transfixed before Hanna-Barbera cartoons or Lucille Ball, not because they were American but because they were better and more vivid than anything else on TV (and later, in adolescence, finding images of possibility and hopefulness in Henry Miller or the Grateful Dead that simply weren't available in England); anyone who's grown up on Wimpy bars and greasy "transport caffs" can appreciate how life in places like Oxford was made unimaginably more pleasant by the advent of first Baskin-Robbins, then McDonald's, in the late Seventies, offering clean and dependable places in which to eat that were neither cheap nor expensive. Again, in fact, like America, England seemed to have been invigorated by its visitors from abroad, and it never seemed a coincidence to me that many of Britain's proudest new traditions—the Globe Theatre, *Granta*, and the modernized Oxford colleges—had been rescued by energetic "Yanks."

England now looked, as most places do, more American, more European, more Asian—more everything but its old self—and that meant that the food was better, the culture was livelier and the grudges were buried under a new glossy sheen; everything, including the colors, was richer than before (to the point where London had even managed to "rebrand" itself as a city of young lovers whose "Cool Britannia" styles were drawing kids from around the Continent). To some extent, the island was being forced to grow less insular, more tolerant to a whole world streaming into it (the Empire in reverse), and anyone who wanted to say as Nancy Mitford had not untypically done, "Abroad is unutterably bloody and foreigners are fiends" had to do so now sotto voce.

Nobody, of course, is entirely smitten with the place where he was born. By chance, my own family has ended up following the very course of empires, from India in the last days of the British, to England as it was falling under the spell of America, to America itself, in the mid-Sixties, when the American century was at its zenith, and the psychedelic California in which we eventually found ourselves was suddenly on every screen. Later, again by pure coincidence, I would move to Japan just as it was buying up Rockefeller Center and Columbia Pictures, in the late Eighties, and becoming what looked to be a new center of gravity.

But for my parents and for me such movements carried very different meanings, I think. It wasn't so much that they were born in India and I in England as that they knew they came from India (albeit British India), whereas I always felt I came from nowhere. Our worldviews didn't clash so much as they didn't overlap: my parents knew where they belonged, what they believed, and where their allegiance lay, and they remained unchanged in this for all their lives (in thinking that India was home, and Pakistan was an enemy, and Macaulay and Churchill had been enemies to India); after fifty years of living in the West, they still, quite rightly, kept their Indian passports.

I, by contrast, lacked their furies and felt I'd inherited none of the

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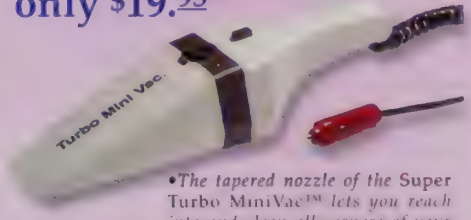


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enmities. I had no tradition to protect, I felt, and I reveled in those like Theodor Adorno, who said, "It is part of morality not to be at home in one's home." Instead of their passions, I was more prone to a floating dispassion; and instead of their fierce sense of right and wrong, I had a more unanchored, relativistic sense. "Perhaps there is an advantage in being born in a city like Monte Carlo, without roots," says Brown, the suitably anonymous character in Graham Greene's *Comedians* (having seen his "unknown brother" Jones die along the international road), "for one accepts more easily what comes."

The biggest difference between me and my Indian friend, as well as those of my parents' generation, I came to feel, was that I'd never had a strong sense of departures (or arrivals); as a member of a mobile, global generation, I'd grown up without a sense of a place to come to or from which to leave; and whereas someone like my Indian friend was caught in the space between two worlds, as between mother and father in a custody battle, someone like me, I figured, could (for worse as much as better) fit in everywhere. My friend had a map made up of clear divisions; mine was a shifting thing in which everywhere could be home to some extent, and also not home. My sense of severences was less absolute, and although I could visualize the partings in the old stories—the boy at dockside, carrying the hopes of his family across the seas, perhaps not to see them again for years—I knew I could get anywhere very soon, and nothing was final.

It was many years, then, before I could understand the spells that distance could create, in an age when people really might not know whether they would ever return and separation had a special force. It was many years before I could see pictures of my father, proud in his Indian formal wear, president of the Oxford Union, and realize that he was flanked on every side by the kind of Englishmen that an Indian might have dreamed of, in Bombay (one would go on to become editor of the *Times*, one deputy prime minister; one would become head of the Liberal Party; another, the steady sage of the BBC). I imagined his family gathered around the crackly transistor radio in the small flat in the Bombay suburbs, listening to their distant hero on the World Service broadcast, opposing such notions as "This House refuses to take itself seriously," and I realized that by going halfway through the open door, he had allowed me to walk out of it on the other side.

One day, when I met my Indian friend in New York, it was to find that, somehow, and unexpectedly, he'd set up house within his dreams: he'd met a highly eligible young Englishwoman—well-born, beautiful, intelligent, sincere, and highly successful—and this very picture of the blushing English rose had consented to be his wife. Now, as he spoke, in his Old World cadences, of the "human sufferings" and privations of an India he'd scarcely seen, she sat, quite literally, at his feet, eyes filling with tears at the thought of all he'd been through. Her father, I was not surprised to hear, was a domineering imperial type, still administering his own corner of Empire in the East; she was guilty, anxious to atone, a vegetarian.

Her eyes came to life as she spoke of the possibility of visiting her new in-laws, in the place her husband had worked so hard to flee; he said Hawaii sounded preferable.

A little later, when the romance was over, she would say that he was a hypnotist, another dark sorcerer from the East come to ensnare this young Englishwoman out of Forster; he had tried to turn her into an Indian woman, she complained, expecting her to walk six paces behind him and do up his shoelaces. "Come now, my dear," he had said, "what is this, *Othello*? In Thatcher's England?"

But he had made one mistake that no shrewd Englishman would ever make, and that no Englishman of the old order would forgive: he had faked a ruling-class pedigree.

"I said I'd gone to Winchester," he told me, a little defiantly, when I saw him next (down on his luck again and sad), "because I *felt* I'd been there. I remember, when I was fifteen, a man in Singapore telling me 'You're my little Wykehamist. You talk like a Wykehamist, you act like a Wykehamist, you believe, like a Wykehamist, that manners maketh man.'

"I thought of myself as an Oxonian," he said, a little plaintively, "because Oxford is the home of lost causes."

Perhaps the last time I had contact with my Indian friend came after a long absence. I had happened to call him to tell him of a death in the family, and he, fumbling for words on the international phone lines, had left a message on my answering machine in which he reached for a quote from Christina Rossetti, then lamented that he couldn't quite summon the right words from Eliot, and then concluded, in his antique voice, "Look after yourself, dear boy," with a resonance that sounded theatrical and emotional both, India and its version of Great Britain.

When I saw him a couple of months later, though, he was playing the same tape as before, over and over, as if some mechanism had got stuck somehow, as if in the process of emigration he'd got caught in a revolving door, unable quite to come through to the place he'd set out for.

"Of course, if you talk with a thick Indian accent, they'll love you. But if you're middle-class, and have some sense of decency, they feel threatened. The working-class white hates a middle-class Indian much more than he does a working-class Indian with a thick accent and Cockney slang.

"Oh, I don't know," he finally said, turning the tape off at last. "I suppose I just miss an England that built on elegance and love of language and love of literature, instead of money. Maybe I'm kidding myself, maybe it never existed. Maybe Bernard Shaw was right in saying 'Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel.'" I didn't have the heart to tell him that the quote came, in fact, from Samuel Johnson.

America's Medieval Women

By Pearl S. Buck

-am an American woman but I had no opportunity until a few years ago to know women in erica. Living as I did in China, s true that I saw a few American men; but that is not the same ng. One was still not able to w many conclusions from them out American women. I gath-d, however, that they felt that s in China had a hard time of it, cause there every family liked s better than daughters, and, in average family, did not give m the same education or treat-nt. In America, however, they d people welcomed sons and ghters equally and treated them same. This, after years in a ntry which defines a woman's itations very clearly, seemed hing short of heaven—if true.

When I came to America to live refore I was interested particular-in her women. And during these mediate past years I have come to ow a good many of them—women business, artists, housewives in city and country, women young and old. I have taken pains to know them. More than that, I have made my own place as a woman in America. And I find that what I anticipated before I came here is quite wrong. It seems to me that women are very badly treated in America. A few of them know it, more of them dimly suspect it, and most of them, though they know they ought to be glad they live in a Christian country where women are given an education, do not feel as happy in their lonely hearts as they wish they did. The reason for this unhappiness is a secret sense of failure, and this sense of failure comes from a feeling of inferiority, and the feeling of inferiority comes from a realization that actually women are not much respected in America.

I know quite well that any American man hearing this will laugh his usual tolerant laughter, though tolerant laughter is the cruelest form of contempt. He always laughs tolerantly when the subject of women is broached, for that is the attitude in which he has been bred. And immaturely, he judges the whole world of women by the only woman he knows at all—his wife. Nor does he want the sort of wife at whom he cannot laugh tolerantly. I was once amazed to see a certain American man, intelligent, learned, and cultivated, prepare to marry for his second wife a woman as silly and unfit for him as the first one had been, whom he had just divorced. I had to exclaim before it was too late, "Why do you do the same thing over again? She's merely younger and prettier than the other one—that's all. And even those differences are only temporary." To which he growled, "I do not want a damned intelligent woman in the house when I come home at night. I want my mind to rest."

What he did not see of course—though he found it out later—was that there could be no rest for him of any kind. He was irritated by a thousand stupidities and follies and beat-

Pearl S. Buck (1892–1973) was born in West Virginia but reared in China, where her parents were missionaries. Perhaps best known for her novel The Good Earth, *which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1932, she wrote this article for the August 1938 issue of* Harper's Magazine. *Bracketed ellipses indicate omitted material. Reprinted by permission of Harold Ober Associates.*

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[illegible] by his own cowardice. He died a score of years too soon, exhausted and worn out by nervous misery [illegible] hardily on, headed for a hundred, since he left [illegible] well provided for. Neither of them has ever done an honest day's work in her life, and he literally sacrificed his valuable life to keep them alive.

And yet, going home that day from his funeral and wondering how it could have been helped, I knew it could not have been helped. He was doomed to the unhappiness, or at least to the mediocre happiness, with which many if not most American men must be satisfied in their relationships with their women. For if he had been married to an intelligent superior woman he would have been yet more unhappy, since, with all his brilliance as a scientist, he belonged to that vast majority of American men who still repeat today the cry of traditional male pride, "I don't want *my* wife to work."

That is, he wanted a woman who would contain herself docilely within four walls. And he could not have seen that an intelligent, energetic, educated woman cannot be kept in four walls—even satin-lined, diamond-studded walls—without discovering sooner or later that they are still a prison cell. No home offers scope enough to-day for the trained energies of an intelligent modern woman. Even children are not enough. She may want them, need them and have them, love them and enjoy them, but they are not enough for her, even during the short time they preoccupy her. Nor is her husband, however dear and congenial, enough for her. He may supply all her needs for human companionship, but there is still more to life than that. There is the individual life. She must feel herself growing and becoming more and more complete as an individual, as well as a wife and mother, before she can even be a good wife and mother. I heard a smug little gray-haired woman say last week, "No, I don't know anything about politics. It takes all my time to be a good wife and mother. I haven't time to keep up with other things." Unfortunately, her husband, successful doctor that he is, has time to keep up not only with his business and with being what she calls a "wonderful husband and father," but with another woman as well. But that too is one of the things she knows nothing about. . . . Yet who can blame him? He is clever and full of interest in many things, and his wife is dulled with years of living in the four walls he put round her. It is a little unfair that he so encouraged her to stay in the walls that she came to believe in them completely as her place. [. . .]

And yet, vicious circle that it is, I cannot blame Americans for distrusting the ability of their women. For if the intelligent woman obeys the voice of tradition and limits herself to the traditional four walls she joins the vast ranks of the nervous, restless, average American women whose whimsies torture their families, who spoil the good name of all women because they are often flighty, unreliable, without good judgment in affairs, and given to self-pity. In short, she becomes a neurotic, if not all the time, a good deal of the time. Without knowing it or meaning it she falls too often to being a petty dictator in the home, a nag to her husband and children, and a gossip among her women friends. Too often too she takes no interest in any matters of social importance and refuses all responsibility in the community which she can avoid. She may be either a gadabout and extravagant or she may turn into a recluse and pride herself on being a "home woman." Neither of these escapes deceives the discerning. When will American men learn that they cannot expect happiness with a wife who is not her whole self? A restless unfulfilled woman is not going to be a satisfied wife or satisfactory lover. It is not that "women are like that." Anyone would be "like that" if he were put into such circumstances—that is, trained and developed for opportunity later denied. [. . .]

I am not so naive, however, as to believe that one sex is responsible for this unfortunate plight of the American woman. I am not a feminist, but I am an individualist. I do not believe there is any important difference between men and women—certainly not as much as there may be between one woman and another or one man and another. There are plenty of women—and men, for that matter—who would be completely fulfilled in being allowed to be as lazy as possible, if someone will ensconce them in a pleasant home and pay their bills they ask no more of life. It is quite all right for these men and women to live thus so long as fools can be found who will pay so much for nothing much in return. Gigolos, male and female, are to be found in every class and in the best of homes. But when a man does not want to be a gigolo he has the freedom to go out and work and create as well as he can. But a woman has not. Even if her individual husband lets her, tradition in society is against her.

For another thing we Americans cannot seem to believe or understand is that women—some women, any woman, or as I believe, most women—are able to be good wives, ardent lovers, excellent mothers and yet be themselves too. This seems strange, for as a nation we have fitted woman to be an individual as well as a woman by giving her a physical and mental education and a training superior to that of women in any other nation. But when she comes eagerly to life, ready to contribute her share, not only to home but to government, sciences, and arts, we raise the old sickening cry of tradition, "This isn't your business! Woman's place is in the home—" and we shut the door in her face.

I am aware that at this point American men will be swearing and shouting, "You don't know what you're talking about! Why, we give our women more than any women on earth have!" With that I perfectly agree. American women are the most

vileged in the world. They have the privileges—far too many. ey have so many privileges that a od many of them are utterly iled. They have privileges but y have no equality. "Nobody ps them back," the American n declares. Ah, nobody, but everyy! For they are kept back by tradi- expressed through prejudices not only nen but of stupid, hinking, traditionnd women. [. . .]

here are thousands vomen who uphold dieval tradition in erica more heartily n do men—just as China it is the ignot tradition-bound men who have ng to foot binding themselves and ir daughters. . . . No, nen have many enes among women. oes back of course he old jealous sense eneral female infeity. Tradition, if it ds one, should bind they feel.

ometimes, I con, I do not see how erican men can lure some of their nen—their imperiness, their peevishs, their headstrongs, their utter ishness, their smallness of mind outlook, their lack of any sense esponsibility toward society, n to be pleasant. And their lazis—look at the motion-picture ses, the theaters, the lecture ls—crowded all day with wom- The average house, even with servant, can be no full-time job hey wouldn't be there in such des—they couldn't be there. But ldren go to school as soon as y stop being babies, and electricleans and washes the house and hing, and husbands are away all . So what is there for the restless man to do? She goes to the show—and comes home, if she has any sense, to wonder what life is for, and to think that marriage isn't so much after all, though if she hadn't been married she would have been ashamed of herself. For tradition is there too, and it would have made her seem, if unmarried, unsuccessful as a female.



"But what are we going to do?" the harassed American man cries. "There aren't enough jobs now to go round. And women are getting into industries more and more."

This is nonsense and a masculine bugaboo, though merely getting a job is not what I mean. The truth is the number of women in industries is increasing at so slow a rate that it is shocking when one considers how long they have had an equal chance with men for education and training. In the past fifty years—that is, half a century, during which education for women has enormously increased—the percentage of women in industry and the professions has increased from fourteen per cent only to twenty-two per cent. That means millions of women have been made ready for work they either had no chance to do or never wanted to do.

As to what men are going to do with women, I do not pretend to know. But I know I have never seen in any country—and I have seen most of the countries of the world—such unsatisfactory personal relationships between men and women as are in America—no, not even in Japan, where women as a class are depressed. For the Japanese are wiser in their treatment of women than we Americans are. They keep them down from the beginning so that they never hope for or expect more than life is to give them. They are not restless or neurotic or despotic, nor are they spoiled children. They have not been trained for equality and they do not expect it. They know they are upper servants, and they fulfil their duties gracefully and ably, and are happier on the whole than women in America. To know what one can have and to do with it, being prepared for no more, is the basis of equilibrium.

No, what is wrong in America is this matter of educating women. Life for the American woman is still controlled by old traditions. Men think of women, if at all, in the old simple traditional ways. Then women ought to be prepared for this sort of life and shaped through childhood and girlhood for what is to come. The root of the discontent in American women is that they are too well educated. What is

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the use of it? They do not need college educations nor even high school educations. What they ought to have is a simple course in reading, writing, and arithmetic—and advanced courses in cosmetics, bridge, sports, how to conduct a club meeting gracefully, how to be an attractive hostess, with or without servants, and how to deal with very young children in the home. This last course, obviously, should be purely optional.

But all this higher present education is unfortunate. It has led American women into having ideas which they can never realize when they come to maturity. A college education may, for instance, persuade a girl to become interested in biology, which may lead her into wanting to become a doctor. And yet she will never have the chance to become a first-rate doctor, however gifted she is by birth. People will not allow it—not only men, but women will not allow it. They will look at her tentative little shingle and shrug their shoulders and say, "I don't feel I'd *trust* a woman doctor as I would a man." So after a while, since she has to earn something, she takes her shingle down and accepts a secondary position in a hospital or a school or goes into baby-clinic work, supplemented by magazine articles on child care—or she just marries a doctor. [. . .]

Or a college education may lead a girl into wanting to be a banker. It is natural for women to be interested in finance since they own about seventy per cent of America's money. But it is unfortunate if a woman thinks she can be a real banker. I have talked with a good many women who work in our American banking system. Not one is where she hoped to be when she began, and a fair percentage are not where they should be with their high executive ability, or where they would be if they were men. As one of the most brilliant of them said to me bitterly, "I know if I were a man I should now, at the age of fifty, and after thirty years of experience, be a bank president. But I'll never be anything but an assistant t a vice-president. I reached the top– for a woman—years ago. I'll never b allowed to go on."

"Why can't you?" I inquired, bein then too innocent.

"They say no one would want put money in a bank run by woman," she said.

I pondered this. I had then ju come from Shanghai, where one the best modern banks was run an controlled entirely by modern Ch nese women. It was a prosperou bank because most people ther thought women were probably mo honest than men and more pract cal in the handling of money. S the Chinese women bankers di very well.

A good deal is said too about th profession of teaching for wome There are a great many wome teachers in America—many mo in proportion to men than in oth countries. Men here, it seems, a low women to teach in lowe schools because they themselves d not want to teach in anything le than a college. And even the be men do not like to teach in wom en's colleges nor in co-education colleges. The finest teaching America, I am told, is done by me for men.

As for the arts, I know very we that the odds are strongly against th woman. Granted an equally goo product, the man is given the fav always. Women artists in any fie are not often taken seriously, howe er serious their work. It is true th they often achieve high popular su cess. But this counts against them artists. American men critics ma show respect to a foreign woma artist, feeling that perhaps the fo eign women are better than the own. But they cannot believe th the fools they see in departmen stores, in the subways and buses, running to the movies and lecture or even in their own homes, ca amount to anything in the arts. In deed they cannot think of a woma at all, but only of "women." And th pathetic efforts of American wome to improve their minds by readi

id clubs have only heightened the licule and contempt in which their en hold them. To educate women, erefore, to think, so that they need e personal fulfillment of activity id participation in all parts of life is ute cruelty, for they are not al- wed this fulfillment. They should educated not to think beyond the mands of simple household affairs beyond the small arts and graces pleasing men who seem always to ant mental rest. The present ethod is not only cruel; it is ex- emely wasteful. Good money is ent teaching women to do things r which there will be no need. en strain themselves to furnish ed- tations for their daughters which ey would be happier without, and t only happier but better women cause they would be more con- nted women.

It is not only wasteful but danger- is. To educate women as we do for r present state of traditionalism is put new wine into old bottles. A od deal of ferment is going on. nd if we keep this up more will me of it. No one knows the effect on children, for instance, of so any discontented women as moth- s. Amiable, ignorant, bovine wom- make much better mothers than urotic college graduates. And a oman does not need to complain oud to let her children know she is nhappy. The atmosphere about her gray with her secret discontent d children live deprived of that es- ntial gayety in which they thrive in sunshine. [. . .]

Of course there is the chimeralike possibility that we might change tradition. t I do not see anyone capable of anging it. Men certainly will not. hey do not even want to talk out it. They do not want the oman question stirred up, having they say, "enough on their hands ready." To them, of course, wom- "stirred up" simply means ner- us, illogical, clamoring children ho must be placated in one way or nother. They cannot conceive of oman as a rational being, equal to themselves and not always funda- mentally connected with sex. Emo- tionally, as it has been truly said, many American men are adoles- cents—kind, delightful, charming adolescents. "He's just like a boy" seems to be considered a compli- ment to a man in America. It ought to be an insult. This horrible boy- ishness lingering in persons who should be adult is as dismaying as mental retardation. It is responsible for our childish tendencies to "jazz things up," to make "whoopee," to think of being drunk, of removing "inhibitions," of playing the clown, as the only way to have a good time, to the complete destruction of adult conversation and real wit and subtler humor. It certainly is re- sponsible for wanting women to be nothing but wives, mothers, or leg- gy relaxations for tired business men. Even a pretty college girl said despairingly not long ago in my presence, "You can't get anywhere with men if you show any brains. I have to make myself a nitwit if I want dates. Oh, well, that's the way they are!" There are too many nice and rather sad American women who patiently accept even their middle-aged and old men as peren- nial "boys." "Men are like that," they say, at least as often as men say, "women are like that."

Nothing could show a greater mis- understanding between the sexes than this frequent fatalistic remark. Neither men nor women are like that if "that" means what they now seem to each other. It is a strange fact that in new America, as in old India or China, the real life of each sex is not with each other but away from each other. Men and women in America meet stiffly for social func- tions, drink together in an earnest effort to feel less inhibited, play the fool guardedly and feel queer about it afterward. Or they meet for physical sex, in the home or out. And they jog along in family life. Of the de- light of exploring each other's differ- ing but equally important personali- ties and points of view, of the pleasure of real mutual comprehen- sion and appreciation and compan-

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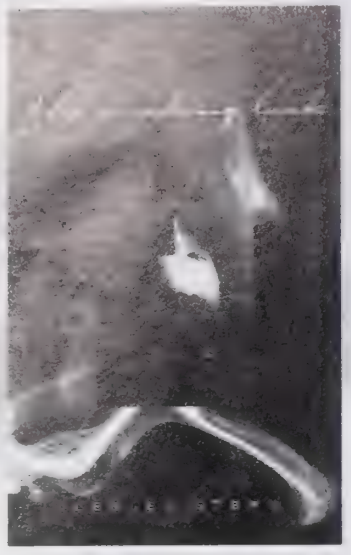
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ionship, there is almost none, inside the home or out. Tradition decrees that after marriage real companionship between persons of opposite sex must cease except between husband and wife. Tradition decrees that all companionship indeed between men and women is tinged with sex. Such an idea as interest in each other as persons, aside from sex, is almost unknown. Women, talking of this among themselves, say, "Men don't want anything else." I am inclined to think they are right. The average American man demands amazingly little from his women—nothing much except to look as pretty as possible on as little money as possible, to run the home economically with as little trouble as possible to the man when he comes home tired. What educated, intelligent, clever, gifted woman is going to be satisfied with that? What average woman would be satisfied even? Ask the average man if he would change places with a woman—any woman. The idea horrifies him. Yet women are far more like him than he knows or wants to know, and modern times have done everything to make her more so.

No, our men, perennial boys, most of them, will not do anything about changing tradition. They do not know how, absorbed as they are in the game of business, abashed as they are in the presence of sex as anything except simply physical, and afraid as they are of women. They are, naturally, afraid of women or they would not cling so to tradition. They were afraid of their mothers when they were children, their imperious, discontented mothers, and that fear carries over into fear of their wives and fear of all women, in industry as well as at home. It leads to the attitude of petty deception which so many perennially boyish men maintain toward their women.

So, naturally enough, men do not want women "getting too smart." [. . .] I do not blame them. There are so many women who chatter without thought, who stop all attempts at conversation with continual commonplaces uttered with all the petty authority of ignorance. And the fe ters of another tradition—that chivalry—still hang upon Americ men. Foolish, haughty wome standing in crowded buses, staring a tired man in a seat, accepting f vors as their right; peevish, idle wo en, wasting their husbands' mone dogmatic women talking ignorant about practical important matters men must try to be polite to them alike. I do not blame American me except for not seeing that not women are the same.

We are so clever with machin we Americans. But we have done silly thing with our women. W have put modern high-powered e gines into old antiquated vehicles. is no wonder the thing is not wor ing. And there are only two cours to follow if we do want it to wor We must go back to the old simp one-horse-power engine or else w must change the body to suit the e gine—one or the other. If the firs then tradition must be held to fro the moment a woman is born, no as it now is, clamped upon her whe after a free and extraordinarily equ childhood and girlhood with boy she attempts to enter into a free an equal adult life with men and finds denied her, to discover then that h education has had nothing to d with her life.

Or else we must be willing to l her go on as she began. This mean that American men must cease b ing "sweet boys" and grow up em tionally as well as physically and fac women as adult men. But they, po things, have not been fitted for tha either! Besides of course they ar afraid of what women might do. An women, inexperienced and eage will probably do as many foolis things as men have until they hav had as much practice.

Of one thing I am sure, howeve There will be no real content amon American women unless they ar made and kept more ignorant or un less they are given equal opportunit with men to use what they hav been taught. And American me will not be really happy until the women are.

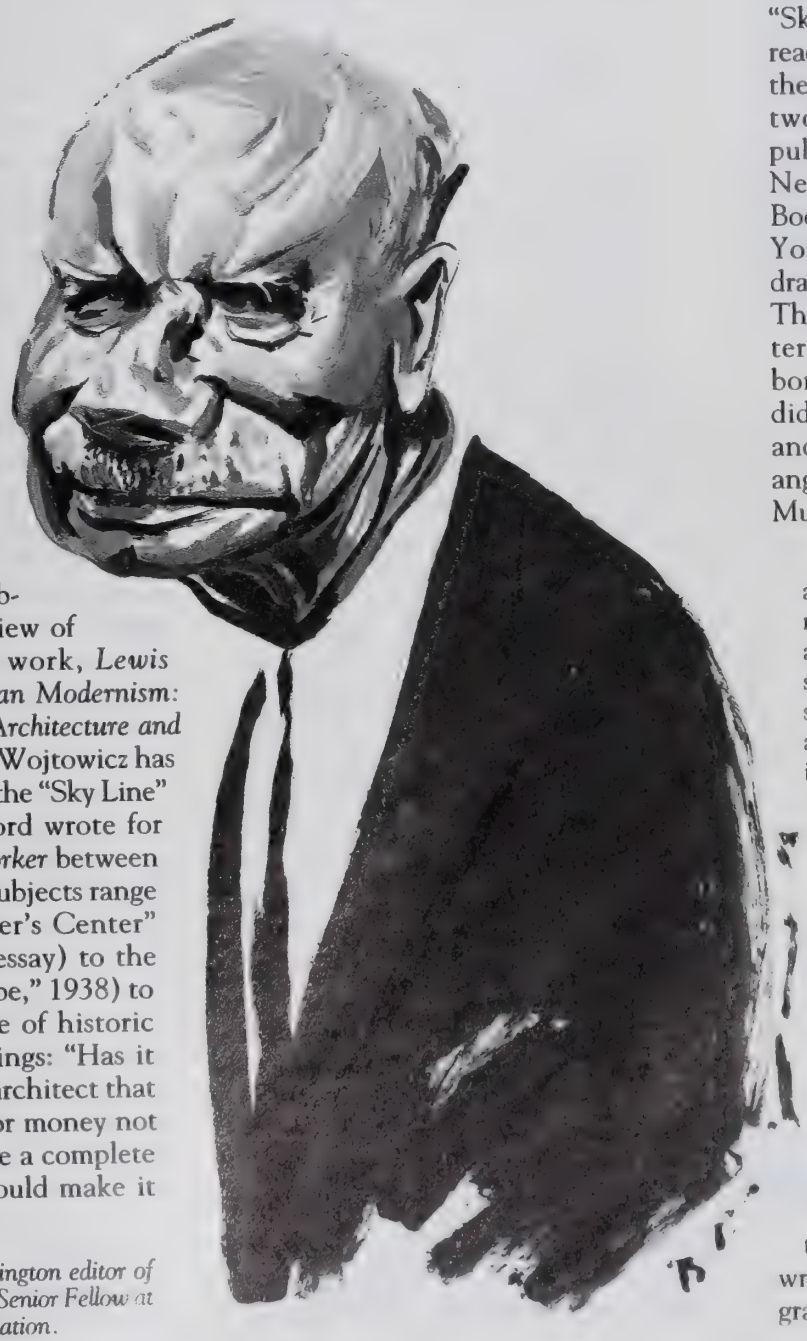
URBAN PHILOSOPHER

A walking tour of Lewis Mumford

by Michael Lind

Discussed in this essay:

Sidewalk Critic: Lewis Mumford's Writings on New York. Edited by Robert Wojtowicz. Princeton Architectural Press. 279 pages. $27.50.



In 1996, Robert Wojtowicz, the literary executor of Lewis Mumford (1895–1990) and a professor of art history at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, published a useful overview of Mumford's life and work, *Lewis Mumford and American Modernism: Utopian Themes for Architecture and Urban Planning*. Now Wojtowicz has collected a number of the "Sky Line" columns that Mumford wrote for Harold Ross's *New Yorker* between 1931 and 1940. The subjects range from "Mr. Rockefeller's Center" (the title of a 1933 essay) to the cloisters ("Pax in Urbe," 1938) to the inappropriate use of historic styles for bank buildings: "Has it never occurred to any architect that the best protection for money not in the vaults would be a complete glass front, which would make it impossible for anyone to stage a holdup without the whole world knowing about it?"

Although Mumford's reprinted "Sky Line" columns are remarkably readable despite the passage of time, the best essays in *Sidewalk Critic* are two brief memoirs that Mumford published in *The New Yorker*: "A New York Childhood: Ta-Ra-Ra-Boom-De-Ay" (1934) and "A New York Adolescence: Tennis, Quadratic Equations, and Love" (1937). The first begins: "Karl Marx characterized the class into which I was born as the petty bourgeoisie. He didn't think much of it as a class, and neither do I; but that was the angle from which I saw New York." Mumford recalled:

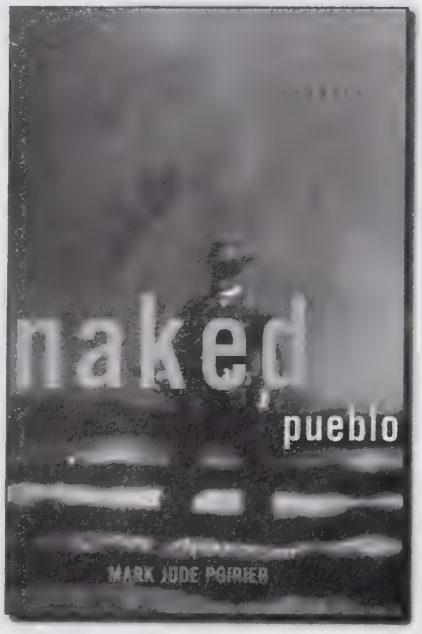
> The gay, wicked world of fashion and sport hung with a sort of stale aura over my childhood; I boasted an aunt who crossed her legs, gingerly smoked Russian cigarettes, and occasionally was abandoned enough, after a cocktail or two, to expose her stockings fully three inches above the ankle. This world was, for me, secretly dominated by the masks and false faces that my grandfather, the headwaiter, would bring home after a celebration at Delmonico's, along with pâté de foie gras, boned turkey, and truffles; these masks were somehow of a piece with the writhing naked ladies and gentlemen that I beheld, at the timely age of four, on the walls of the saloon owned by John L. Sullivan's brother.

Mumford gave up on attempts to become a playwright, screenwriter, or novelist after an autobiographical novella published in 1928,

Michael Lind is the Washington editor of Harper's Magazine and a Senior Fellow at the New America Foundation.

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but he shows the skill of a born writer in his 1937 memoir:

> The other part of my adolescence, particularly in the earlier years, centered chiefly around the old tennis courts in Central Park on the south side of the transverse at Ninety-sixth Street. The courts were then covered with grass, and the most popular court, half-denuded by constant playing, was called the dirt court. An aged keeper, with a gray beard spattered with tobacco juice, had charge of the marking of the courts and the stowing away of the nets. He was probably one of those Civil War pensioners who were still favored on the public payrolls, and we called him "Captain," but he had a vile temper and carried on an uncivil war of his own with most of the people who played there. He was often drunk, and the white lines he marked with his sprinkler showed no disposition to follow the straight and narrow path, but this crusty character gave the place a certain flavor which contrasts with the colorless, antiseptic courtesy of today. We couldn't start playing till the Captain raised the flag on the flagpole.

As this excerpt suggests, describing Lewis Mumford as merely an architecture critic is rather like identifying Mark Twain as a humorist or Goethe as the prime minister of a small German duchy. Recommending an artist to the director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1975, Mumford wrote, "While Le Witt paints in the language of abstraction, he is close to Blake and Ryder in spirit, as he is likewise to Emerson, Thoreau, and—if I may dare to add!—myself." That Mumford put himself on the level of Emerson and Thoreau might seem to have been presumption. But on this subject, as on many others, Mumford was right. He was—to use the words in their original meanings—a philosopher and a humanist.

Mumford took as his subject all of human life and society—from the ancient world to the present, from architecture and art to politics and social life. In so doing, he was inspired by Romantics like John Ruskin and William Morris, and by his mentor, the Scots philosopher Sir Patrick Geddes. From Geddes, Mumford derived, along with unsuccessful coinages like "technics" a "eutopian," and a tendency to the term "organic" as a commen tory adjective, a focus on the hist and sociology of cities and region the basis of an interdisciplinary proach to knowledge and histo He devoted much of his life t four-volume history of Western ci lization, *The Renewal of Life*, whi like its coda, *The City in Hist* (winner of the National Bo Award in 1962), focused on evolution of the city from anci times to the present.

Metahistory like that of Mu ford, Toynbee, and Spengle frowned upon today, thou metahistories continue to be w ten by William H. McNeill, Sam P. Huntington, Francis Fukuya and Jared Diamond, among oth The metahistorian whom Mumf most resembles, perhaps, is H. Wells, another child of the work class with a satirist's eye and a former's enthusiasm, who tried explain humanity to itself in *Outline of History*. But Mumfo whose first book, *The Story Utopias* (1922), was a survey of genre, came to associate utopias Wells's Fabian vision of a wo government run by enlighter technocrats with tyranny. In *Pentagon of Power* (1970), Mumf warned, "The pervasive characte all utopias is their totalitarian ab lutism, the reduction of variety choice, and the effort to esc from such natural conditions or torical traditions as would supp variety and make choice possible

A genuine polymath, Mumf would have been at home amc Renaissance men or Enlightenm philosophes. Unfortunately for posthumous reputation, his ca coincided with the grafting o English-language higher educat of the horrible Teutonic univer system, in which scholars are couraged to increase their acade market value by specializing to point of absurdity. What Gore dal refers to as the "scholar-sq rel" is trained to react with ho and hostility to synoptic think like Mumford, who in a 1933 le to Van Wyck Brooks explained

rogram for *The Renewal of Life* in erms that would make a modern rofessor faint. "By now," he wrote, ny book has expanded into three ooks: one on machines, which overs incidentally the major prob- ms of economics, and of politics nd morals as related to that; the econd on cities, which will cover olitics, and to no small degree in- ude also culture and art; and the ird on the Personality, which will ring everything together, but hich will mainly be concerned ith philosophy and education and arriage and what not." If Mum- rd had not dropped out of City ollege without obtaining his B.A., is intellectual ambition might ave got him expelled.

Compounding his offense against cholarship, Mumford wrote in a lu- d, witty, conversational style at a me when academics were trained o adopt a scholastic prose in hich, not coincidentally, solecisms nd banalities are easily hidden. Pe- arch and the original Italian hu- anists, it should be recalled, re- ected the formal modes of rgumentation favored by the cholastics of the Sorbonne and Oxford in favor of the familiar let- r and its offspring the familiar es- ay, as well as the symposium, the onversational treatise, the satire, he fable, the epic and didactic po- m, the polemical pamphlet. Like he Renaissance humanists he re- embled, Mumford enlisted literary rt in the service of philosophy.

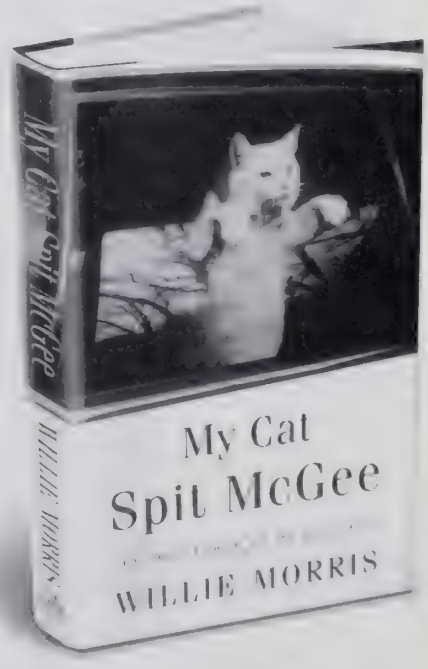
In light of his sins against edantry and obscurity, it comes as o surprise that Mumford's name is lmost never heard on American niversity campuses, except, per- aps, in the architecture and urban tudies departments. The fact re- ains that Mumford was a greater ociologist than most of his contem- oraries; who now reads Pitirim Sorokin or Talcott Parsons? And a page of history from Mumford is worth any number of tomes by today's Marxist, structuralist, post-structuralist, or race-and-gender theorists.

A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country and his own house. The Italian scholar Luciano Pellicani, in *The Genesis of Capitalism and the Origins of Modernity* (English translation, 1994), finds Mumford a better guide to the history of capitalism and constitutional government than either Marx or Weber. Unlike Weber, Mumford understood that Western capitalism was invented in the laboratory of the late-medieval city, centuries before the Protestant Reformation to which Weber attributed so much importance. Mumford's argument that twentieth-century fascist and communist totalitarianism were high-tech versions of the military-bureaucratic despotism of the ancient empires—the "Megamachine"—seems much more plausible, in light of what we now know about Hitler, Stalin, and Mao, than dated attempts such as Hannah Arendt's to explain totalitarianism in terms of the "mass man" or the Frankfurt School's theory of the "authoritarian personality." Nevertheless, American professors probably will not take this great American thinker seriously until they are instructed to do so by some minor Oxbridge don in *The New York Review of Books*.

Mumford's claim to eminence as an American writer does not rest on *The Renewal of Life* and *The Culture of Cities* alone. If he had died at the age of thirty-seven, in 1932, his place in the American pantheon would be secure. Mumford began his writing career in one of the few Golden Ages of higher journalism in the United States.

AS THIS BOOK SUGGESTS, DESCRIBING LEWIS MUMFORD AS MERELY AN ARCHITECTURE CRITIC IS RATHER LIKE IDENTIFYING MARK TWAIN AS MERELY A HUMORIST

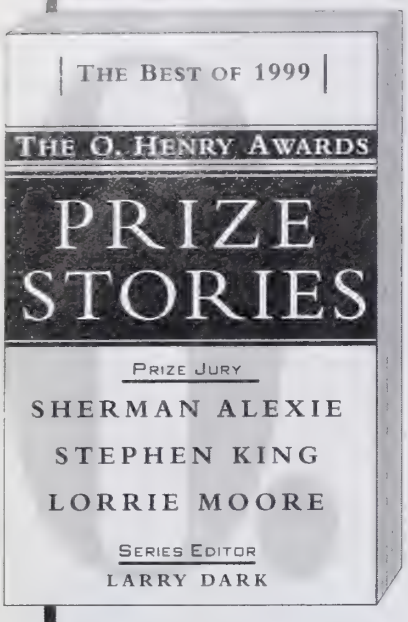
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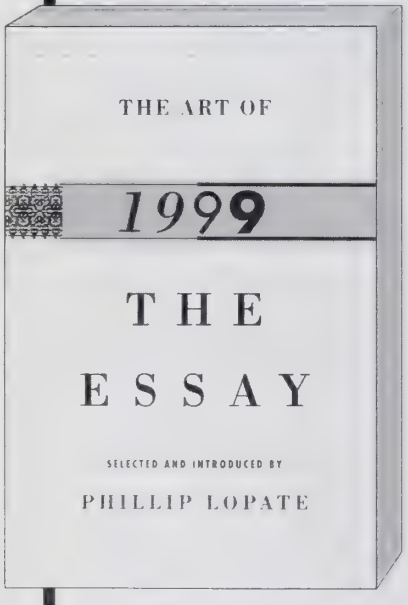
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He wrote for Thomas Bucklin Wells's *Harper's* and Herbert Croly's *New Republic*. He worked for Albert J. Nock at *The Freeman* and was a colleague of Van Wyck Brooks at *The Dial*. He took a class from Thorstein Veblen at the New School for Social Research and helped Alfred H. Barr Jr., Henry-Russell Hitchcock Jr., and Philip Johnson introduce the American public to European modernism. Inspired by his friend Brooks's call for a "usable past," Mumford quickly wrote four books on the history of American culture: *Sticks and Stones: A Study of American Architecture and Civilization* (1924), *The Golden Day: A Study in American Experience and Culture* (1926), *Herman Melville* (1929), and *The Brown Decades: A Study of the Arts in America, 1865–1895* (1931).

Mumford had come of age in one of those periods in U.S. history in which native traditions are devalued and everything British or European is considered superior (our own time is another). In his tetralogy, Mumford made the case that the leading American writers, artists, and architects of the mid-nineteenth century, far from being provincial eccentrics, were native masters who flourished in an era of American innovation between the derivative colonial era and the equally derivative age of Beaux-Arts classicism in art and architecture, and genteel realism in fiction. With a genius equal to Ruskin's in *The Stones of Venice*, Mumford, in *The Brown Decades*, uses the metaphor of earth tones in analyzing the qualities he sees in Walt Whitman's poetry and Henry Hobson Richardson's architecture: "Through all the dun colours of that period the work of its creative minds gleams—vivid, complex, harmonious, contradicting or enriching the sober prevalent browns." In *The Brown Decades*, art criticism rises to the level of art. It is a testimony to Mumford's taste and persuasiveness that the American pantheon he was among the first to define—Whitman and Dickinson, Eakins and Ryder, Richardson and Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright, whom he once described as "the world's greatest living architect"—is still our own.

Recognizing Mumford achievements in fields oth than architectural criticis need not divert attention from th accomplishments for which he chiefly remembered. Indeed, Mu ford the architecture critic dra insight and power from Mumfo the humanist and philosopher, a the essays on architecture and u ban design in *Sidewalk Critic* illu trate the range of his interests a the depths of his knowledge in h chosen specialty.

Although he was reared in Ma hattan, Mumford was anything b a parochial New Yorker. In 1938 wrote, "It should be a great blow a New Yorker's pride to realize th none of the important things th have happened in modern archite ture have taken place here. . . . A the decisive improvements in t design of skyscrapers were made Chicago before 1900." After Wo War II, when various New Yo schools of architecture, paintin and poetry enjoyed an epheme prominence, Mumford proved h independence from fashion boosting the "Bay Region Style" California architecture.

When Mumford wrote his "S Line" columns, the future of N York City and urban America w still undecided. Mumford feared t worst, writing in 1939, "For wh the Futurama really demonstrate that by 1960 all jaunts of more th fifty miles will be as deadly as th now are in parts of New Jersey a in the Farther West." We kn that it all ended badly, in glass b es and Piranesian overpasses a desolate strips, so there is a cert poignancy in wondering what mi have been if Mumford's enthusia for decentralized pedestrian ci and a modernism more eclectic a diverse than the orthodox Inter tional Style had been shared postwar architects, realtors, and ban planners.

Mumford watched in horro the livable New York City of childhood mutated first into "

olis" and then toward "Necrop-
" (What term could be more ap-
priate for today's mausoleal
hattan, a cross between Singa-
and Epcot Center?) Speaking
in favor of historic preservation
re it became fashionable, Mum-
opposed urban planners who
olished human-scale neighbor-
ds to create monstrous highways
housing projects; he clashed re-
edly in print with Robert Moses
o, believe it or not, wanted to
nd Fifth Avenue through the
dle of Washington Square). But
nford disagreed with Jane Jacobs
others who preferred high-den-
areas to well-designed suburbs.
g before the suburbanization of
erica had become a common-
e topic, Mumford was describ-
the "fourth migration" to sub-
and "regional cities." *Sidewalk*
c contains a favorable review of
ght's Broadacre City exhibit at
kefeller Center in 1935; Mum-
praised it as "the new type of
ngested city that the motorcar
the autogiro have made techni-
possible."

e gustibus non est disputandum.
l, it is worth noting that the
erican people have voted with
r feet against Jacobs and others
algic for brownstone apartment
ks and in favor of Mumford and
ght. Only the constant influx of
overished immigrants and a
sient population of affluent sin-
professionals has prevented
hattan's population from de-
ng in absolute numbers, as the
dle and working classes, as well
ffluent families with children,
in search of space, safety, and a
r cost of living. But immigrant
es who themselves escape to the
rbs as soon as their earnings
hit cannot replace the resident
ence of working- and middle-
Americans who once patron-
New York theater and book-
es. Nor can fashion-minded
ies in the publishing and media
istries or European and Latin
erican trust-fund babies in Soho
orm the roles that once be-
ed to bohemian intellectuals in
enwich Village, whose succes-
were long ago driven by high
rents out of New York City to college campuses, think tanks, and rural retreats across the country.

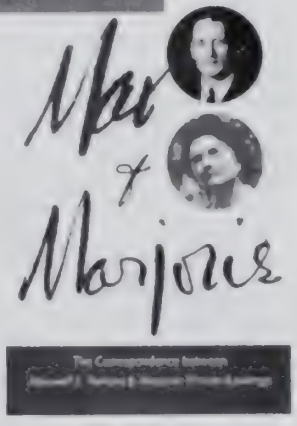
Although Mumford favored decentralization, he was no fan of suburban sprawl: "The planners of the New Towns seem to me to have over-reacted against nineteenth-century congestion and to have produced a sprawl that is not only wasteful but—what is more important—obstructive to social life." Mumford's vague ideal of the "regional city" with "organic" or contextually appropriate architecture was similar to that of the architects Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, the writer James Howard Kunstler, and other proponents of the New Urbanism—a suburb more like a small town than like a large parking lot. But Mumford, who like many early-twentieth-century architecture critics was concerned with housing for low-income workers, would have warned that the New Urbanism will be a failure if its only lasting products are ghettoes for the affluent like Seaside, Florida, and Disney's Celebration. A lifelong liberal, Mumford testified before the U.S. Senate in 1967 against trying to revitalize inner cities by subsidizing public housing and slum clearance. Instead, he argued for his old panacea, the regional city. Today, an increasing number of progressives have arrived at a belated understanding that programs to disperse the urban poor among middle-income suburbs make more sense than expensive efforts to turn inner cities into more comfortable prisons.

"Some day," Mumford wrote his daughter in 1954, "some sedulous Ph.D. will go through my literary remains and compose a really brilliant dinner out of what was left in the garbage pail: thus raising the embarrassing question of what I thought I was doing when I cooked the original dinner itself." Robert Wojtowicz has done a public service in republishing these essays and columns. It is now time for the Library of America to devote a volume or two to one of America's greatest and least appreciated twentieth-century thinkers. ■

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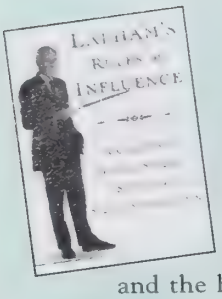
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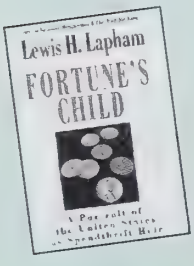
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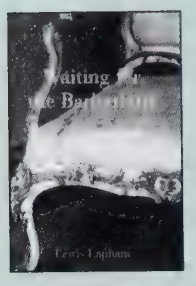
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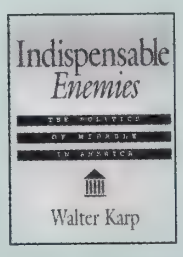
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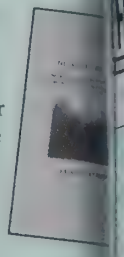
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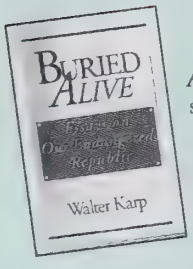
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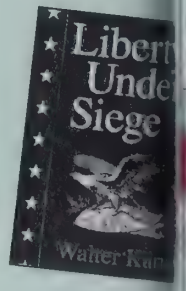
Walter Karp



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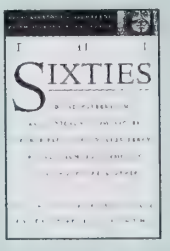
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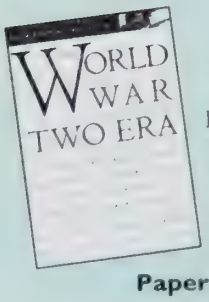
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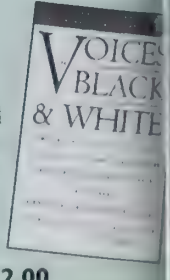
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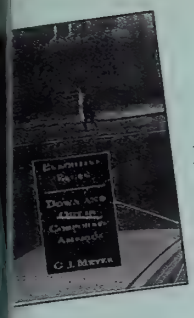
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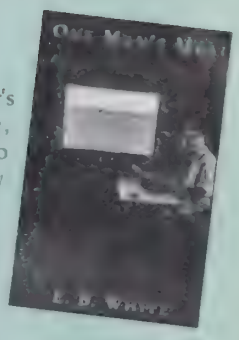


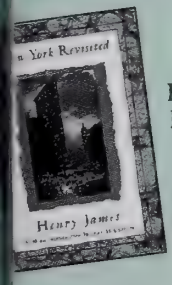
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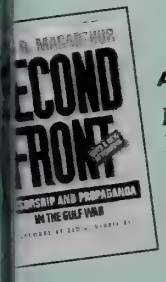
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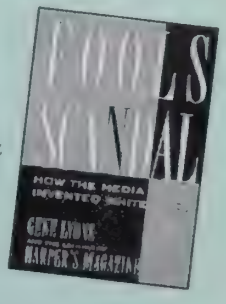


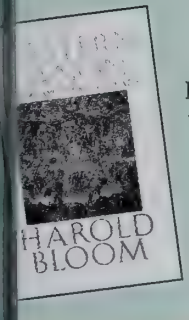
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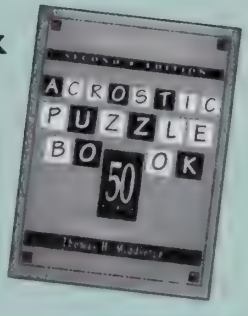


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GREEN WORLD

By Greg Hrbek

My new defense attorney is a young and tireless idealist. She files appeals the way some people knock back drinks or smoke cigarettes. I believe she regards me as more than a client. I believe she sees me as a symbol and a metaphor, and my case as a kind of historical fulcrum. Also, I believe she has a crush on me. It is clear that she is confused by these feelings. They threaten her professional sense of self. They hint at something dark at her core, a previously unglimpsed motivation for her involvement with the lowest of the doomed. Each day, we meet at the glass wall to discuss her hopeless attempts to disable the mechanism of justice.

"You look pretty today," I tell her. "In that suit."

A bloom of color in the cheeks. An attempt at a chastising stare, her little blue eyes rising like little blue moons over the horizon of her eyeglasses.

"Those frames," I say.

"Armani."

"I thought so. They give you a look of severe and erotic intellectualism."

"They're supposed to make me less attractive."

"A beauty like yours can't be disguised, Liza."

"Stop flirting," she says. "You're a condemned man."

"Boy," I correct her.

Clack! Clack! Pow pow pow! Clack! Clack!

This is the sound of my typewriter. Of metal arms, dampened by soft inky ribbon, striking a plane of white. I am thirteen years old, and I have resided in this cell since the time of my eleventh birthday. On that festive morning, my biological mother appeared with a chocolate-frosted cupcake impaled by a tiny baby-blue candle. Forgive and forget, it silently said. Bury the hatchet. I indulged her with a brief pantomime of eye closing, wish making, and blowing out of an imaginary flame. I opened my gift: a brightly colored kazoo. An instrument, she claims, I'd adored in the days before we parted company. She lit a long mentholated cigarette, plastic curlers nesting like giant centipedes in her hair, the chair beneath her creaking like a ship on the high seas. When it comes to this woman, I can't help but feel some disappointment; when thrown, at a green age, surprisingly and squarely into the public eye, one wishes for a leaner and more thoroughbred lineage. My myriad foster parents, I can tell you, are hardly more aristocratic; certainly those subpoenaed and called to the stand at my trial were desperate-looking people who seemed to have good reason to lie and were often tricked into telling the truth. Apparently, if we can believe testimony given under oath, my early years were troubled ones. I don't remember any of them. Not a thing about the world I'd closed my eyes on; and as I sat at the table of my defense, listening to day after day of examination and cross-examination, the eyes in the courtroom were shining all around me like the stars of some teary galaxy, and I, too, felt the urge to cry for the b
they were talki
about, whoever he w

My trial, conducted in a le
than-orderly fashion over the cou
of several weeks in the jurisdiction
X, is considered by many to ha
been a travesty of justice. My sta
appointed counsel, a man with a f
cinating birthmark completely sh
owing his left ear, seemed unfamil
with the relevant cases and statut
and was consistently unprepared
the day's litigation. From time
time, during the prosecution's leng
ier occupations of the floor, he wo
drift off into a reverie that was not
indicator of complicated legal stra
gizing but of simple somnolence,
evidenced by the thin string of dr
that dangled, nooselike, from the c
ner of his mouth. Ultimately he
me in mind of the duelist who,
vored with the first shot, opts chiv
rously to fire into the air. As for t
prosecuting attorney, the man clea
has a long and distinguished career
look forward to as both a practici
lawyer and a writer of legal thrille
His closing argument was a work
oratorical genius, cinematic in sc
and Dostoyevskian in length; an
must say that, by the time he c
cluded, even I found myself comi
around to his point of view. Shor
after my incarceration, he visited
here, in my new home. We met
the glass wall. He, as always, was fl
lessly groomed and dressed; I, al
had not had a shower, and the ora
uniform of my criminal constituer
was clashing miserably with my f
outbreak of acne. He wanted to
sure that there were no hard feelin

Greg Hrbek is the author of The Hindenburg Crashes Nightly, *a novel. He teaches English at Butler University in Indianapolis.*

wanted to make clear that, in an-
ner reality, we might very well have
en friends, and he would have ar-
ed the case for my innocence with
the vigor and seeming conviction
h which he'd argued the case for
guilt. I understood, of course. I
d him that, in my opinion, we all
low the road laid down before us;
d all those roads have been trod be-
e, so many times that the bricks
derfoot are cracked and worn
ooth; and yet, still, we find our
y, be the path direct or circuitous,
a common destination. He nodded
h a scholarly gravity. I mentioned
new legal counsel. Attractive,
idite, alert. A partner-to-be in a
-notch metropolitan firm who had



reed to waive all fees for her ser-
es. He said he knew her well. A
man whose passion for justice is ri-
led only by her passion for deeply
penetrating acts of physi-
cal love.

As you all undoubtedly know
now, the film adaptation of this
l and stormy saga will soon be on
way to a theater near you, star-
g, as your humble author . . . well,
household name escapes me at
e moment, but I am certain you
ow him. A boy-man. Sandy-
ired. Young and dashing. An actor

whose professional range enables him to portray both romantic lead and idiot savant. I myself must admit to a girlish crush, one of those attractions that begins and ends with the airbrushed image, straying perhaps into the storybook terrain of a midafternoon cuddle, but never—not once, I promise you—approaching the shower-room fantasies of violent sodomy broadcast up and down the corridor during his visit by a startling percentage of my peers. He arrived on a Tuesday and stayed until the following Monday, living among us like a missionary from some mythic civilization, wearing our clothes, eating our food, telling us stories about life in his world. His beach house in Malibu, recently featured in *Architectural Digest*. His steamy love affair with an older Academy Award Nominated Actress. Leaning against the bars of his borrowed cell and aiming his little prison-issued mirror in my direction, he spoke of the unremitting assaults by camera, the plague of the Hollywood paparazzi, the crisis of intrusive journalism.

"They're like urban sewer rats," he said. "Hiding. Carrying disease."

"You don't look much like me," I said.

"Have you ever been to the Naked City, Sasha?"

"Will they dye your hair?"

"What?"

"Your hair," I said. "It's blond. Mine's black."

"They'll dye it. They'll make a little prosthetic scar for right here, paint a little acne on my cheek."

A few scattered comments from the cell block about our visitor's hair, about true blondness and the search for it in a dark locked room where a pretty actor boy could scream and scream and never be heard. For some reason, this particular brand of heckling seeped into me like dampness. It chilled my epidermis and gave me a sensation of snow falling between my legs. When I looked back at our guest, fixing his reflected image in my little mirror, he seemed distant and melancholy; and I imagined holding his head to my chest, stroking his blond hair and making the poisonous voices go away.

"What are you thinking about?" I asked.

"My girlfriend."

"Oh."

His smooth, tanned forehead came to rest against the cold metal bars, and he drifted into a tale of dinners, shopping trips, and gondola rides ruined by rabid photographers. He spoke of basic human rights and

stration by Jeffrey DeCoster

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our culture's rampant disrespect for the private lives of public figures, while from the end of the corridor, with the humdrum reliability of a geyser, John Milton Luzinski delivered his mid-morning quota of reproductive fluid, making the usual breathy demands of imaginary female hostages.

It was only a few mornings ago that Mr. Stearns appeared at my cell—bright and early, in his spotless, perfectly pressed uniform—and, cuffing my hands, escorted me, in an uncharacteristic silence, down the corridor, past the curious and careworn faces of my peers, past the guard station and through a maze of blank, seemingly soundproof hallways that terminated at a heavy gray door. Here, time seemed to stand still. My ear was nearly level with my companion's belly, whose digestive murmurings evoked things epic and primeval, subterranean lava exploding through the ancient oceans and cooling into continental land masses. "Mr. Stearns," I said, "you've been eating beef again." A moment later, the door buzzed open. An overwhelming burst of light. I blinked and shielded my eyes—somewhat melodramatically, somewhat biblically—until Mr. Stearns offered to lend me his imported sunglasses. The chaotic radiance lifted like a curtain. There were the prison walls garnished with curlicues of shiny electrified wire. Fiery leaves scattered on the ground and coming loose from surrounding trees. Birdsong. A plump, red-breasted robin extracting a worm from a plot of grass. Flowers turning their heads eastward, still heavy with sleep, to be warmed by the young sun.

To be outdoors in the crisp cool of autumn!

How light and buoyant my heart felt, swelling balloon-like in my chest; and for a moment I lost myself, and it seemed I was walking down a suburban lane, schoolbooks in one arm and a bag lunch in the other, the impression of a mother's kiss still fresh on my cheek and a paternal shadow merging with mine on the ground, slipping effortlessly over the scudding whisperi leaves, while up ahead the scho bus idled patiently, door ajar, wi children moving and humming i side like as many bees in a hone combed hive. Too soon did w reach the steps of a small bric building. Mr. Stearns removed t sunglasses and, brandishing a poc et comb, raked my hair into a se blance of order while I gazed up the nearby guard tower, realizi suddenly how strange and unprec dented this all was. Inside, we a cended a broad staircase to the se ond floor, where a door with frosted window stood open a crac Mr. Stearns trilled his knuckles u on the glass. A baritonal respon from inside. Then the door swu open to reveal the warden seated a massive mahogany desk, flank by two windows throwing identic trapezoids of sunlight on the bloo red carpet. On the wall behind hi hung a photograph, nearly as lar as the desk itself, in an elabora wooden frame. A decimated fores The fallen bodies of a half-dozen g ant trees stacked in pyramidal fas ion upon the flatbed of an eighteen wheeled truck. Two men, insignificant and unreal as little t figures, standing at the rear end the vehicle. The sky above a po dery blue.

"Good morning, Sasha."

"Good morning, sir."

As Mr. Stearns guided me to large armchair, I noticed on the wa den's desk, resting beneath his lo strong fingers, a mustard-yellow e velope.

"Sleep well?" he asked.

"Like a log, sir."

"Let me come straight to t point, my boy."

"Yes, sir."

"Sasha, my boy, in the two yea you've been here, we've all becom very fond of you."

"Thank you, sir."

"Not just the men, but the staff well . . . and I, myself."

"The feeling is mutual, sir. A things considered, I can't imagi having a more supportive atmo phere in which to pay my debt to s ciety."

As I completed this sentence, t

vy hand of Mr. Stearns weighed
n on my neck with the reassur-
warmth of a freshly baked ham.
ncing up, I caught him in the act
wiping a jewel-like tear from his
ek. As for the warden, his posture
facial expression put me in mind
patriot gazing at the flag of his
ntry on some historic and senti-
ntal holiday. His fingers were un-
going a series of nervous conjoin-
s, making psychoanalytical
dows on the desk and the enve-
e. Peaked roof. Church with
ple. Twenty-two-caliber hand-

I see you have an envelope there,

Yes, my boy."

A good minute elapsed; the ham
led solidly on my shoulder, and
shadow fingers twisted them-
es into grotesque abstractions
r that envelope, which resembled
hing so much as an announce-
nt of one's privileged status in
e nationwide million-dollar
epstakes. I met the warden's eyes,
sky-blue irises misting over with
d and terrible intention, and felt
denly like a dog, some helpless
-wetting dog, abandoned in a re-
e and faraway place.

It's from the governor," I said,
't it?"

I'm profoundly sorry, my boy."

He picked it up and transferred it
my shackled hands, explaining
t this personal meeting was high-
rregular, but under the circum-
nces et cetera et cetera. I watched
lips moving, but the words were
in a sound like water surging just
of sight, an ominous imminent
r that spoke to me of the power of
rents. Yes, my friends, my little
t was being drawn unstoppably
vard, to that place where the riv-
akes a suicide plunge and spectral
nbows tell their lies of beauty.
xt thing I knew, Mr. Stearns was
ling me from the room, down the
rcase, and into that glorious di-
nsion of light and air; and as we
ked silently, side by side, the au-
n leaves drifting down like giant
lamed snowflakes, a choking
nd escaped from my throat. Mr.
arns did not break his stalwart
de but gripped my shoulder with a tender firmness, while the leaves scudded and whispered, suggesting we order up some hot chocolate from the canteen and devote the rest of the morning to playing Scrabble.

It is strange to think that, in a few short days, I will be put to death for the crime of first-degree murder, a crime whose details continually elude my conscious grasp, like a firefly chased deeper and deeper into some dark wood. To be sure, the signing of my death warrant has been having a curious effect on both staff and inmates alike. Everyone is behaving quite inexplicably. One day, I am shunned like a leper; the next, the entire unit is making me gifts of bubble-gum cigarettes and breaking into tear-jerking renditions of Negro spirituals. They seem to have settled down now, into a collective state of fearful paralysis. A hushed silence pervades the corridor, and a strange purple light seems to be bathing us all, as in the hours before some rapturous apocalypse. As for me, I float in a dreamlike place, trapped between doubt and belief, not unlike someone who, upon entering a funeral parlor to bid farewell to an old friend, is asked, with the utmost civility, to kindly step into the open and empty casket.

Yes.

No.

It is undeniable. It is impossible. This divided world. Do you believe, gentle reader, that for every self there is an other, a single other who is the second half of a whole, a being of uniqueness identical to one's own? That some of us meet that counterpart at an inevitable point in space and time, and fewer of us still, having found that other, lose them forever? Is there a place where that lost other waits for us, a place without jealousies or possessiveness, a place without hurting, where severed life can be rejoined? I have squandered everything. Everything.

Tonight, I have received the correspondence that I have been eagerly awaiting. In light of my circumstances, many of you will no doubt

the inspirational and emotionally intelligent greetings of Mary Anne M. B. L. Radmacher



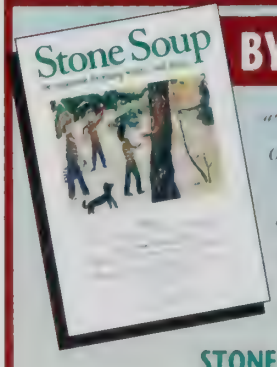
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be surprised by its nature; others, the incurable romantics in the crowd, have perhaps seen it coming from the start: the cherub's arrow tracing its invisible arc, whistling softly toward its destination and lodging in the humble breast of my diary. Without further delay, let me state that the object of my affections is most absolutely not one of my fellow prisoners. For me, eros is a thing governed by the soul, not the libido; and passion grows out of a mutual sensitivity, shared dreams, and a Frommian conception of the intimate, as opposed to the preoccupation with bodily apertures which seems, regrettably, to be the foundation of most jailhouse homoeroticism. Breathe easy. It is not a fellow inmate of whom I speak. For even if my emotional makeup allowed for such an alliance, there is simply no future in relationships whose common denominator is a sentence of death—nothing down that road but pain and suffering. No, this affair has nothing to do with depravity and delusion. It has to do with language and love.

Even now, as I type away, she gazes at me, in wallet size, from the wall of my cell. Her auburn hair and gently freckled face. Her dark, void-like eyes, and lashes so long and majestically curved they seem to breach the two-dimensional plane of the photograph, reaching out in an undying butterfly kiss. She is not smiling so much as daring the photographer, with an airy expression, to attempt to capture the fullness of her in the corner of a middle-school gymnasium. Her letter, which skated into my cell just after midnight, rests on the bed beside me. Her words are desperate, misted lightly with a cinnamon perfume, replete with superlatives, and shining with girlish fables of our alternate realities.

I wonder what is more desirable.

To be the author of such a work, or the one to whom it is dedicated? To be she who seals the envelope, or he who opens it? She who lies awake in a warm bedroom, anxiously separated from the letter in question, or he who lies awake in a cold cell, in covetous possession of it? What, I wonder, is more tragic? To be condemned to love—or condemned to die? To be the teenage daughter of a warden, or to be that same warden's teenage prisoner?

It is through the kindness and courage of Mr. Stearns, the most romantic screw ever to walk the cold hallways of death row, that Francesca and I have corresponded in times of emergency and, on occasions as rare and heart-stopping as a total eclipse of the sun, have met in person, after dark, in the deserted recesses of the prison complex. Several nights after my grievous news from the governor's office, she staged a decoy sleepover at the house of a friend, and Mr. Stearns arranged for a nocturnal supply truck to smuggle her past the gate. It was dangerous business; if discovered, Mr. Stearns's correctional career would be ruined, Francesca would be shipped off to some all-girls preparatory school at the summit of a puritanical mountain, and I—well, what did I have left to risk? My capacity for self-sacrifice had been hunted to extinction.

Just after midnight, I heard my friend's approach, his keys jangling softly and seductively. I'd passed the evening in candlelight, reading Rilke's *Book of Hours* and staring at Francesca's photo, and was in a rather mystical frame of mind. As my cell door eased open, I laid my book down, securing the photograph tenderly between its prayers, and extinguished my candle flame. Of course, there was the usual needling from the peanut gallery. Suggestive whistling, the breathy sounds of ersatz feminine ecstasy, all broadcast at a volume low enough that we could still hear Jimmy Lee Johnson murmuring in his sleep, reciting verbatim, as he does every night in Dickensian installments, the unabridged text of his criminal trial transcript. The execution chamber loomed before us. Inside, there is a light that never goes out, and at night a false moonbeam streams from the window and illuminates the end of the corridor. It always seems that something should happen there after dark, in that empty shining space; and sometimes I dream about it, about a man patiently standing there in a long dark overcoat, smoking, his face ur seeable in the shadow of a brimme hat. But I don't know who he is what he is waiting for. I hugged th far wall, trying to avoid the touch that light. Soon enough, we wer safely on our way to the rendezvo point.

"I'm frightened," I whispered.

"You love her," Mr. Stearns sai "Love is two-thirds fear, kiddo."

I pressed a hand against my ches I was half out of my body now, Francesca, I knew, was half out hers. Mr. Stearns stopped at the e trance to the shower room, rapped code on the door, then inserted th key into the lock. The lock tumble rhythmically. The door swung ope and she flung her arms around m neck, pressing her wet cheek again mine. Oh, Kooky, she said, agai and again. How long since our la embrace? Five months, two week and eleven days. And now, in h arms, the endlessness of that tim was burned away in a flash, as to ment is burned away for the marty the raw fibers of his soul tinglin with a glorious ascent. Mr. Stearn had withdrawn, soundlessly, into th hall. The door was closed behind u We stood alone in the showers, b fore the row of animal cage stalls. snapped off the lights and, in th pitch blackness, the tiled walls b came the walls of a secret grotto, th leaky plumbing the syncopated dri of water into an underground poo There was little to be said in word This was farewell and both of knew it. With each precious m ment, I committed to memory ar other detail of her—the scent of h hair, the topography of her lips, th pitch and timbre of her voice as sh repeated, in a slowly swellin crescendo, that term of endearmen that is one of the three points on o triangle of love. You see, I am Kool la, she is Fran, and our first-born so he was to be name Oliver.

My friends, it is with some di ficulty that I compose this entry, th wrist of my dominant hand bein sprained, sight in my left eye less tha perfect, and my myriad cuts sti stinging from the touch of Dr. Grei

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Incitement to Violence

Do the Palestinians Live up to Their Oslo Commitments?

In the so-called "Oslo Agreement", often called the "peace process", Israel undertook unilaterally to make valuable concessions to the Palestinians, concessions that would eventually enable them to form an autonomous entity and to be masters of their own destiny. Never in the recorded history of mankind has any state made such concessions to one of its resident minorities. Israel requested and was solemnly promised very little in return—primarily that the Palestinians would abstain from violence and from incitement to violence.

What are the facts?

The reality, regrettably, has not at all lived up to the agreement and to the promises made. While Arafat and other Palestinian leaders proclaim their peaceful intentions in English before Western audiences, they are brutally frank when they address their own people in Arabic and away from Western newspeople and television cameras. There is constant incitement to violence and frank declaration of the ultimate goal—firmly embedded in the never rescinded PLO Covenant—namely the destruction of the State of Israel and its replacement by "Palestine," an Arab state.

> "Peace will not come...until the Palestinians and the Arab nations commit themselves to full acceptance of Israel and are willing to live with it in peace."

The statements that follow were made by Palestinian leaders not too long ago. They are representative of similar ones made before and since.

PA Chairman Yasser Arafat ***(Palestinian Television, August 9, 1997):*** *"We must confront them, we must confront them. We must confront them in every sense of the word."*

Yasser Arafat ***(Palestinian Television, August 6, 1997):*** *"...let us commit ourselves before Allah and the Palestinian people that we shall lead the coming battle as we have led previous battles. An oath is an oath and a promise is a promise. The whole world stands by us, while they are alone. They are afraid, but we are not. We cling to the oath and the promise. The Palestinian people is faithful to its oath, the one which we swore upon the first day when the initial shot was fired and the first of our martyrs fell...We are marching together with the blessing of Allah, my brothers, we are marching together to Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Jerusalem."*

Kamel Hamid, head of Fatah (a faction of the PLO) ***(At a Rally, August 10, 1997):*** *"...all means are legitimate to uproot the despicable occupation."*

Sheikh Hamed Bitawi, chairman of the Palestine Religious Scholars Association ***(July 27, 1997):*** *"That which befell the infidel nations will also occur to the State of Israel. We are certain that Allah will destroy the State of Israel either through natural disasters, such as an earthquake, or at the hands of the Moslems, or both."*

PA Mufti Ikrama Sabri ***(In a sermon at Al-Aksa Mosque, July 11, 1997):*** *"Oh Allah, destroy America for she is ruled by Zionist Jews...Allah shall take revenge on behalf of his prophet against the colonialist settlers who are sons of monkeys and pigs..."*

PA Minister for Jerusalem Affairs Feisal Husseini ***(May 18, 1997):*** *"Israel is attempting to obstruct peace...The only option remaining for us will be an alternative option...war."*

Yasser Arafat ***(Addressing a crowd in Tulkarem, April 28, 1997):*** *"I now see the walls of Jerusalem, the mosques of Jerusalem, the churches of Jerusalem. My brothers! With blood and with spirit we will redeem you, Palestine!"*

Nabil Ramlawi ***(At a session of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, Reported March 17, 1997):*** *"Israeli authorities...infected by injection 300 Palestinian children with the HIV virus during the years of the intifada."*

All of these actual verbatim quotations are only a minute fraction of the inflammatory statements with which Palestinian leaders whip up their followers to a frenzy of hatred and violence against Israel. It is totally against the letter and the spirit of the Oslo accord. But it is in line with all the other acts of defiance and non-compliance on the part of the Palestinians. For example, and most egregiously perhaps, that famous Covenant that unequivocally calls for the destruction of Israel has never been rescinded. Instead of combating terrorist activity, the Palestinian Authority (P.A.) continues to release well-known members of terrorist groups. Another blatant violation is the size and the weaponry of the so-called P.A. police force, which was fixed by Oslo at a maximum of 24,000, but which is now estimated at over 50,000 members, many of them former terrorists and equipped with smuggled advanced military weapons. It is essentially an army in waiting. How do people expect Israel to bring further "sacrifices for peace" to appease these fanatics and why, in the face of daily evidence of Palestinian intransigence and murderous hatred, should Israel even consider turning over vital strategic assets to those who are openly committed to its destruction? Peace will not come to this part of the world until the Palestinians and the Arab nations commit themselves to full acceptance of Israel and are willing to live with it in peace. And that day seems to be a long way off.

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er's iodine. But a writer's work cannot be postponed on account of pain. On the contrary, there is no state more fertile for the act of composition than one of mental or physical anguish; so on with the story, which takes us now on a second journey across the prison grounds, identical to the first in all respects but that Mr. Stearns has been supplanted by Mr. Corrigan and the autumn sun by dark clouds spitting pebbles of hail all over the place. At present, the hail has turned to rain, but this morning—only hours after my tragic and transcendent conjunction with my secret love—it was hail bouncing violently off the rooftops and the walkways and off of my head and face, which I protected, as best I could, with my bare shackled hands while I was shoved and dragged forward by the temperamental and less-than-popular Mr. Corrigan. On the second floor of the small brick building, the frosty-windowed door stood open, and the warden sat at his desk in an amber glow, the giant framed photograph of the felled redwood trees spotlit by a tiny lamp affixed to the top of the frame. Without taking his bespectacled eyes off a stapled report, he nodded gravely, and Mr. Corrigan exited the room, leaving me just inside the door. The warden flipped a page. The hail tapped percussively against the building. A few cold stones lodged in my hair silently melted. He flipped another page, and, as he digested its content, reached out to a small collection of picture frames that stood clustered at one corner of his desk. Very slowly, he rotated one of them, turning the image to face me. Francesca's seventh-grade photograph. I had, suddenly, an uncontrollable urge to urinate.

"Sleep well, my boy?"

Outside, the storm had lost its frigid edge, and rain was tracing lacrimal pathways down the panes of the twin windows. The warden set the report down on the desk. Removed his reading glasses and gently folded the arms together. He fixed me with a leaden stare, which elicited a warm trickle down the inner thigh of my left leg.

"Sir . . ."

"There's no need to explain, my boy. I was young once, you know." He rose to his feet and stepped slowly out from behind the desk. "It is my conviction," he said, "that the adolescent male bears no true responsibility for actions taken under the duress of passion, be it of a violent or romantic nature. What I must do to you, my boy, three days hence and in the next several minutes, runs contrary to all my personal beliefs as a social reformer. However, as I feel you well know, the private self is rarely in concert with the public. As the director of this facility, and as the father of a twelve-year-old girl, certain responsibilities, arguably unfortunate ones, fall to me, and to me alone. A man's bond with his daughter is peerless in its complication. It is fraught with horrible jealousies, unspeakable fantasies, and a loving devotion that is like a sun unto the fleeting spark of your carnal desire. Do I make myself clear, my boy?"

I nodded, shut my eyes, and a moment later felt myself propelled forward, losing my balance and careening headfirst into the side of a piece of furniture. A blood vessel had burst somewhere above the bridge of my nose. My bladder was emptied. As I struggled to my knees, I saw before me, on the edge of the desk, Francesca's tender freckled face, turned as if forced to watch these proceedings. I reached up and averted her eyes. Then I felt the warden's hands lifting me by the collar of my shirt.

Dreamed last night of a dark little house and an unkempt yard, its grass dotted with dandelions whose flowering heads were as brilliant as suns and whose souls, when I blinked, appeared in the air wherever I looked. There was a terror stealing my breath away. This thing with a door and a roof and windows. This thing that hides the secrets of its dwellers, that absorbs truth into its walls and carpets, its closets and beds. I looked down at the gun sleeping soundly in the embrace of my right hand, and for the first time I thought to question my attitude toward it. Until now, I'd been treating it like some irreplaceable possession, holding it near, refusing release as one refuses to release a newfou lover or a talisman for fear th someone else will snatch it up a steal away its protections and charms. But what, after all, di know of this weapon? To be sure, had awakened together in that d little room in the house across t unkempt yard; in all likelihood, had shared something there, how er inaccessible the memory; and remained, to this very minute, each other's intimate company—a yet, the sight of it filled me with ease, for did closeness not go hand hand with vulnerability; had I n in all likelihood, revealed to i measure of my deepest secrets; a might I not find myself, at some ture time, betrayed by the very thi I'd trusted so completely?

There seemed little choice but bury it in the woods.

But before I could do so, I w awakened by the sounds of mornin Locks springing open in the d tance, the slow advance of t breakfast carts. A handful of priso ers stirring from sleep. Urine jetti into toilet bowls. The ignition cigarettes. The choking infamy Money G's morning bowel mov ment, making its way up the corrid with the invisible menace of biolo cal weaponry. I went to the sink wash my face and underarms. I not the appearance of yet another cu ing hair in the center of my brea bone. There are five now. Five lit black weeds growing in the center my chest. Then I turned to see t warden and several guards passing my cell, carrying a small, darkly va nished wooden booster seat, remin cent of those encountered in on friendly neighborhood barbersho and a crudely fashioned mannequ of youthful stature. I must say, it difficult to subdue one's curiosity u der such circumstances. Your i pulse, I can tell you, is to take yo little mirror from the edge of t sink, and, easing it through the b of your cell, angle its reflective su face in a westerly direction, that rection where the sun is wont to s and the day to come to a close. Ha ing myself obeyed this impulse, I w able to see that blank-faced sexle doll—limp wrists and ankl

pped and a metal halo embracing head—sitting placidly in the large en chair.

t was quite some time later that I erged from darkness, a sharp pain he back of my head. Evidently, I l lost consciousness and pitched kward, striking the top of my ewriter. Since the signing of my th warrant, these blackouts have ome increasingly frequent. I must ember to speak to Dr. Greiner. A ter such as I, one who relies on obiography as the foundation of art, simply cannot be fainting at slightest provocation. By the e I got back to the bars and rein- ed my view of the corridor's end, execution-room door was shut, l my powdered eggs had grown d, a family of houseflies busy on jaundiced surface, like pioneers o have pushed west and claimed partial ownership of a dream.

Earlier this afternoon, I re- ved a phone call from my young l idealistic attorney. I have not n much of her of late. She has l little time for social visits, fran- as she has been with her venth-hour attempts to save my . At the booth, in the shadow of . Corrigan, I took the phone mewhat nervously, I must admit) my two cuffed hands and held it my ear. The famed metropolitan had placed me on hold and was nsmitting a piece of classical mu- —the first aggrieved movement, if n not mistaken, of Saint-Saëns's nphony No. 3 in C Minor, a com- ition that spoke to me of denied eals and rejected pleas for execu- clemency. I imagined my beauti- and idealistic attorney sitting at desk, countless stories above the ming city, staring at her tele- ne and the little red light throb- g on it like a heart. Abruptly the sic disappeared, the vacated space d by the sound of a woman cry- .

Liza?"

I'm a failure," she sobbed.

twisted the phone cord around fingers. Her sadness was like a pical storm raging in some distant tude.

"It was unanimous," she said. "Seven to none. Not even one dissent."

"Well," I said, after a long and awkward silence, "law isn't everything," at which she burst again into tears, choking and wheezing, everything muffled as if she were trying to suffocate herself in the plush leather of her office chair.

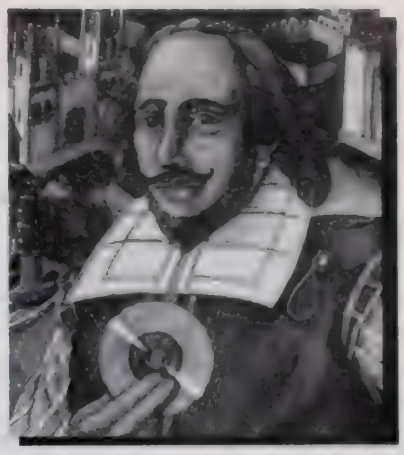
"He left me yesterday," she said.

I burrowed deeper into the corner of the booth. I tried to hide from Mr. Corrigan as I extended a pinky and cleared a strange and disconcerting wetness from my cheek.

"Billy left me," she repeated, "for an aerobics instructor."

Considering all that has happened recently, it came as no small surprise that the warden had designated my final meeting with my biological mother a contact visit. Instead of sitting on opposite sides of the glass wall, in a silence punctuated by occasional commas and semicolons of speech, we converged in a small room furnished with a faux-leather couch, an end table with a plastic ashtray, and a television hanging ominously, like a giant wasps' nest, from one corner of the ceiling. She drew me into her spongy mass, arms clamping around me, then held me by the shoulders and stared at me intently, like a schoolgirl straining to memorize the spelling of some strange and multisyllabic vocabulary word. We were supplied with junk food, soda, and coffee. My mother smoked her mentholated cigarettes while we watched reruns of situation comedies, avoiding news magazines, live broadcasts, and monologues of late-night talk shows, whose jokes were centered around tomorrow's historic event. Finally, she commenced shifting in her seat, making the frictional motions of the guest who wishes to be released from social enslavement. I told her I had to be getting back to the death-watch cell, I still had some important entries to record in my diary; and she said they'd be missing her outside the gate, at the candlelight vigil. She did not kiss me goodbye, but how can I blame her? The events of these last few years have

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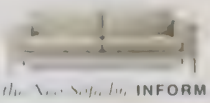
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put my poor biological family through a battery of tests that few could hope to pass. We, if I may employ that cozy pronoun, have been torn asunder. Suffice to say that even now, as I type away, my mother stands beyond the prison's northern wall, holding her tiny waxen torch under the black canopy of night, singing hymns with the advocates of mercy, while my father, in his smoky rented room, prepares his statements for the press on the morality of retribution and the demands of justice.

Gentle mother and angry father.

But let me not misrepresent, let me not oversimplify either one of them. My mother, I know, despises me, regrets the day I exited, breathing, from her womb; and my father, I am certain, feels the deathly pain of Abraham, and even as he lashes me to the rock and raises the dagger over my heart, he is waiting for a voice to call out from above and release him from his duty. What will happen to them after I am gone? The strange weather of love cannot be forecast, for often does the sun not shine in one chamber of the heart even as the other floods with rain? I want to believe that after this affair concludes itself, my mother and father will find their way back to each other, to a place uncomplicated by children, and live out the rest of their days in peace. The greater part of me, though, the part that has given up the reading of fairy tales, fears that cozy pronouns no longer have a place in our lexicon of thought and speech, that like the particles of a split atom we are spinning hopelessly, randomly through space, and that a conflict of this kind can find its end only in divorce.

Soon, very soon, the film version of this sad and stormy saga will be featured at your local multiplex, and you will learn all the details that I cannot supply. On this very night, even as I type, the film is enjoying its premiere at the famous Chinese Theatre in the City of Angels. Yes, the premiere is tonight, and I regret to say that, despite a gracious invitation that even now, from the wall of my cell, requests the pleasure of my company at this gala event, I am not in attendance, as I have a prior engagem... at dawn sharp. Earlier today, I ... quite upset about this conflict. Q... childishly upset. I spent hours sulk... on my cot, refusing to eat, refusing... speak or communicate in any way. ... high noon, under the general head... of protest and rebellion, I urina... through the bars of my cell and i... the corridor, and a few hours later, ... the way to the shower, threw a t... per tantrum so violently irratio... that it was necessary to sedate me ... my own safety. Since then, I h... come to accept the hard, if somew... obvious, fact that in this life one ... ten encounters obstacles immune ... the power of desire.

So.

I am not in the audience on t... thrilling night; I am not standing ... tuxedoed and discreetly handcuff... while the film's young star, my ci... matic double, presses his hands i... the primordial sludge of that fam... sidewalk; and I am not being cha... fered afterwards to the private pa... at his Malibu beach house. I can ... it, though, blurry and silent in ... crystal ball of my imagination. ... amoeba-shaped swimming pool, ... water slick with varicolored refl... tions. Blue-noted jazz windi... through the air. Celebrities bo... from the pages of shiny magazi... and tabloid newspapers. Tipsy ... sparkling cider, my auburn-hair... consort and truest love has plott... our intimate escape from t... madding crowd. Down the cliffs... we go, my hands, with sudden ma... cian's skill, slipping free of th... binding. The moon like fresh m... spilled all over the surface of ... ocean. The waves making love wi... the beach while we run barefoot, s... and I, falling to the sand. Surf was ... ing against us as we kiss. Wet s... the smell of freedom filling my lun... as the thwap thwap thwap of a he... copter becomes audible. Sear... lights sweep the beach, illuminati... momentarily a group of armed m... who are moving, with the lanky lo... of wolves, over the sandy terra... Sirens wailing from the heights. ... bullhorned voice demanding ... peaceful surrender. Do I have any ... nal words? I was a killer once; now ... am a writer.

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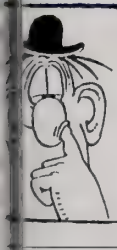
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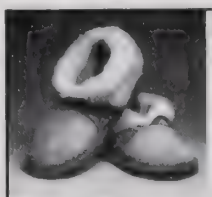
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TTERS

inued from page 10

ng, least resolvable of human licaments, and each of them re- s what we all, in the end, whatev- ur experience, seem to become: al innocents.

ıony Giardina
ence, Mass.

ee Siegel's analysis of Stanley rick's *Eyes Wide Shut* is a fasci- ng account of the film, full of ı insights and smart references, ultimately, Siegel's take is just as ted as those of the critics he tises, since no one can claim a ue vantage into the mind of a t, and dead, filmmaker. Siegel disagree with David Denby, An- v Sarris, J. Hoberman, Louis and, Michiko Kakutani, et al., to insist that his own opinion— ever rigorously derived—is hwhile while deriding the opin- of others is a foolhardy exercise, the paradox that arises out of all cism of criticism.

ıa Klein
cago

he arrogantly instructive tone of Siegel's essay compels me to e in defense of the people who as much thought to the film as el did but still disliked it. He ac- s the critics of letting hype de- ine their experience of the film, he accuses the rest of us of not wing a work of art when we see However, in his explanation of Stanley Kubrick made the ces he did, and how they are to correctly" interpreted, Siegel ns to be missing the point. A ine work of art does not stand ll on the pans or praises of the cs, nor should it require a didac- point-by-point interpretation nted in its defense to prevail its audience.

ou can understand the film and brably still not like it, but you ot proclaim your dislike of the without basing it on your under- ding," Siegel writes. My guess is he wanted to say "without bas- ing it on my understanding"—that is, if you disliked the film, you didn't understand it at all.

Lauren Hancock
Chicago

Tender Mercies

Roger D. Hodge's criticism of Jedediah Purdy's book *For Common Things*—that it is naïve, scantily researched, overly earnest, and poorly written—may be valid, but his review ["Thus Spoke Jedediah," September] would have been more persuasive if he hadn't based his attacks entirely on Purdy's youth. Hodge calls Purdy a "young sage" three times in eight paragraphs, and there are at least seven direct references to Purdy's or his peers' youth to support the position that Purdy's philosophy is, at best, adolescent.

Hodge's implication that no one at the "tender age of twenty-four" could possibly have anything to say is utterly unsound. I imagine that he would maintain that Henry V knew nothing of conquest, and dismiss Mozart's early works because only a more experienced ear could compose "real" music.

D. C. Burton
San Francisco

On the assumption that published reviews are supposed to enlighten the broader readership, it would have been virtuous for Roger D. Hodge to move beyond tallying the technical shortcomings of Jedediah Purdy's book to actually making an argument. I'm prepared to concede that the book has all the faults Hodge enumerates and then some, but what bothers me is that nowhere in his irritated review does Hodge inquire whether Purdy is right.

"Last time I checked," Hodge writes, "Wendell Berry was still plowing his Kentucky farm with a horse and issuing occasional treatises on the value of simple rural life, good neighbors, and local politics. Why, then, do the second- and third-hand musings of a twenty-four-year-old command our attention?" Implicit in that remark is the concession that there is no avalanche of public discourse on these issues.

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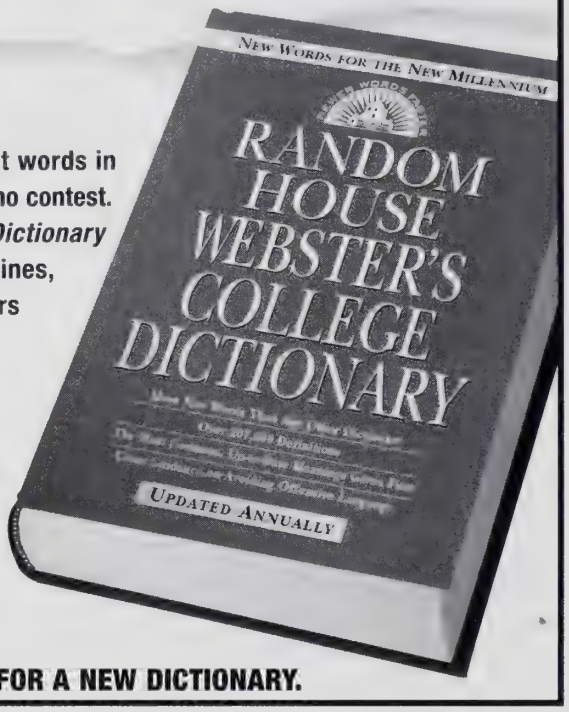
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W	H	I	T	E	E	U	H	O	L	L	A	N	D
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I	N	N	E	R	T	U	B	E	L	O	R	R	Y
S	N	E	E	R	E	R	S	T	A	S	K	D	A
T	E	N	A	R	R	A	G	A	N	S	E	T	T
S	L	A	T	E	S	L	A	L	O	M	E	R	S

NOTES FOR "STUFF 'N' NONSENSE":

The added letters spell out BREEDS OF TURKEY, *and the unclued entries are:* BROAD-BREAST BRONZE, BELTSVILLE WHITE, WHITE HOLLAND, NARRAGANSETT, *and* SLATE.

Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).

ACROSS: 1. *; 14. (n)un-deal*-(n); 15. ho(mini)d; 16. fr(I'd)ay; 17. p-rams; 21. *; 22. brim's-tone; 26. hidden; 27. s(nail-is)h; 31. two mngs.; 39. (t)rue; 40. noug(h)t; 41. (b)urger; 43. inn-er(tub)e; 44. homonym (*Oklahoma*); 45. SNE-er-er-S; 46. tas-K; 49. *.

DOWN: 1. two mngs.; 2. r-ender; 3. (a-part)-me-(NT); 4. *; 5. homonym; 6. homonym (Merman); 7. Abou(t); 8. toi(l); 9. homonym; 10. *; 11. bedst*-ea-d(ead); 19. in-Aug.-Ural; 20. homonyn; 23. slu(t)e; 25. Hi-C, two mngs.; 27. *; 28. a-(ha)-b(ulk); 29. lunche(o)n*; 30. *; 32. late-of (rev.); 33. wri(s)ts; 35. on-all (rev.); 36. *; 37. hidden; 38. d(ress)-rats*; 40. two mngs.; 42. (D)-Ross.

Hodge would have served us b
if he had taken the opportunit
start a discussion; instead, we got
pages of him being condescendin
a young person expressing w
seemed to him to be urgent truth

Ben Lipscomb
Flora, Ind.

Mistaken Target

An item in the October *Har*
Index states that 40 percent of A
icans were "not sure whether the
or Slobodan Milosevic won the
in Kosovo." Maybe so many were
fused because the correct answer is
ther; it was the international f
and the U.N. that won. For that
tinction to be lost on Americans, h
ever, is not terribly surprising.

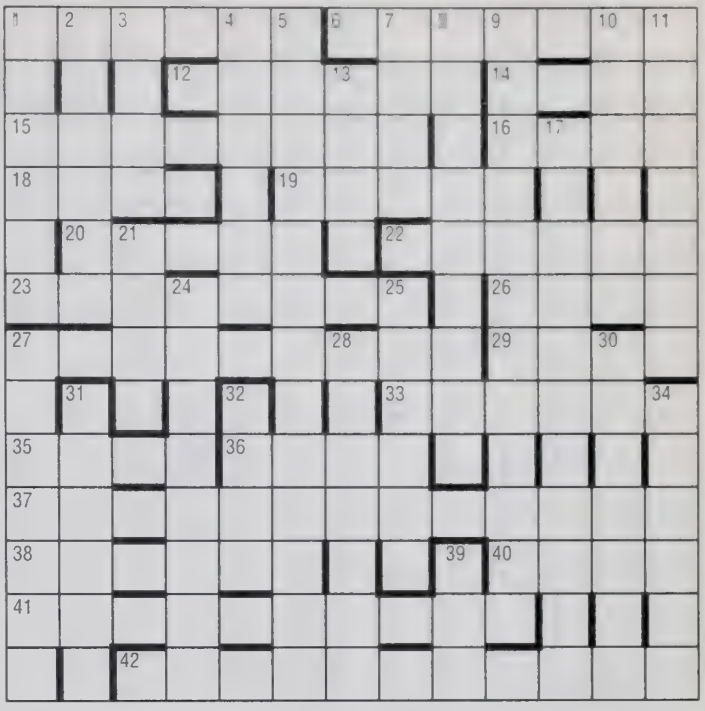
Alan Baycroft
Vancouver, B.C.

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37,38 Marriott Marquis (N.Y.C.
Caviar House (London); **40** Main
reau of Motor Vehicles (Augusta, M

Christmas Game

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.



This month's puzzle is a game of 9 Down. How to play it will become clear as the answers are entered in the diagram. Did I mention that some of the answers won't fit in the diagram? That's why word lengths are omitted. The solution to the game has several options, but only one will give the diagram the correct holiday tone.

Answers include one proper name and one variant (British) spelling. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 116.

ACROSS

1. Small layer of deodorant applied to carpet backing
6. Quiet on-going reception I skipped as a rule
12. Having too little alkali, a Catholic gets idiotic without one
14. I'm beautifully curvaceous and produce a vocally awed response!
15. Record points about American fashions
16. Mean and not masculine
18. I go smack into slides, going head to tail
19. Pre-engagement opening for *Get Smart*
20. Madder than mad Detroit?
22. Short story writing can oddly show too much emotion, emotion initially held in
23. Redistribute roasters?
26. Give an oath in discussion
27. Hint to take a rest
29. Crib that requires posts?
33. Rustic chewed Juicyfruit!
35. Shock heard from stage
36. Still defining Manchu's historic contribution
37. Mixing nectarines and gin can cause stiffness
38. Master of the ear having curvature of the spine
40. Part of modern mail returns put Connecticut in a temper (two words)
41. Lots of animals and humans reach maturity and rise in a new form
42. For disseminating lies, cadet is liable to go for quite a stretch!

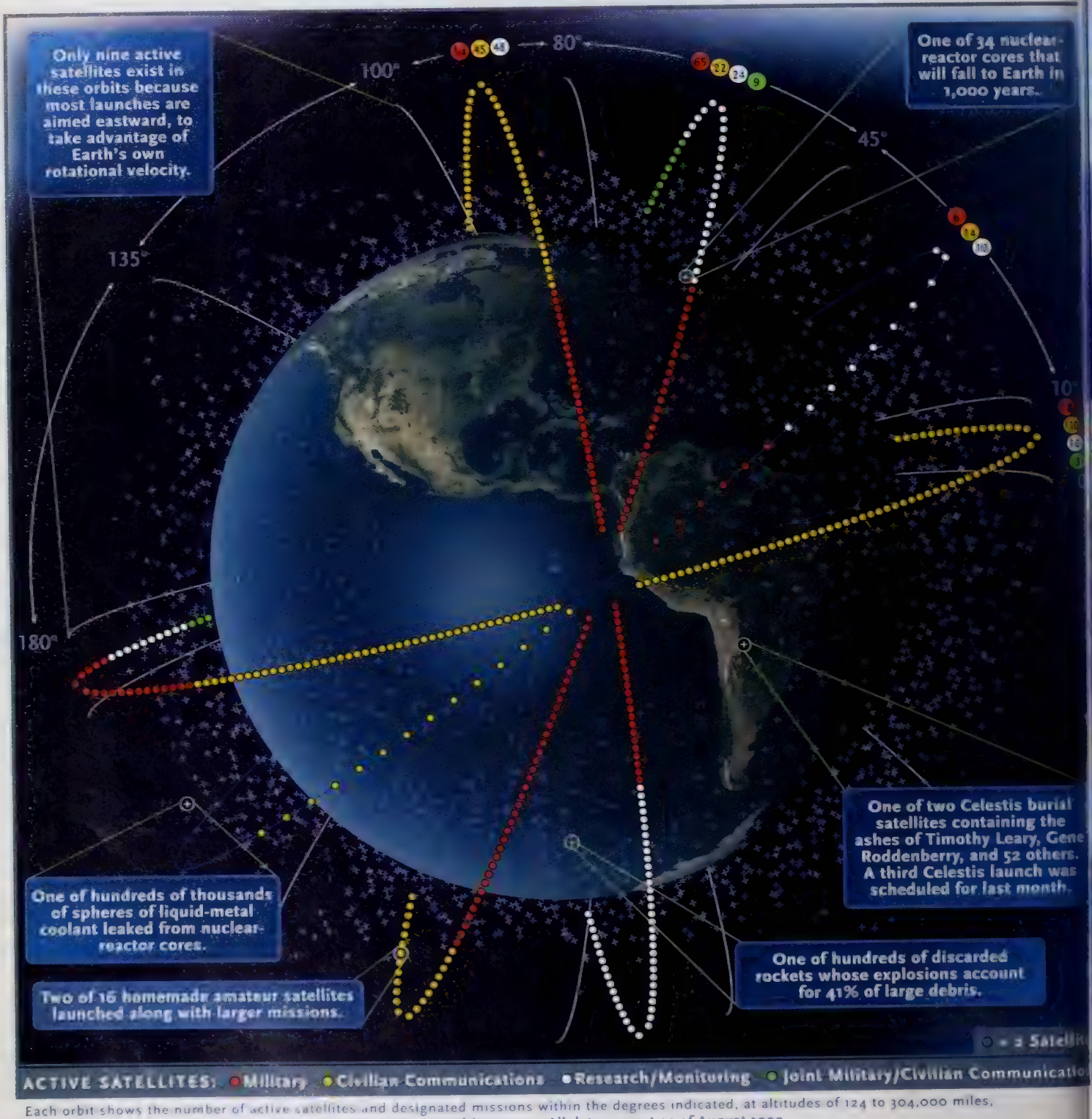
DOWN

1. Street performer, Van Kay, appears before the Queen
2. Actor against tetanoid outbursts . . .
3. . . . votes against expressing opinions delivered from the mount?
4. Cooler Indians with accents
5. Among small miscellaneous marks of excellence, he, for example, speaks incorrectly
7. Some breads are said to do this!
8. Odd enchantress returns to take in copper
9. *See instructions* (three words)
10. Stones embedded in topsider
11. Office worker has time in New York, winds up with precipitation
13. Fans stored in a bundle
17. Incidents leading to return of company moneys I appropriated
21. Cultivated messmate
24. Acts involved with ordeal of the cloth
25. Mechanic getting off the ice? That's backward!
27. Takes more shots and refills (50 going to 1,000)
28. Charlotte, perhaps, with hair pulled up
30. The result is the opposite of income?
31. They're found in oceans!
32. Ribbon in the ear of certain Orientals
34. Appeared to be put together soundly . . .
39. . . . in inspecting bodybuilder's pride

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Christmas Game," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by December 6. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the February 2000 issue. Winners of the October puzzle, "Change for a Quarter," are John Abelin, Houston, Texas; Michael Hiltzik, Seal Beach, California; and Jon Hofferman, Los Angeles, California

SPACE, THE CLUTTERED FRONTIER

Since 1957's Sputnik launch, Earth's atmosphere has accumulated some 110,000 artificial orbiting objects larger than a half inch acr The 8,870 items larger than a softball include 2,000 defunct satellites, hundreds of discarded rockets (roughly six of which explode e year), and thirty-four nuclear-reactor cores. This celestial congestion is also due in part to a fivefold jump since 1994 in the numbe commercial satellites launched. Crowding may be slightly alleviated next spring, when the peak of an eleven-year sunspot cy causes Earth's atmosphere to grow dense enough to speed the decay of lower orbits, but the number of objects dropping from the will double, to twelve a week (most will burn up before impact). NASA is now helping to draft the first international standards for orbi debris reduction, which would include the establishment of a 21,650-mile-high "graveyard orbit."



Each orbit shows the number of active satellites and designated missions within the degrees indicated, at altitudes of 124 to 304,000 miles, as determined by Space Analysis and Research, a private consulting group. All data current as of August 1999.

Map by XPLANE.com. Research by John C


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